**Executive Dominance, Party Control and State Legislatures in Nigeria: Evidence from Three States in the North-west Geo-political Zone of Nigeria**

**By**

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**Abstract**

This paper examined the phenomenon of executive dominance, party control and subordinate nature of legislatures at state level in Nigeria. The paper argues that legislatures in Africa generally are faced with the crisis of executive belligerence, which itself is a hangover of the military rule and one party state in the 60s, 70s and the early 80s. This culture manifested in Nigeria after the country’s return to democracy in 1999. The first few years of Nigeria’s democratic experiment was thus marked with fierce executive-legislature conflict, though with the central legislature emerging relatively strong. At state level, however the culture of executive dominance appears to be more endemic and destructive to democracy. The paper revealed that state legislatures in Nigeria are more or less one party dominated, influenced largely by the incumbent governors to avoid confrontation and scrutiny. Three state legislatures in the North-west geo-political zone are selected for the study. In-depth interviews and desk review are the major sources of data for this study. The paper found that the executive governors are overwhelmingly powerful and dominant at state level because of their unlimited access to state resources, which gives them control over party structures. The control over candidates’ selection by governors makes legislators at state level stooges of the former, which relegates the institution to mere rubber stamp of the executive. It is also found that control over legislative bureaucracy in the past and to some extent even now makes the legislature dependent on the executive. This undermines the capacity and autonomy of state legislatures to hold the executive accountable and to a large extent to function as co-equal of the executive arm of government. Thus unless parties are funded independent of holders of executive power and moneybags, governors will continue to control the proceedings in state legislatures.

**Introduction and General Background**

The endemic culture of executive dominance in Africa’s one party states and military regimes has made legislatures weak and vulnerable. This scenario continued even after return to multi-party democracy in various African states. Suffice to say that the pace of democratization across the political landscape of Africa only produces strong chief executives that undermine the autonomy of legislative institutions. The latter are merely seen as appendages of the former. This power interplay, which is skewed against the legislature hinder the institutionalization of democracy in Africa. In terms of raw power, most African legislatures like legislatures worldwide, remain weak in relation to the executive…… they are at best emerging institutions in terms of their capacity to foster horizontal and vertical accountability (Barkan, 2009). Similarly, the organization and conduct of political parties in Africa also influence executive-legislature relations, apparently in favour of the executive in most emerging African democracies. In Nigeria, for instance, the strong attachment of political parties to executive arm of government is obvious. This is largely on the account that the executive remain the major source of funding for political parties. Accordingly, agenda control, rollcall behaviour of members and their re-election bids are influenced largely by the executive through the instrumentalities of political parties. Party structures (both within and outside the legislature) thus limits the powers and functionality of legislatures in Nigeria.

For instance, from 1999 to date, the Nigeria’s National Assembly has been struggling to curtail unnecessary interferences from both the executive and the political parties albeit with little success. The legislature’s refusal to amend the constitution in 2006 to elongate the tenure of the then president and the election of the Speaker of House of Representatives in 2011 against the interest of the executive and the position of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) are few achievements by the Nigeria’s National Assembly to engender legislative assertiveness. Despite these and other similar developments, the National Assembly can not be described as a strong institution of democratization in Nigeria. This is largely on the account that the Nigerian political system is characterized by clientelism, factionalism, polarization and inertia and indeed structured around distributional contention and capture of rents rather than mechanisms of representation and accountability of which the legislature serves as a central arena (Lewis, 2009).

Given these obvious institutional limitations of the central legislature in Nigeria and the derailing quality of democracy in the country, the National Assembly receives the attention of not a few scholars. However, little is known of state legislatures in Nigeria, as have been the case with most state legislatures in Africa, particularly the power relations with the executive and party structures at state level. Events have shown that the state governors in Nigeria exercise control over state legislatures much as the presidency does on the National Assembly. The influence and control of the state legislatures by governors appears to be more obvious and destructive to legislative autonomy than what obtains at the centre. The vulnerability, weakness and limited capacity of state legislatures has made public accountability, transparency and probity dismal and limited at state level. This has led to personalization of public funds by state governors with which they fund the activities of political parties and sponsor candidates for elections at all levels, particularly into the state legislature. The influence and powers of state governors over political parties and elections generally, has led to the emergence of predominantly one-party legislatures across Nigeria. This is also in addition to the fact that most state legislatures rely on executive bureaucracy for staffing. Worst still, the funding of state legislatures has always been at the pleasure of the state governors.

Nonetheless, cracks within political parties at state level and disagreement within the ranks of the legislature had at different times interrogated the powers of state governors in different states of Nigeria. Some of these examples include Lagos, Ekiti, Anambra, Plateau, Sokoto, Oyo, Osun, Bayelsa and Kano states. Except for the governors of Oyo, Ekiti and Bayelsa states whom were impeached by the state Assemblies, with the support and interference of the central executive (presidency), other governors survived the impeachment threats and in some instances engineered the impeachment of the leadership of the legislature. This paper therefore, interrogates the powers of state governors in Nigeria vis-à-vis political parties as it affects the organization, conduct, autonomy and functionality of state legislatures in Nigeria. The paper argues that the political, legal and socio-economic order within which state legislatures operate is responsible for their subordination to the executive. Three states in the North-west geo-political zone of Nigeria are selected for the study. The paper will rely on desk review and key informant interviews to examine the factors responsible for the sustained subordination of legislatures to executive governors in some states of Nigeria. This will, however, be preceded by theoretical discourse of the interlocking relationships among the executive, parties and legislative institutions in a democracy.

**Executive, Political Parties and Legislatures: Some Theoretical Insights**

The functioning of a democracy is to very large extent hinged on the existence and development of some major political institutions. Democracy as a form of governance is thus organised within some institutional frameworks. For instance, participation, accountability, equality and justice, being the hallmarks of democracy are guaranteed only with the existence of certain institutional arrangements. These arrangements, though in differing contexts, facilitates active involvement of the people in governance, fair play and accountability of stewardship in public spheres. Vibrant institutions thus make democracy. Numerous institutions count in this respect. Institutions such as electoral bodies, political parties, executive arm of government, parliaments, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the media are particularly central in the regulation and functioning of a democracy at a macro level. Our focus in this paper however is on three dominant political institutions: executive; parties; and legislatures. Theoretically there have been discourses on these concepts as to how they relate to the functioning of one form of democratic government or the other. The emphasis in this paper is rather on the interconnectedness of these institutions; particularly the power relations at institutional level as it affect the capacity and autonomy of one another and their co-existence in the discharge of their statutorily and conventionally assigned functions.

Broadly speaking, theoretical discourses on executive, parties and legislatures, particularly the relationship between executive and legislatures are centred on the separation and balance of power between the two major arms of government. In this regard, party platforms are often used by either of the arms (executive or legislature) to be assertive and/or balance its power to the disadvantage of the other. For instance, early democratic theorists cautioned that accumulation of executive, legislative and judicial powers in one hand (whether of individual or institution, majority or minority) will lead to tyranny regardless of how government is constituted and dissolved. In this regard, Montesquieu (1689-1755) wrote on the need to build internal restraints in liberal form of government in ways which powers of government would be separated and balanced. In his famous essay ‘The Spirit of the Laws’ (1750) he argued on the need to institute mechanisms for checks and balances among the three major arms of government – notably the executive, legislature and the judiciary. The publication of Montesquieu had considerable influence on framers of American constitution. The theoretical position of Montesquie (1750) is more associated with presidential democracy than parliamentary or other systems of government. Thus the modelling of Nigeria’s democracy along the American Presidential system is borne out of the concerns to check and balance the powers of elected officials. The 1999 Constitution thus delineate the boundaries of the three arms of government in terms of the power structure and relationships among them both at national and state levels.

Similarly, James Madison’s question of how to achieve compromise between the power of the majorities and the power of minorities, between the political equality of all adult citizens on the one side, and the desire to limit their sovereignty on the other seems interesting in understanding power differentials between and among citizens and institutions alike. To Madison, it is necessary to limit the sovereignty of individuals and groups in order to avoid tyranny. He defined tyranny in the Federalist Paper, No.47 as the accumulation of all powers legislative, executive and judiciary in the same hands whether of one, a few or many.

Accordingly, Madison developed two working hypotheses, which depicts a political order that could either entrench or distort the practice of democracy as a system of government. The first hypothesis is stated thus: if unrestrained by external checks, any given individual or groups of individuals will tyrannize over other. He defined external checks as the application of reward and penalties, or the expectation that they will be applied, by same source other than the given individual himself; Hypothesis II suggests thus: the accumulation of all powers: legislative; executive; and judiciary in the same hands implies the elimination of external checks (empirical generalization). From these assumptions, two other proposition are also developed: (i) if unrestrained by external checks, a minority of individuals will tyrannize over a majority of individuals (ii) if unrestrained by external checks a majority of individuals will tyrannize over a minority of individuals. Hamilton captured this situation more succinctly when he argued that “give all powers to the many they will oppress the few. Give all power to the few they will oppress the many. Madison’s arguments published in the Federalist (1788) to a large extent influenced the ratification of the American constitution which adopted a republican government (Dahl, 1956).

In the context of emerging democracies, however that had backgrounds of one party states and/or military dictatorship, the principles of separation of powers and checks and balances contradicts the culture of executive dominance in the political system. Thus regardless of the constitutional provisions that separate and balance powers of the major arms of government, subordination of one arm of government by another is seen as a normal and realistic trend that is part of the political process and development. In Nigeria, for instance, this trend predominate the country’s political landscape since 1999. At national level there were major episodes of contentious politics between the executive and the legislature. At the state level, however it was a scenario of executive dominance with pockets of resistance from some Houses of Assembly.

