

AN ASSESSMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

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ABSTRACT

Democratic values and practices are crucial for democratic institutionalization and the development of party strength. However, the history of Nigeria's democratic experiments demonstrates that elections and electoral politics have generated so much animosity which has, in some cases, threatened the corporate existence of the country. In this essay, the critical nature of Nigerian political parties in the Fourth Republic will be explored to ascertain their contributions to the achievement of democratic consolidation in the country. Based on empirical evidence gathered from the activities of political parties of this dispensation, the essay attempts to provide answers to questions like: what specific contributions have political parties in Nigeria made towards the achievement of a lasting democracy? Is democratic competition (a major tenet of democratic consolidation) at play in Nigeria? What factors must be injected into the current practice to make it a system that will engender a permanent, stable democratic order for the Nigerian State?

Keywords: Political Parties, Democracy, Consolidation.