In the power interplay between the executive and legislative institutions across democracies, party platforms are usually at the fore front. The institutions of political parties within and outside legislatures are often the instruments of contestations between the executive and the legislatures. Internally, members of legislatures may act unanimously against the executive across party lines in a bid to be assertive, but only at the risk of party sanctions depending on the position of their parties.

Party affiliation of legislative members is central to the organisation of a legislative institution. Thus, to understand the level of institutionalisation of legislative assemblies in a democracy, the role(s) of some political institutions, particularly political parties, must be underscored. This is against the backdrop of their position in the recruitment of legislative members and perhaps, the tremendous influence parties have on their members in the legislature. Partisanship is thus a fundamental organizing principle in the legislature (Cox and McCabe’s 1991,. 1993; Keewet and McCubbins 1991; and Rhode 1991).

Lyne M. Mona (2002) for instance, posits that party affiliation of legislators is important to understanding policy effectiveness and regime stability. In other words, the pattern of conflict and cooperation between the executive and legislature on policy issues defines the stable nature of a democratic regime. It is also argued that the characteristics of presidential regimes (constituting of executive through direct elections, fixed term for executive, accumulation of executive powers to a single party or individual and the entry of amateur politicians) are particularly responsible for their instability and policy ineffectiveness. In advanced democracies, conflict between executive and legislature mainly focuses on policy issues, which are later resolved through consultations, dialogue and out of fear of regime breakdown. In emerging democracies, particularly in Africa, conflicts between the two arms of government are usually on power contestations. For example, the legislature cannot sanction the president for corruption allegations or offences or the President can spend public funds without the approval of the legislature or even the legislature must pass a bill as it is presented to it by the executive. These are some of the issues that characterized the nature of executive legislature conflicts in Nigeria.

Shugart Mainwaring (1997) on the other hand, contends that the executive-legislature conflicts in presidential regimes are to be explained within the context of legislative support to executive, especially the support of majority parties, which are to a large extent disciplined. Thus, Presidents with both strong and weak legislative powers who lack disciplined party support are likely to have difficulty in the pursuit of their policy agenda. It is further argued that coalition dynamics in presidential regimes is partly responsible for the executive-legislature face-off, especially on policy issues, which often makes the polity unstable. This is as a result of the dual democratic legitimacy character of a presidential regime. Thus, Presidents have their own independent popular mandate and are likely to be reluctant to cede the degree of power necessary to an opposition party in order to entice it into legislative coalition. The opposition parties, at the same time lack incentives to join the cabinet of a president of another party.[[1]](#footnote-1) This scenario most often results in policy gridlock and probable general instability. This submission sums up one of the dimensions of executive-legislature relationship in Nigeria. The National Assembly in Nigeria since 1999 has been dominated by the PDP, yet the legislature has been in fierce conflict with the executive whose president is also on the platform of PDP. There were even unsuccessful attempts to impeach the president by majority of the PDP members in the National assembly.

In another context, it is argued that party membership distribution in the legislature to some extent affects the productivity of the institution, especially in the area of policy making. Accordingly, the traditional wisdom is that party control of Congress and the presidency is important in the production of legislation. Unified control of the institutions by one party, it is said, results in more policy innovation. In Nigeria, however, this seems contradictory at the national level. Because at different times the PDP dominated National assembly fiercely disagrees with the president, whoi is also elected on the platform of the PDP. However, it appears to be the case at state levels, where unified control of State Assemblies and Governorship leads not to policy innovations but rubber stamp state legislatures.

Krutz (2000) thus examined how fragmented legislatures on party affiliation can cope with uncertainties of law making and policy issues at the legislative chambers. He described Omnibus bills as massive bills with component measures from desperate substantive policy areas. It is argued that these desperate policy areas, if considered separately, are likely to face serious opposition from certain sections of the legislature or at the desk of the President. This explains the rationale behind packaging a massive bill with a consideration of both policy measures that appear attractive and controversial to the members of the legislature and the chief executive alike.

In this way of thinking, political parties ensure order to an otherwise dispersed policy process.[[2]](#footnote-2) It is also argued that more bills fail in divided government than in unified government, a result that holds under multivariate regression analysis. Empirical evidence shows that divided government negatively and significantly affects legislative production.[[3]](#footnote-3) Thus, no matter the level of institutionalisation of the legislature, its fragmentation along party lines can significantly affect its productivity and efficiency.

The nature of conflicts between the executive and legislature is sometimes related to the orientation of legislative members themselves i.e. whether or not members are committed to party platforms or not. Richard (1979) conducted a study on the impact of party platforms on legislative performance. He compared the state legislatures of Illinois and Wisconsin in the United States, examining the extent to which these fulfil legislatively their platform commitments. He differentiated between ‘issue oriented’ and ‘moralistic parties’ on one hand and ‘job oriented’ and ‘individualistic parties’ on the other. He argues that issue oriented and moralistic parties are likely to do well in the fulfilment of legislative platform agenda than the job oriented and individualistic parties. He described the Wisconsin parties as the issue oriented and moralistic, while the Illinois parties as the job- oriented and individualistic parties.

 ‘Job- oriented parties’ in Illinois, are described as parties that are characterised by an orientation towards winning office for tangible reward, while a concern with issues is notably lacking.[[4]](#footnote-4) On the other hand, ‘issue oriented and moralistic parties’ in Wisconsin usually have extensive state-making activity (especially by the Chicago Democratic organisation) and a closed primary does seem to translate into external party organisational control of state legislators by the Democrats if not Republicans.[[5]](#footnote-5) Richard, (1979) described the process of fulfilling party pledges as “Party Responsibility. In Nigeria, legislatures at both national and state level are ‘job oriented and individualistic parties’. This explains why legislatures in Nigeria are vulnerable to financial shocks. Thus bribes, gratifications and providing cover for the corruption of the executive for kickbacks are some of the ways in which the executive control legislature in Nigeria. This is even worse at state level where governors give directives to state Assemblies on virtually all issues of public concern. This scenario has made state governors godfathers of state legislators. In some instances, members of the state assemblies who are elected on different party platform with the governor are compelled by the dominance of the governor to decamp to the platform of the governor for incentives and personal favours.

Similarly, Timothy (2000) examined the dynamics of congressional loyalty from 1947 to 1997. The rate of party defection among members of the U.S Congress within the stipulated period was also investigated. It is argued that one interesting thing about congressional loyalty in the U.S is that Congress members enjoy relatively free hand to cast roll call votes than their counterparts in the parliamentary system. This is because members of parliament only vote against their party preferences at the risk of severe party sanctions; and in the extreme, the possibility of government dissolution.

Despite the liberty being enjoyed by members of the American Congress in roll-call behaviour, political parties in the U.S. institute measures of influencing the roll-call behaviour of their members. This is achieved by maintaining cohesion in two ways: they institutionalise an incentive structure that encourages members to support the party line (Aldrich, 1995; Cox, and McCubbins, 1984; and Rodhe, 1979). The derivable benefits may be plum committee assignments, leadership positions and collective reputation to assist them in their respective re-election bid. The party leadership has the means of keeping divisible issues out of the agenda. This, however, does not suggest absolute control of members by their political parties.[[6]](#footnote-6) Other factors such as ideological inclination of members and campaign statements also influence roll call behaviour of legislators. In Nigeria, party incentives and sanctions paly central role in influencing the roll call behaviour of its members. For instance, most of the legislators that opposed the third term bid of the executive under President Obasanjo where apparently denied return ticket of the party or rigged out of office at the polls. At state level, this is even more obvious as governors determine who run for legislative positions in the ruling party. Given this trend, there have scenario of party switching in by legislators before or during elections.

Mershon and Shvetsova (2008) studied Parliamentary Cycles and Party Switching in Legislatures. It is observed that the choice of party by legislators is a strategic one and it is recurring throughout legislative cycle. The authors argued that individual legislators are prone to switching parties as they trail specific goals at different stages of parliamentary cycle. Using Russia and Italy, they argued that legislators switch to other parties basically for office benefits, policy advantage and vote seeking at distinctive moments of parliamentary cycles. This study, however, challenges the conventional wisdom that parties exist as fixed units from one election to the next. This is because recurring switching of party platforms, especially by legislators suggest that parties are, at least not fixed units, since members of political parties change party platforms in the pursuit of certain goals.

Studies on this phenomenon are documented in both emerging and advanced democracies (See Heller & Mershon 2004; Laver & Benoit 2003). For individual countries including Australia (Miskin, 2003), Brazil (Desposato, 2006), the European Parliament (McElroy, 2003) Hungary (Agh, 1999), India (Miskin, 2003) and United States during periods of realignment (Canon & Sousa 1992; Nokken & Poole 2004; cf. Mershon and Shvetsova 2008:100). Parliamentary cycle in this context is defined as the different legislative and electoral stages towards the end of a given term. Mershon and Shvetsova (2008) further identified the different stages of parliamentary cycles:

… stage A (for affiliation) marks the transition from popular vote to taking up legislative seats in the first legislative session; stage B (for benefits) when executive portfolios and committee seats, committee chairs and other legislative posts are allocated; stage C (for policy control) when legislative agenda focuses most heavily on policy domains relevant to the broad range of issues and decisions , which bring to a peak the salience of policy aims of legislators; stage E (for elections) at this stage the electoral motivations of the legislators influences their decision to switch party affiliations. It closes the parliamentary cycle; stage D (for Dormant) this mostly refer to all periods other than stages A,B, C and E- a residual set of intervals between the active stages (Mershon and Shvetsova (2008:101-3).

These stages are crucial in explaining the motives behind the switching party platforms by legislators. At every stage, legislators take decision on whether or not to switch party, on the basis of the anticipated results. In Nigeria, party switching among legislators are mainly for the stages of B and E. Personal benefits and the desire to win elections motivates members to switch party platforms. This is more common at state level in order to attract personal benefits form governors and ultimately be selected by the governor to run for elections.

Similarly, legislative members with portfolios in the legislatures appear to be more supportive of the executive than the rank and file. Wright Fiona (2000) thus examined why standing committee chairs in the U.S. House, as a group, are dramatically more supportive of their party, its leaders and their agenda than they were in the 1950s and 1960s. He generated data on the roll-call behaviour of the U.S. House members before and after the Democratic Reform of the early 1970s. The study centred on Caucus Re-election requirement and the transformation of House Committee Chairs as the major reason for the increased loyalty to party, its leadership and agenda by the Committee Chairs. The study examined the extent to which Committee Chairs were more or less loyal than rank and file members on critical party votes between 1959 and 1994. This period was selected to understand the initial low level of loyalty among the Chairs which fuelled the ultimately successful Reform efforts of the Democratic Study Group (Richard Bolling 1966, 1968; Burton Sheppard 1985), and to conclude a substantial number of post-reform Congress with which to assess fully the long-term impact of the new rule.

 It can be noted, therefore, that the introduction of Caucus re-election requirement has threatened to some extent the conventional formula of the distribution of positions of power within the legislature. Indeed, the seniority requirement which has been advocated by proponents of legislative institutionalisation like Squire and Polsby is negated by the Caucus re-election requirement of the Democratic Reform of 1970s. The rationale behind the introduction of Caucus re-election is basically to enhance loyalty to party, its leadership and agenda, especially in the roll-call behaviour of legislators on critical and controversial policy issues in which parties have taken position. Thus the fear of loosing prestigious position of committee leadership influences committee chairs to be supportive of party agenda. In Nigeria, the support of party agenda is by extension support for the executive. This is because at both the national and state level, parties are control largely by President and governors. It should also be noted that committee leadership in Nigerian legislature is not only prestigious but also lucrative. Chairmen of legislative committees control funds of ministries, departments and agencies and to some extent are involved in various corrupt deals organizations under their supervision.

Theoretically, therefore, executive, parties and legislatures have strong connections in the organization and conduct of a democratic form of government. To say the least, party platforms are the major source of political power. Thus politicians seeking for office in both the legislature and executive are conditioned, at least in the context of Nigeria’s constitutional framework to channel their quest for office through a chosen party platform. At the period of elections therefore, political parties are the most influential institution of democracy and governance. However, both the executive and legislature assume different levels of power and influence after elections. Thus power contestations shift from interparty to inter-branches of government, especially in emerging democracies where institutionalization of democracy is yet to be achieved. Thus even when the constitution refer to the executive and legislature as co-equal branches of government with their powers separated and balanced, the hangover of executive dominance from the military rule one party states guides the executive in their relations with the legislature. Attempt to assert their position as an autonomous institution often degenerates into conflicts, policy gridlock, party switching, political victimization of various sorts and above all subordination of the legislature by the executive through the instrumentalities of political parties. Party incentives and sanctions for or against loyal and disloyal party members appears to be central to the control of the legislature by the executive in emerging democracies. The rampant nature of corruption which gives the executive unlimited access to state resources also limit the powers and influence of legislatures and increase thus far the powers of the executive over parties and legislatures.

### Powers and Functions of the State Legislature and Executive: Evidence from 1999 Constitution of Nigeria

Across modern democratic societies, legislatures perform basically three conventional functions of representation, law-making and oversight responsibilities. The Nigerian National Legislature is no exception. The 1999 Constitution has provided the legislature in different sections, the powers to perform these functions at both the central and state levels.

In the context of representation for instance, the Constitution provided for delineation of constituencies in which different groups of people are represented on the basis of their population size, state of origin or `in the case of state legislatures the number seats a state has in the House of Representatives. Section 91 of the Constitution states that:

Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, A House of Assembly of a State shall consist of three or four times the number of seats which that state has in the House of Representatives, divided in a to reflect, as far as possible, nearly equal population. Provided that a House of Assembly of a State shall consist of not less than twenty four and not more than forty members.

Therefore, based on the State Assembly constituencies created by the constitution, people vote to elect their representatives to the National Assembly. The elected Representatives are required to interact with the electorate and as much as possible reflect the interests of their constituents in their general conduct and activities. It is against this backdrop that Esebagbon (2005) argues that:

In a modern democracy today, the legislature evokes the idea of representative democracy, more than any other branch of government. Thus, democracy can only be sustained when legislatures have the will, ability and information to make decisions that reflect the interests and needs of the society. Similarly, the governed must have the will, ability and information to transmit their needs and interests to their legislators and to evaluate the performance of the legislators and the various parties and to reward or sanction their actions (Esebagbon 2005:3).

This assertion is a true reflection of the function of a legislature as a representative institution of governance in a democracy. The idea of representation and the development legislative institution is necessitated by the complexity of human societies, which ruled out the possibility of direct democracy. It is in this context that representative assemblies evolved, whose members are elected within defined constituencies to represent their people in government. In the case of Nigeria, the central legislature supposedly performs these functions, however not without challenges. Relatively, the state legislatures in Nigeria are deemed to be of very low quality. This is because in Nigeria, legislators are hardly held accountable for their actions. Even when elections are to serve as mechanism for reward and sanctions on incumbent legislators, representatives often rig their ways into offices. This often affects the quality of representation and the level of participation of the electorate in governance.

Secondly, the legislature in Nigeria as the case in other modern democracies is empowered by the constitution to make laws. Law making function is perhaps what distinguishes a legislative institution from other organs of government. The 1999 Constitution empowers the State Assemblies to make laws. This is contained in Section 100 (1) of the constitution which state thus: “The power of the House of Assembly to make laws shall be exercised through bills passed by the House of Assembly and, except as otherwise provided by this section, assented to by the Governor.” Sub-section (2) on the other hand, states that: “A bill shall not become law unless it has been passed and, subject to sub-section (1) of this section, assented, to in accordance with the provisions of this section.”

Subsection (3) on the other hand, stipulates that: Where a bill has been passed by the House of Assembly it shall be presented to the governor for assent.[[7]](#footnote-7) Mores, sub-section (4) states that: Where a bill is presented to the Governor for assent that shall within thirty days thereof signify that he assents or that he withholds assent.[[8]](#footnote-8) Accordingly, sub-section (5) stipulates that: Where the Governor withholds his assent and the bill is again passed by the House of Assembly by two-thirds majority, the bill shall become law and the assent of the Governor shall not be required.[[9]](#footnote-9)

To this end, the legislature has overriding powers in law-making. It is in this context that the institution is often called the law-making body of government. In making laws, therefore, the internal complexity of the legislature, its interaction with external environment and the extent to which it adopts universal procedures of conducting business to a great extent bear on the quality of laws it makes. In Nigeria’s state Assemblies, however, there are concerns that legislative institutions are rather appendages of the executive governors. The procedure laid down by the constitution and the powers given to the Assemblies in law making are hardly exercised or at best guided by the executive in the exercise of their powers.

The law-making function of a legislative institution is of paramount importance. It is in light of this that Esebagbon (2005) argues that:

The principal function of the legislature under the 1999 Constitution is to make laws. It is in the exercise of this function that legislative assemblies acquire this distinctive character and take their rightful place within the structure of government. It is this law – making power that places the legislature as an independent organ of government that is of coordinate status with the Executive and the Judiciary. The legislature exercises its main constitutional functions through legislation (Esebagbon 2005:5).

Thirdly, the oversight function of the legislature is also another traditional function of a legislative institution. Sections 128 and 129 of the said constitution stated in categorical terms the powers of the National Assembly to supervise and control the activities of the other branches of government. However, section 128 of the constitution which confers on the House of Assembly the power to conduct investigation, illustrates the oversight functions of the legislature clearly. It states thus: (1) Subject to the provision of this constitution, the House of Assembly shall have power by resolution published in its Journal or in the official gazette of the Government of the Federation to direct or cause to be directed of investigation into:

* any matter or anything with respect to which it has power to make laws; and
* the conduct of affairs of any persons/authority, ministry or government department charged, or intended to be charged, with the duty of or responsibility for:-
* Executing or administering laws enacted by the National Assembly; and
* Disbursing or administering money appropriated or to be appropriated by the National Assembly.

(2) The powers conferred on a House of Assembly under provisions of this section are exercisable only for the purpose of enabling it to:

* make laws with respect to any matter within its legislative competence and correct any defects in existing laws; and
* exposes corruption, inefficiency or wastes in the execution or administration of laws within its legislative competence and in the disbursement or administration of funds appropriated by it.

This function is adjudged to be the most routine and engaging activity of a legislative institution. Iwuanyanwu (1998:7) argues that:

The legislature therefore, carries out surveillance over the activities of the executive. To achieve this, the legislature has several standing committees. Virtually every Government Agency or Ministry has an overseeing standing committee. It is the responsibility of any particular standing committee to report to the full House the activities of the agency or ministry it supervises. The Committee members apply whatever legitimate means to monitor the activities of the Agency or Ministry. These include visits to the departments, interrogation of their staff, occasional assessment of plan implementation, holding of inquiries, encouragements and suggestions for improvement … and exploring easy ways of improving and bettering the services of the departments for the general good and well being of the society (Iwuanyanwu 1998:7)

This broad range of activities encapsulates the legislative function of oversight. The function of oversight given to the legislature by the constitution is to enhance accountability, transparency and probity in the conduct of public affairs, particularly in the management of public resources. These functions are performed by various legislative committees who report the findings of their investigations to the committee of a whole (plenary) for further legislative deliberations and necessary actions as may deem appropriate. The oversight functions of the legislature reveal its powers with regards to supervision and control of other government agencies, particularly executive agencies. This function of the legislature, particularly in Nigeria exposes the institution into perpetual conflict with the executive arm of government. This is so because routine checks by the legislature of the executive expose corruption, which dents the image of holders of executive positions.

As a result, the executive, particularly the presidency resists being investigated or manipulates the process and outcomes of legislative investigations. In the case of state governors there is an entrenched culture of dominance. However, the efficient conduct of oversight functions by the legislature is a function of its level of autonomy and the degree of its internal complexity occasioned by autonomy of standing committees. Thus, while at the central level, the National Assembly had at various times initiated and conducted investigations relating to sharp practices and scandals by the executive, at state level, the House of Assemblies are apparently overwhelmed by the powers of the executive governors. There have not been serious independent legislative investigations against governors in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic. Even the impeachment attempts and the successful impeachments of some few state governors where mostly sponsored or directly guided by the Presidency.

On the other hand, Section 178 of the 1999 Constitution provided for the establishment of office of the Governor. Sub-section (1) states thus: “there shall be for each state of the federation a Governor. Sub-section (2) further clarifies that: “the Governor of a state shall be the Chief Executive of that state.” Given this status, the governor is empowered to perform executive functions relating to the administration, governance, maintenance of law and order and the security of the state. As the chief executive and chief security officer of a state, the governor is responsible for the welfare and security of the people of the state.

In addition to the office of the Governor, the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria also provides for the establishment of the offices of Commissioners. Section 192 (1) states that: there shall be such offices of Commissioners of the Government of the state as may be established by the Governor. Sub-section (2) added that: “Any appointment to the office of the Commissioner of the Government of a state shall, if the nomination of any person to such office is confirmed by the House of Assembly of the state, be made by the Governor of that state in making such appointment the Governor shall conform with the provisions of section 14(4) of this Constitution”. These provisions suggest that the Governor is responsible for the coordination and management of state’s public affairs. He is though, to be assisted by Commissioners whom he appointed with the approval of the state House of Assembly. It is in this regard that Section 148 (2) of the 1999 Constitution states that: “the Governor shall hold regular meetings with the Deputy Governor and all the Commissioners of the Government of the state for the purposes of:

1. determining the general direction of the policies of the Government of the state ;
2. co-ordinating the activities of the Governor, the Deputy Governor and the Commissioners of the Government of the state and the discharge of their executive responsibilities; and
3. advising the Governor generally in the discharge of his executive functions other than those functions with respect to which he is required by this Constitution to seek the advise or act on the recommendation of any other person or body.

Given these powers and functions, the executive, traditionally is seen as having enormous powers and responsibilities compared to other arms of government. The executive arm of government is responsible for policies, programmes and projects that are expected to impact on the welfare and security of the people in the state. Because of these enormous powers, the institution in a democracy provides some limitations, which control the conduct of the executive to prevent abuse of power and tyranny. In Nigeria, these limitations are embedded in the various powers and responsibilities of the legislature, as provided for by the constitution. The functions of law making and oversights empowered the legislature to exercise tremendous control over the executive. This however is being resisted and contested by the executive, which constitute the dynamics of executive-legislature relations in Nigeria. No where is the dominance of executive arm of government more apparent than at state level, where state governors are believed to be the dominant force in the candidate selection process at party level and indeed very central to the election of members into the state Houses of Assembly. The nature of party financing, which depends almost entirely on governors at state level in the Nigeria’s Forth Republic, is majorly responsible for the subordination of the state legislatures to the executive, particularly the absolute control state Assemblies by state governors. The following section thus examines the interconnectedness of executive dominance, party control and state legislatures in Nigeria. Three states in the North-west Nigeria; Sokoto; Kebbi; and Zamfara are chosen for empirical emphasis.

**Executive Dominance, Party Control and the National Assembly in Nigeria**

As obtains in typical African democracies, where legislatures are relegated to mere ‘rubber stamps’ of the executive, and rendered to an ‘order of executive dominance,’ Nigeria is no exception. No where is this trend more obvious than at the sub-national level of the Africa’s political system. At the national level, for instance, the Nigeria’s National Assembly had, at different occasions, demonstrated some level of commitment to asserting its autonomy and indeed checking the excesses of the executive. Using the normal tricks of controlling party apparatus, abuse of public funds in their care(corruption) and bullying ‘stubborn legislators’ with security agents and hired gangs and thugs, the executive is deemed to be more powerful than the legislature in African democracies. Nigeria’s democracy is characterized with the scenario of power tussle between the executive and legislature at inception in 1999. This has continued unabated.

The Nigerian state is a federation of thirty six (36) states, seven hundred and seventy four (774) local governments and the federal government at the centre. As a federal system of government, powers are divided between and among the three tiers of government. The various Legislative Lists: Exclusive; concurrent; and residual specify areas of jurisdictions and competence of the three levels of government in the country. The fiscal nature of Nigeria’s federal system is however criticized as been lopsided in favour of federal government, which controls bulk of the nation’s revenue through the federation account. The 1999 Constitution also provided for the Presidential system of government, particularly at the federal and state levels. It thus provided not only for the separation of powers between and among the three arms of government: executive; legislature; and judiciary but also mechanisms for checks and balances in the exercise of powers by the three arms of government. In spite of these arrangements, the Nigerian state has been embroiled in unprecedented governance crisis and political tensions, arising mainly from the power tussles between and among the tiers and arms of government. Tensions and crisis between the executive and the legislature stands out as the most recurring.

Power tussles between the executive and members of the legislature in Nigeria in the determination of who occupy various leadership positions was the starting point executive-legislature conflict in 1999. It is also largely responsible for high leadership turnover. In many instances, the executive acts under the guise of party supremacy and often members of the ruling PDP are coerced into accepting the proposals of the executive as the position of the party. This has caused serious tensions, instability and crisis in the legislature since 1999. This point was equally stressed by Salisu Buhar[[10]](#footnote-10) when he argues that: “the greatest challenge of Nigeria’s democracy since 1999 is how to get the executive arm of government appreciates the place and role of the legislature in the governance process” (*Thisday*, 6 June, 2009).

Similarly, Ume-Ezeoke[[11]](#footnote-11) contends that excessive executive interference in the activities of the legislature, particularly in the determination of its leaders is largely responsible for leadership crisis and instability in the legislature. He argues that, his tenure as the Speaker of House of Representatives in the Second Republic was more stable because the executive and indeed the parties then were more focused and disciplined (*Thisday*, 6 June 2009). Thus the culture of fusion of executive and legislative powers and functions under the military has impacted negatively on the practice of democracy in 1999. The institution of the legislature is the worst affected, even when the Constitution clearly separated executive and legislative powers and functions and provided for checks and balances.

Thus sustained urge by the executive at the centre to anoint leaders of the legislature is only another way of ensuring firm subordination of the latter by the former. However, where the executive failed to impose leaders, various means are often employed by it, to stifle the tenure of the freely elected leaders. These include financing some members to initiate and champion the course of impeachment and/or harassing them through the use of security agents, party instruments and anti corruption agencies such as Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt and other Related Offences Commission (1CPC). The consequences are high leadership and membership turnover in NASS. Aminu Bello Masari[[12]](#footnote-12) testifies in the following words:

The high level leadership turnover in the legislature and indeed the turnover of members in the institution is attributable to the desire by the executive and other extraneous political forces (parties) to pull out of parliament those they termed trouble makers who would not succumb to the dictatorial tendencies of the executive (*Thisday*, 6 June, 2009).

Similarly Anyanwu (2007) concurs with this viewpoint and elaborated as follows:

One of the defining characteristics of eight years of legislative practice was the struggle for supremacy between the executive and legislature. Behind the downfall of repeated leaders of both arms of NASS have been disagreements over control and independence of the legislature. Checks and balances were taken to mean opposition to the executive branch and attempts to show the independence of NASS were dubbed disloyalty to the President and the party. Each presiding officer across time and session adopted different ways to cope with the situation (Anyanwu, 2007:4).

As a consequence, the possibility of incumbent leaders to return to the legislature, especially when the candidates in question do not enjoy the support of the presidency seems to be dicey. For instance, from 1999 to date, none of the leaders of the legislature with the exception of Senator David Mark (2007 to date) returned to the legislature. Some were not allowed nomination forms for re-election by the party (PDP), while others who perceived the plot against them by the party and the executive refused to seek for re-election. However, for Ghali Umar Na’Abba, who won primary elections to return to the House in 2003, the party sided with the opposition candidate and he lost the elections to an ANPP candidate in his constituency (Interview, Masari, 2009). In the case of David Mark, he is considered loyal to both the Presidency and the ruling party (PDP) and thus supported by both institutions not only to return to the Senate but also to be re-elected as Senate President for the second consecutive term.

In the case of Pius Anyim[[13]](#footnote-13) and Aminu Bello Masari, they were believed to be ‘anointed’ by the executive, but resisted attempts by the executive to influence their actions in the conduct of the legislature. For instance, the refusal of Pius Anyim Pius to manipulate the proposed Electoral Bill 2002 and ensure its passage as presented by the executive was partly responsible for the face-off between the presidency and the then leadership of the Senate. In the case of Aminu Bello Masari, the failure of his leadership to manipulate legislative processes and ensure the endorsement of the *third term* (tenure elongation for President Olusegun Obasanjo) accounted for the crisis of his leadership. In both cases, the presidency in collaboration with the PDP punished the two anointed leaders. Both Anyim Pius Ayim and Aminu Bello Masari were, however, frustrated by the party under the influence of the presidency in their bid to contest gubernatorial elections in their respective states (Interview, Anyim, 2009 and Interview, Masari, 2009).

Accordingly, divergent sources of information confirmed the excessive interference of the executive in the affairs of the legislature, particularly, the choice and removal of its leaders. This situation was more glaring under the former President Olusegun Obasanjo. Thus, the military background of the former President was argued to be responsible for the dictatorial tendencies of his administration generally. This is the view of Faruk Lawan,[[14]](#footnote-14) he argues that:

We all know by now the President still have hangover of his military background. He seems to be high-handed in the way he handles issues especially with regards to both the legislature and judiciary. And there must be credible opposition, principled opposition to check the excesses of the executive arm of the government (*Hotline*, 5 September, 1999)

In a similar vein, Ghali Umar Na’Abba argues that:

I think what is happening is that, the President being in the military for most period of his life has the tendency to be dictatorial and we must not forget the fact that he was at one time a Head of State under military dispensation. The military style of governance is such that the executive performs the functions of the legislature and judiciary. I believe that this has a bearing on the behaviour of the President” (*Hotline*, 5 September, 1999).

Similarly, Nnamani acknowledges the interference of the executive in the choice and removal of leaders of NASS. He argues that this contradicts the philosophy of presidential system of government. He disputes the assumption that the leadership of NASS are stooges of the executive and contends that the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives were not mere stooges of the ruling party and the executive. He maintains that:

It would not serve any useful purpose to impose a Senate president against the wishes of the majority of senators. In the last eight years the Senate has had five Senate presidents. The large turnover is traceable to executive interference (*Leadership*, 1 June, 2007).

However, because of the trend of imposition of legislative leaders by the executive under the guise of party supremacy, it is assumed that the imposed leaders often compromise the autonomy of the legislature to serve the vested interest of the executive. Even when imposed leaders of the legislature are impeached and replaced by freely elected confidents of members or when the imposed leaders abandon their sponsors (executive), there are always attempts by the executive to ensure that such leaders are impeached. For instance, the election of Ghali Umar Na’Abba as the Speaker after the resignation of Salisu Buhari, saw a House leadership that was committed to asserting the independence of the legislature. This gesture pitted him against the presidency and the latter masterminded several unsuccessful attempts at impeaching him. Anyanwu, (2007) argues that:

Although the executive branch did not succeed in unseating Na’Abba, it succeeded in breaking the House membership into mutually antagonistic factions. There were ‘pro and anti Na’Abba groups’. As a result his leadership experienced much internal unrest, culminating into unprecedented number of attempts at impeaching him. One of the fall outs of this struggle was that the House declared the Presidential liaison officer, Esther Uduchi a “persona non-grata’ in NASS having accused her of bribing some of the House members to impeach the Speaker” (Anyanwu, 2007:2).

In spite of the crisis that is associated with the imposition of legislative leadership, the trend has continued. For instance, on the eve of leaving office, the former President Olusegun Obasanjo, in a meeting of the PDP caucus held at Presidential villa on the 30th May, 2007, endorsed the candidature of David Mark and Patricia Etteh as Senate President and Speaker, respectively. Speaking in defense of the action by the presidency and the PDP, Mahmud Kanti Bello[[15]](#footnote-15), states that:

It is not a question whether I support or reject whatever, we are party people and the party did not just do this alone, we are the people who accepted it this way. The party gave reasons and it should be so for everyone who supports the ranking policy in the Senate rules. The rule is very clear, it should be ranking Senators and if the party in its wisdom decided to zone these things and advised, then why is somebody complaining? (*Thisday*, 31 May, 2007).

This imposition came in the wake of a call on the executive and the PDP to desist from imposing leaders on NASS by the then Senate President, Ken Nnamani. In his valedictory speech, the Senate President made veiled reference to the instability of the Senate, which he attributed to the executive meddlesomeness in the emergence of its leadership. He opines that:

I urge the leaders of our party, PDP and the President to allow the incoming Senators to determine who becomes Senate President so that the person will continue to enjoy the unflinching support I enjoyed for the past two years. In the last eight years the Senate has had five Senate Presidents. (*Leadership* 1 June, 2007).

According to David Mark, the incessant changes in the leadership of the Senate over the years, particularly between 1999 and 2007 has made it highly unstable. He contends that:

I believe that if I check from 1999 to 2007, I think some of the changes in the leadership that happened between 1999 and 2007 were totally unnecessary. They destabilized the Senate. Within that time, I believe the Senate Presidents were leaving their houses for National Assembly, not sure whether they will come back as Senate Presidents. That is not good enough for a leader (*Daily Trust*, 28 May, 2009).

Thus, it can be argued that executive interference in the choice of legislative leaders influenced the high leadership turnover in NASS. Accordingly, this trend affects leadership stability and poses serious challenge to legislative autonomy in Nigeria. However, from 2007 to date, the National assembly as an institution has relatively enjoyed some sorts of stability, especially with regards to leadership imposition, which in the past had been the source of friction between the executive and the legislature at national level. Except for Hon. Patricia Etteh, who was impeached as the Speaker of the House of Representatives in August, 2007, barely three months after her election, the post-Obasanjo era witness stability in the leadership of National Assembly. This is largely as a result of the character of Presidents Ummaru Musa Yar’Adua and Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. Both leaders cannot though be considered as non-interfering Presidents, they however play their cards with caution when relating to the National Assembly, especially internal affairs such as leadership determination.

This was obvious when President Ummaru Musa Yar’adua did little or nothing to interfere with the impeachment of Speaker Patricia Etteh, even when PDP and former President Obasanjo, the Chairman of PDP Board of Trustees was keen to protecting his anointed Speaker. The same can also be said of President Goodluck Jonathan who watched as members of the House of Representatives defied the directive of the PDP and the Presidency on the choice of the Speaker at inception in 2011. This is even more worrisome to the party and Presidency as the House obliterated the zoning arrangement of the party on leadership distribution. The election of Aminu Waziri Tambuwal as Speaker from the North-west as against a candidate from the South-west left South-west as the most disadvantaged geo-political zone and North-west the most advantaged (with Vice President and Speaker of the House of Representatives).

Given these trends, it can be argued that the Nigeria’s National Assembly functions under constant intimidation by the Presidency and the ruling PDP in particular. The culture of intolerance exhibited by the executive in its relationship with the legislature, has over the years and even now continues to undermine the autonomy and efficiency of the National Assembly. The first phase of Nigeria’s democratic practice (1999-2007) was the worst in terms of executive highhandedness and meddling in the affairs of the legislature. Obasanjo’s arrogant approach to the issues of separation of powers and checks and balances destabilized the institution but in a way also made it strong because of the institution’s continued resistance to executive dominance. This made the subsequent Presidents considerate and cautious in the way it relates with the National Assembly. Recent events show that the National Assembly is even more assertive than ever before. The recent probes of various executive agencies by the National Assembly (Fuel Subsidy, Aviation Minister etc) are all indications that the legislature is increasingly more assertive.

The recent development in the House of Representatives, where some members of the House defects to the opposition party of All Progressive Congress (APC) indicates that the presidency and the ruling PDP no longer control the affairs of the House and its members. The PDP is, as at now, not the majority party in the National assembly. The membership of the PDP now drops to 171 in favour of the main opposition party APC, which has 172 members. However, does this trend exist at the state level? Are state legislatures increasingly assertive or absolutely subordinated to the state governors? What is the role of political parties in the executive control of state legislatures? These are the issues discussed in the subsequent section

**Are State Legislatures Autonomous from Executive and Parties in Nigeria?**

At national and state levels, executive-legislature conflicts are noticeable and constitute one of the major challenges of democratic governance in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic. However, the executive-legislature conflicts at the national level seem to be the most widely discussed and referred to, by both scholars and political commentators. Whereas, the nature of the crisis at state level is more endemic and injurious to democracy, compared to what obtains at the centre. The pattern of power tussle between state governors and the State Houses of Assembly is somewhat different from the crisis between the Presidency and the National assembly. While in some respects and most often the National Assembly demonstrated some level of assertiveness in its relations with Presidency and sometimes even against the position of their political parties, the state legislatures are almost entirely controlled by state governors. Some of the factors that account for overbearing powers of state governors over the state legislatures include but not limited to governors’ control of political parties at state level, unlimited access to public funds of the state government, over reliance of state legislatures on executive bureaucracy and apparent lack of credible opposition at various state legislatures in Nigeria.

From 1999 to date, composition of state Houses Assembly shows a trend of one party legislature across various states. Except for instance, the elections in 1999, which shows some mixture of parties represented at various state legislatures, subsequent elections depicted one-party legislatures in many states of Nigeria. This is more or less connected to the role of the state governors in the control of the party machineries (candidates’ selection) and indeed their ability to fund elections of their favourite candidates and parties in their states. Except in 1999 general elections, members of the state legislatures and indeed politicians wishing to be re-elected or elected in the state legislatures almost entirely rely on the support of the governors for nomination by the ruling party and the funding for general elections. This ultimately transformed state legislatures to mere appendages of the state governors, as most members are anointed and thus stooges of the governors. The table below shows the composition of the thirty six (36) Houses of Assembly in terms of party affiliation segregated into ruling and opposition parties after the 2011 general elections.

**Table 1: Showing Number of Seats won by both Ruling and Opposition Parties**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **States** | **No. of Seats Won by the Ruling Party** | **No. of Seats Won by Opposition Party(ies)** | **Total** |
| 1. | Abia | 24 (PDP) | NIL | 24 |
| 2. | Adamawa | 20 (PDP) | 5 (CAN & CPC) | 25 |
| 3. | Akwa Ibom | 25 (PDP) | 1 (ACN) | 26 |
| 4. | Anambra | 16 (APGA) | 14(LP, ACCORD, PDP & ACN) | 30 |
| 5. | Bauchi | 24 (PDP) | 5 (CPC) | 29 |
| 6. | Bayelsa | 21(PDP) | 3 (KP, LP & PPAP) | 24 |
| 7. | Benue | 21(PDP) | 9 (ACN) | 30 |
| 8. | Borno | 22 (ANPP) | 6 (PDP) | 28 |
| 9. | Cross River | 29 (PDP) | 1 (ACN) | 30 |
| 10. | Delta | 18 (PDP) | 11(DPP,UDP,ACN & ACCORD) | 29 |
| 11. | Ebonyi | 22 (PDP) | 2 (ANPP) | 26 |
| 12. | Edo | 19 (ACN) | 5 (PDP) | 19 |
| 13. | Ekiti | 26 (ACN) | 2 (PDP) | 28 |
| 14. | Enugu | 24 (PDP) | NIL | 24 |
| 15. | Gombe | 20 (PDP) | 4 (CPC) | 24 |
| 16. | Imo | 15(APGA) | 12 (PDP) | 27 |
| 17. | Jigawa | 29 (PDP) | 1 (ANPP) | 30 |
| 18. | Kaduna | 21 (PDP) | 13 (CPC) | 34 |
| 19. | Kano | 30 (PDP) | 10 (ANPP) | 40 |
| 20. | Katsina | 30 (PDP) | 4 (CPC) | 34 |
| 21. | Kebbi | 22 (PDP) | 2 (CPC) | 24 |
| 22. | Kogi | 21 (PDP) | 4 (ANPP & CPC) | 25 |
| 23. | Kwara | 22 (PDP) | 2 (ACN) | 24 |
| 24. | Lagos | 40 (ACN) | NIL | 40 |
| 25. | Nasarawa | 4 (CPC) | 20 (PDP) | 24 |
| 26. | Niger | 24 (PDP) | 3 (CPC) | 27 |
| 27. | Ogun | 18 (ACN) | 8 (PPN & PDP) | 26 |
| 28. | Ondo | 25 (LP) | 1 (PDP) | 26 |
| 29. | Osun | 26 (ACN) | NIL | 26 |
| 30. | Oyo | 13 (ACN) | 14 (ACCORD & PDP) | 27 |
| 31. | Plateau | 19 (PDP) | 5 (LP & ACN) | 24 |
| 32. | Rivers | 32 (PDP) | NIL | 32 |
| 33. | Sokoto | 30 (PDP) | NIL | 30 |
| 34. | Taraba | 20 (PDP) | 4 (CPC & ACN) | 24 |
| 35. | Yobe | 24 (ANPP) | NIL | 24 |
| 36. | Zamfara | 13 (ANPP) | 11 (PDP) | 24 |

Sources: INEC and African Elections Database <http://africanelections.tripod.com/ng_2011assembly>

The table above shows that most of the state legislatures in Nigeria are one-party dominated. Except for Nasarawa and Oyo states, where the ruling parties (the party that produced the governors) are in the minority in the Houses of Assembly, all the remaining thirty four (34) states are one-party dominated legislatures. The paradox in Nasarawa state stands out unique only on the account that the party that won election into the office of the governor capitalized on the unpopularity of the incumbent governor. Congress for Progressive Change only emerged as a party in the 2011 elections, while the ruling PDP was in power in Nasarawa states since 1999. The popularity of the CPC candidate undermined the executive might of the incumbent governor only as a departure from an endemic culture incumbency advantage. Thus while the ruling PDP lost gubernatorial election, it won twenty out of the twenty four state legislative seats. The remaining four seats were won by the CPC. In Oyo state, however, the slight numerical advantage gained by a combination of two parties Accord and PDP over the ruling ACN is also seen as abnormal trend in the state legislative elections. For one, PDP as a party have established structures and had one time won gubernatorial elections in the state. In seven states of Rivers, Sokoto, Abia, Yobe, Osun, Lagos and Enugu, the ruling parties in the respective states won all the available legislative seats in the state. This is consistent with the dominant powers of the state governors generally and their overwhelming influence in elections in particular.

Other relatively abnormal curve in the above table are states in which opposition parties won considerable number of seats in the legislatures. In Anambra state, APGA won 16 out of 30 seats while Accord, LP, CAN and PDP shared the remaining seats among them. This is so because PDP as a party was well established before the crisis that wrecked the party after the 2003 general elections. In Delta state, PDP won 18 out of 29 state legislative seats while the opposition parties (DPP, UDP, CAN and Accord) shared the remaining 11 seats among them. In Kaduna state, the popularity of the CPC, especially being the resident state of its Presidential candidate (General Muhammadu Buhari) led to the party’s remarkable performance by wining 13 out 34 seats of state legislative seats. In Imo and Zamfara states the incumbent parties were defeated by the opposition parties in gubernatorial elections, which account largely for the near equal representation of the two parties in the legislature. It should however be mentioned that in Imo state, PDP won majority seats 16 against APGA with 11, but 4 members elected on the platform of PDP defected to APGA immediately after they were sworn into the office.

In Zamfara state on the other hand, the incumbent governor, who was initially elected under the platform of ANPP defected and contested elections under the platform of PDP but was eventually defeated by the most popular party in the state. It however won 11 out of 24 state legislative seats. Thus the dominant trend of having a one-party dominated state legislature has contributed immensely in undermining the autonomy and capacity of state legislatures in Nigeria. This in addition to the fact that most of the candidates in the dominant parties are selected for elections at party level only with the support of the governors and their elections nearly funded wholly by the governor. Even when the opposition parties control state legislature in certain abnormal circumstances, the governor has the tendency of buying off the opposition members and sometimes even influencing them to defect to his party. The example of the Imo state legislature is a case in point.

However, for an in-depth examination of this phenomenon, three state legislatures (Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states) are selected as the focus of this study. Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states are in the North-west geo-political zone of Nigeria. The three states shared a lot of things in common. Until the partition of the former Sokoto state in 1991 and 1996, as a result of state creation by the military governments of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha, the three states were formerly known as Sokoto state. The three states are predominantly homogeneous with Hausa/Fulani as the dominant ethnic groups and Islam as the major religion of the people. Except for Kebbi state, which has some percentage of ethnic minorities and Christian population in Kebbi South Senatorial District, the three states are considered to be in the core northern Nigeria (predominantly muslim and Hausa/Fulani).

Politically the three states are traditionally described as conservative, mainly supporting the dominant political party in the core northern Nigeria. For instance, the three states were stronghold of the defunct Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) in the First Republic, National Party of Nigeria (NPN) in the Second Republic, National Republican Convention (NRC) in the aborted Third Republic and the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) at the inception of the Fourth Republic. Recent developments however, saw massive defection of the political elite from the states from ANPP to ruling PDP and back to APC with the exception of Kebbi state. Given this trend, what is the party composition of the members of the three selected state legislatures? What is the role of the executive governor in the control of parties, candidates’ selection and elections generally? How does the party composition of the legislatures affect the capacity and autonomy of the institution to function as co-equal of the executive arm of government? And finally are the legislatures truly autonomous of the executive? These constitute the major puzzles to be addressed in the subsequent discussion. To begin with, the following table shows the composition of the Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states Houses of Assembly in terms of the dominant and opposition parties’ representation from 1999 to 2013.

**Table 2: Showing the composition and party affiliations of members of Sokoto. Kebbi and Zamfara States Houses of Assembly from 1999 to Date**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **States** | **Period** | **Ruling Party(ies)** | **Opposition Party(ies)** | **Total** |
| **Sokoto** | 1999-2003 | 21Seats(APP) | 9 Seats (PDP) | 30 Seats |
|  | 2003-2007 | 30 Seats (ANPP) | NIL | 30 Seats |
|  | 2007-2011 | 22 Seats (PDP) | 8 Seats (DPP) | 30 Seats |
|  | 2011-2015 | 30 Seats (PDP) | NIL | 30 Seats |
| **Kebbi** | 1999-2003 | 15 Seats (APP) | 9 Seats (PDP) | 24 Seats  |
|  | 2003-2007 | 24 Seats (ANPP) | NIL | 24 Seats |
|  | 2007-2011 | 22 Seats (PDP) | 2 Seats (DPP) | 24 Seats |
|  | 2011-2015 | 22 Seats (PDP) | 2 Seats (CPC) | 24 Seats |
| **Zamfara** | 1999-2003 | 17 Seats (APP) | 7 Seats (PDP) | 24 Seats |
|  | 2003-2007 | 24 Seats (ANPP) | NIL | 24 Seats |
|  | 2007-2011 | 24 Seats (ANPP/PDP) | NIL | 24 Seats |
|  | 2011-2015 | 13 Seats (ANPP) | 11 Seats (PDP) | 24Seats |

Sources: INEC, Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States Houses of Assembly

The table above shows the composition of the three selected Houses of Assembly and the party affiliation of members from 1999 to date. Across the three states, there were dominant and opposition parties in the Houses of Assembly from 1999 to 2003. In Sokoto state for instance, APP won the gubernatorial seat and 21 out of the 30 seats of the state legislature. The opposition party, being the PDP won the remaining 9 seats. In the same way, Kebbi state House of Assembly from 1999 to 2003 was constituted with two major political parties. The APP, which was the party that won the gubernatorial seat, also secured 15 out of the 24 legislative seats in the state House of Assembly. PDP on the other hand won the remaining 9 seats. Given this distribution, the APP stood as the majority party and the PDP as the only minority party in the state legislature. Similar trend was also emerged in the Zanfara state House of Assembly from 1999 to 2003. APP won the gubernatorial and 17 out of the 24 legislative seats, while PDP was victorious in the remaining 7 state constituencies.

In this context, it can be argued that the party distribution of members in the three legislatures is fairly reasonable to guarantee some sense of opposition and scrutiny of the executive in the legislature (Interview, Muhammad, 2013). The fear that minority voice in the House could expose any form of misconduct by the ruling party was good for transparency, accountability and probity in the management of public affairs (Interview, Mummuni, 2013). Accordingly, the three Houses of assembly were vibrant and the executive, particularly the governors are always on their toes. In Kebbi state for example, there were a lot of intrigues and pressures from the opposition party against the ruling party in the legislature (Interview, Abubakar, 2013). Thus in terms of performance, it is widely believed that the three states performed fairly better in the first four years of democratic inception (1999-2003) than the subsequent periods of less or zero opposition in the legislature. This was the period in which the governors tried to silence the opposition either by their score cards or various intrigues such as gratification, political incentives and intimidation of various sorts.

However, in the build up to the general elections in 2003, the executive governors realized that their dominance in the state could not be guaranteed with sizable number of opposition parties in the legislature. The three governors, like in other parts of the Nigerian states deployed all their power politics to ensure that their state legislatures are parked with their loyal party members. Thus, they were central in candidates’ selection within their parties. Other tactics used included rewarding popular politicians in the opposition parties with political incentives such as appointment and/or giving them tickets automatically to contest elections. Given the enormous resources they controls, most people and politicians believe that it is difficult to win elections at state level without the support of governors. Thus after the 2003 general elections, the three Houses of Assembly in Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states were parked with legislators from only one party (ANPP) as shown in table 2 above.

In Kebbi state for instance, four of the incumbent state legislators on the platform of PDP defected to the ruling ANPP before the general elections. The said members were given automatic tickets in their new party and returned elected as members for the second term under different party. In Zamfara state, two of the opposition members also defected to the ruling ANPP and were returned elected for the second consecutive term under a different party platform. In Sokoto state, however, there were no incidences of defection of incumbent members but all the legislative seats were won by the ruling ANPP. Given this trend, the three state legislatures in question had only ruling parties. The opposition were outdone by the overwhelming powers of the executive governors. During the electioneering campaigns, it is normal to hear the executive governor or his representatives promising or delivering at some moments, particularistic goods to constituents such as project lunch, appointment for their sons or daughters or giving out cash and materials in exchange for support and votes during elections. The opposition parties on the other hand could not guarantee these benefits to electorate. This way, the executive governors become increasingly powerful and dominant in electoral politics.

In 2007, however, there were some political events that shaped the process of candidates’ selection and electoral contestations in both Sokoto and Kebbi states. In Sokoto state, the governor and his deputy fell apart. The then incumbent governor Alh. Attahiru Bafarawa clearly opposed the candidature of his deputy, Alh. Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko to run for the position of governor under the platform of the ANPP. This in addition to the fact that the governor himself was in conflict with the national body of the ANPP. After court cases and fruitless attempts to settle the crisis that wrecked the ANPP, the then governor of Sokoto state dumped the party and registered another party, Democratic Peoples’ Party (DPP). The deputy governor of on the other hand remained in the ANPP. Given this internal wrangling within the state government, the state legislature was also divided between those loyal to the governor and those symphatetic to the deputy governor. Attempt by the governor to get his deputy impeached was not successful. After several mediations and intervention by elders in the state, particularly the former president of Nigeria, Alh. Shehu Shagari, the deputy governor was asked to resign his appointment, which he did. The deputy governor became very popular because of the maltreatment he was subjected to by the incumbent governor. In addition, the governors of Kebbi and Zamfara states supported the candidature of the former deputy governor, given that the then governor abandoned ANPP. Because of the sympathy he received from the people and the support of the two neighbouring governors, opinion polls of the 2007 gubernatorial election in Sokoto state were in favour of the former deputy governor.

However, with barely less than two months to the conduct of 2007 general elections, the incumbent governor of Kebbi state defected to the PDP in an agreement that the governor will be given the slots for governorship, three senatorial seats and eighty percent of the seats of House of Representatives and state House of Assembly. The deal was struck with the governor in order to guarantee that the presidential candidate of the PDP (Late Ummaru Musa Yar’adua), who was from the North-west win elections in his geo-political zone. Eventually, there were trade offs between the governor and the PDP, which saw the governor controlling the proceedings of the PDP in the state. The then governor of Kebbi state, Alh. Muhammadu Adamu Aliero was also said to have masterminded the defection of the former deputy governor of Sokoto state from the ANPP to PDP under similar arrangement. His defection gave him the PDP gubernatorial ticket and more than eighty percent of the ANPP aspirants for National Assembly seats and state legislative seats.

At the end of the 2007 elections, PDP won all but two of the state legislative seats in Kebbi state. The dominance of PDP in the Kebbi state legislature, for the first time was mainly because of the defection of the then incumbent governor from ANPP to the PDP. Clearly, executive dominance played out as a major factor that influences the party composition of state legislatures in Nigeria. The election results in Sokoto state however contradicted the conventional trend of executive dominance. Thus PDP, which was in the opposition as at 2007 elections won 22 out of 30 seats of the state legislature. The remaining 8 seats were won by the ruling DPP. This was largely as a result of the fact that the party was only new and that the incumbent governor became unpopular as a result of the maltreatment of his deputy governor. The ruling PDP at the centre also contributed immensely in restraining the executive belligerence of the state governor. The use of security agencies and anticorruption agencies such as EFCC and ICPC in favour of the PDP undermined the dominance of the incumbent executive governor in Sokoto state. In Zamfara state, the then governor did not defected to PDP. Thus the ruling ANPP won all the 24 seats of the state legislature. However, the governor and the members of state legislature later defected to the PDP midway into their tenure. The governor was central to influencing the members to defect to the PDP. This is also an indication of the overwhelming powers and influence of the executive governors at state level.

The party composition of the three state legislatures after the 2011 general elections was also a reflection of the previous trends. In Sokoto state, the ruling PDP won all the 30 seats of the state legislature. The main opposition parties, CPC and ACN lost in the 30 state legislative constituencies. In Kebbi state, the ruling PDP also won 22 out of the 24 state legislative seats. The two seats were won by the CPC, which was the main opposition party in the state. In Zamfara state, however, power changed hands between the ruling PDP and the main opposition party (ANPP) in the gubernatorial election. The ANPP, which was in the opposition and virtually not represented in the state legislature, as at the period of general elections, won the gubernatorial election and 13 out of 24 legislative seats. The remaining 11 seats were won by the ruling PDP. The outcome of the election was abnormal and contradicts the conventional pattern state legislative elections in Nigeria. This is on the account that Zamfara state has been an ANPP state from inception in 1999. The PDP governor that was defeated in the gubernatorial polls was himself elected into office under the platform of the ANPP. He only defected to PDP alongside all the state legislators after his election in 2008. Thus the grassroots support of the ANPP played out in the 2011 general elections. This is in addition to the fact that the incumbent governor was at a loggerhead with his political mentor, the immediate past governor and an incumbent senator who mobilised against the PDP leading to its defeat in the 2011 polls. Even with fair representation of the opposition party in the House, indications are that the opposition members are also being controlled by the executive governor. An anonymous source from the state legislature suggests that members in the opposition party (PDP) are preparing to defect to the ruling party.

Thus the party composition of the three state legislatures from 1999 to date suggests that the legislatures have been one party dominant. Except in 1999, which had a mix of ruling and opposition parties wherein the incumbency factor was not decisive in determining electoral outcomes. The 2007 elections in Sokoto state and the 2011 elections in Zamfara state also contradicts the normal trend of incumbency advantage in electoral outcomes and the near one-party state legislative structure. In the two cases, the so-called opposition parties not only won gubernatorial elections but also won majority seats in the legislature. The ruling parties however won considerable seats as opposition parties 10 seats out of 20 in Sokoto state in 2007 and 11 seats out of 24 in Zamfara state in the 2011 elections. The battle for the control of state legislatures by the ruling party is borne out of the need to control the proceedings and roll call behaviour of the institution and the legislators themselves. The role of the governors in candidates’ selection at the party level and the funding of the elections by governors give them control over the institution if the legislature turns out as one-party dominant. This undermines the capacity and autonomy of the legislature to hold the executive accountable. Unlike in the National Assembly, where the presence of opposition parties makes the institution vibrant and sometimes assertive, state legislatures are mere appendages of the state governors. In law making for instance, the executive governors appeared to be dominant. The table below shows the number of bills passed by the three legislatures divided into executive and private member bills:

**Table 3: Showing Distribution of Bills Passed By the Three Houses of Assembly across Three Legislative Sessions**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **States** | **No. of Bills Passed** | **Period** | **Executive Bills %** | **Private Bills %** |
| **Sokoto** | 25 | 1999-2003 | 25(100%) | 0(0%) |
|  | 15 | 2003-2007 | 15(100%) | 0(0%) |
|  | 28 | 2007-2011 | 27(99.72%) | 1(0.28%) |
| **Kebbi** | 43 | 1999-2003 | 43(100) | 0(0%) |
|  | 24 | 2003-2007 | 24(100) | 0(0%) |
|  | 27 | 2007-2011 | 26 (99.73) | 1(0.27%) |
| **Zamfara** | 48 | 1999-2003 | 47(99.53%) | 1(0.47%) |
|  | 43 | 2003-2007 | 43(100) | 0(0%) |
|  | 35 | 2007-2011 | 35(100) | 0(0%) |

**Source: Authors’ Compilation from the official Documents of Three State Houses of Assembly**

From the table above the number of bills passed by the three Houses of Assembly from 1999 to 2011 are shown. In Sokoto state a total of 68 bills from 1999 to 2011. All the bills passed and assented to, by the governor are executive bills except one. In Kebbi state however none of 94 bills passed and assented to, by the governor is a member private bill. In Zamfara state a total of 124 bills were passed and assented to, by the governor from 1999 to 2011. Like what obtains in Sokoto state, only one out of this figure (124) is a private member bill. This picture shows a clear dominance of the executive, particularly the state governors in the proceedings of the legislature at the state level. The normal trend at the state is to keep the legislature under check by the executive and not the other way round. Thus as stooges of the executive governors, members of state legislatures are only expected to rubber stamp whatever proposals submitted to the House by the executive governor. Thus any attempt to critically scrutinize executive proposals by legislators is dubbed as opposition to the person and authority of the governor and could be punished politically. For instance, the member that sponsored the only private member bill passed in the Zamfara state was threatened with suspension from the House by the governor, which was almost actualised. In Sokoto state, the executive governor also influenced the impeachment of some principal officers between 1999 and 2003 on the account of disloyalty to the executive. Similar episode also occurred in Kebbi state in which the executive governor in 2010 influenced the impeachment of the Speaker and his Deputy on the suspicion that they are loyal to a rival political group in the state.

Another dimension to understanding the subordination of state legislatures to the executive in Nigeria is overreliance of the former on executive bureaucracy. Given the stunned growth of legislative institutions in Nigeria, as a result of frequent and prolong military rule, legislative bureaucracy remain relatively underdeveloped. Thus at inception in 1999, the legislature including the National Assembly relied on the executive for staffing. However, in recognition of the need for a separate bureaucracy for the legislature, as required by the principles of separation of powers and cheeks and balances, the National Assembly quickly passed an Act establishing the National Assembly Service Commission (NASC Act No.7 2000). This was done to guarantee the autonomy of the legislature and its capacity to independently generate data for effective scrutiny of the executive. In state legislatures, however the executive serves as the major source of manpower. Not until recently the state governors in Nigeria resisted the establishment of House of Assembly Service Commission, similar to what obtains at the national level. Thus the executive bureaucracy had for long been the source of manpower for state legislatures at state level. This has grossly undermine the autonomy and capacity of the legislatures to function as a separate arm of government. To a very large extent, these staffs serve the interest of their employers (executive), spying on the legislators and in some instances misguiding or sabotaging the legislators in the interest of the executive.

Thus in order to curtail the autonomy of state legislatures, the executive governors frustrated all efforts made build independent legislative bureaucracy. In the three selected states of Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states, the legislatures were for long being staffed by the executive arm of government. It was only in 2008 in both Sokoto and Zamfara states that the legislature succeeded in establishing the Houses of assembly Service Commissions and 2010 in Kebbi state. Before this period, the staff in the state legislatures are recruited, posted, transferred, promoted and disciplined by the state Civil Service Commissions. As a result, the staffs of the legislature are loyal to the executive and not the legislature as an institution. Given the centrality of legislative and technical support services provided by staff in legislative institutions, the control of this segment of the legislature by the executive translate into subordination of the former to the latter. For instance, the legislature needs quality and accurate data to scrutinize various executive proposals and activities. Thus to generate quality and reliable data, a source independent of executive must be relied upon. Indeed, the legislature must be provided with quality manpower that is dedicated, loyal and unique to the institution of legislature. In the three selected states examined, not until a few years ago, 2008 and 2010, the three legislatures relied entirely on the executive for staffing. Even with the establishment of the Houses of assembly Service Commissions, the three state legislatures still relied on the executive for posting of Directors of key departments such as administration, finance and the Clerk to the House of Assembly. The Clerk, being the head of legislative bureaucracy is a staff of the executive civil service. This alone is an impediment to the principle of legislative autonomy.

Given the above scenarios, particularly the dependent nature of state legislatures on the executive, the concept of separation of powers and checks and balances is in jeopardy. Often times, state legislatures are not well funded. Budgetary allocations are only mere rituals that are more or less not implemented. Budgetary allocations to the legislature are only released at the pleasure of the executive governor. The governor can decide to hold on the finances of the legislature without any explanation. The three legislatures studied show a trend of subservient relationship between the executive governor and the legislature in favour of the former. It was gathered that even as the legislators recognised the need to be bold and assertive, the tendency that most members may not be willing to act collectively in promoting the spirit of equality between the two arms of government undermines any frantic efforts at achieving legislative autonomy. Suffice to say that most of the legislators are agent and political godson of the executive governor. The governor is often seen as a godfather given his role in their selection as candidates for legislative elections and indeed his control over party structures, which can influence the removal and/or substitution any disloyal members in the forthcoming elections. Few instances of power tussle between the governors of and members of the state legislatures in Sokoto and Kebbi states shows that the governors overwhelmingly outweighed the legislators. The two instances saw the Principal officers removed from their positions and replaced by members loyal to the governors.

**Conclusion**

The phenomenon of executive dominance is traditionally entrenched and widespread across various forms political systems, the world over. However, the democratic framework of governance, to a large extent encourages interdependence of the executive, legislature and judiciary. This is borne out of the concern for probity, accountability, transparency and the need to entrench the principle of the rule of law. The concepts of separation of powers and checks and balances in a democracy are thus meant to curtail abuse of power and prevent tyranny by holders of political power. In spite of all forms of restrains entrenched in the constitutional and legal framework of governance in democracies, executive dominance is still seen as an obstacle to democracy. In Africa, prolong military rule and one party state has made executive dominance an established tradition of governance, which spilled over to the era of multiparty democracy. This syndrome has derailed the quality of democracy in the continent and reproduces many elected presidents as civilian dictators. Given this trend, the place of legislative institutions in governance process is construed as a subordinate of the executive. Many studies on African legislatures show that they play subordinate role as against co-equal institutions of governance. No where is this trend more obvious than at the sub-national level of Africa’s democracy. In Nigeria, particularly, state legislatures are seen as mere appendages of the executive governors. This is in spite of the constitutional powers granted to the institution to function as co-equal of the executive.

Findings from the studies of three selected state legislatures suggest that the executive governors are more or less patrons of state legislatures. Because of the inability of the legislatures to hold executive governors accountable, state resources are abused and misused to the advantage of the executive. Obviously, political parties at state level are run as private businesses of the executive governors. The governors remain the major source of funding for political parties. This way they control candidates’ selection process and elections generally. Because of the amount of financial resources in the care of governors, which are often abused, it is almost certain that political parties of executive governors win elections. Except under abnormal circumstances as the case of Sokoto state in 2007 and Zamfara state in 2011, incumbent governors are always at advantage in electoral contestations. Table 1 shows the trend of one party dominance in Nigeria’s state legislatures. Table 2 on the other hand shows the party composition of the three state legislatures investigated. Various sources indicated that the governor alone determines who run for legislative elections under the dominant party, which is the most advantaged. Given this members always act as agent of the governor in the legislature. Table 3 shows the number bills passed by the three Houses of Assembly from 1999 to 2011. Across the three legislatures all but one of the bills passed are executive bills. This is in addition to the fact that the legislatures relied on the executive funding and staffing. For almost a decade both Sokoto and Zamfara states relied on the executive civil service for staffing. In Kebbi state this trend stretched for over a decade. Given this trend, the executive governors will continue to overwhelmingly manipulate the process of governance with no concern for probity, transparency and accountability. Thus unless political parties are restructured and re-organized as people-centred with some mechanisms funding outside the state and independent of moneybags and godfathers, the legislatures at state level will continue to be under the strong influence and control of the executive governors.

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9. Ibid Section 58(5). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
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13. Pius Anyim Pius was the Senate President from 2000 to 2003. He succeeded Senator Chuba Okadigbo after the latter’s impeachment on the account of financial misappropriation. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Faruk Lawan is member is one of the longest serving members of the House of Representatives in the Fourth Republic. He was first elected in 1999 and re-elected in the 2003 and 2007 elections. He is currently the Chairman House Committee on Education. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
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