

INTRA-PARTY CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA: THE CASE STUDY OF PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)

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ABSTRACT

Party system is one of the essential tools for democracy. In all democracies, conflict is inevitable. This is true because democracy seeks the effective ways through which a society should be governed, borne not out of contest either internally or externally. Conflict results whenever two or more persons seek to possess the same object or occupy the same position and play incompatible means of achieving their purposes. What has the situation been like in the internal contest of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)? What are the factors responsible for intra-party conflict in the People Democratic Party? How do these factors affect Nigeria as it moves towards democratic consolidation and sustainable development? What is the way forward? These are the premises of this paper with an in-depth analysis of the concept by addressing the rate at which it occurs overtime. From all indications, it is observed that the parochial idea of the party stalwarts in the People Democratic Party is highly defective. The paper then maintains that there should be transparency in party financial administration and the imposition of candidates into any elective position should be abolished, among other ways forward. It then concludes that unless intra-party democracy is embraced solution to intra-party conflicts and total political violence in Nigeria will be a mirage.

Keywords: Party, Conflict, Democracy, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Sustainable Development

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria was until 1999, devastated with military rules. However, almost 14 years (1999-2013) into democratic rule and in spite of sustainable democratic government, peace and security have been threatened and difficult to achieve. To maintain peace and security, the role of political parties in the country is paramount. These among other roles include; democratic sustainability, maintenance of peace and security and serve as a unifying force in a divided polity. The general administration of election, despite sporadic minor setbacks, suggests that elections may not be a “fading shadow of democracy” or “without choice” (see Schedler, 2002; Omotola, 2010). One may be persuaded to contemplate the celebration of Nigeria’s democracy and doing that will amount to various misreading of the situation and an underestimation of the challenges of democratic consolidation by promoting democratic political culture and security, whatever push and pull, which are often much more daunting than the task of establishing it. Some core defies in Nigeria are difficult and tiring task of political conflict resolutions and internal democracy. This is because intra-party democracy is central to the maintenance of orderly society in any democracies. According to Scarrow (2000), democracy needs strong and sustainable political parties with the capacity to represent citizens and provide policy choices that demonstrate their ability to govern for the public good. With an increasing disconnect between citizens and their elected leaders, a decline in political activism, and a growing sophistication of anti-democratic forces, democratic political parties are continually challenged.

Political parties are crucial actors in representative democracies. Parties can help to articulate group aims, nurture political leadership, develop and promote policy alternatives, and present voters with coherent electoral alternatives. It has been observed in recent times that many political parties in Nigeria find it difficult to adopt an open system that will not only allow members of the party to participate in the decision making but also give them constrained opportunity to contest in elections under the party’s platform. This kind of socio-political restriction is poisonous and has resulted in party wrangling, acrimony and cross-carpeting in many Nigerian political parties. Is there intra-party democracy in Nigeria’s political parties? Can Nigerian political parties stand the test of time in maintaining peace and security, and consolidating democracy when assessed against their roles? These and other related questions are engaged in this piece with a view not only to understanding the depth of the crisis and contradictions of 2011 primaries and general elections, but also to mapping a viable path towards maintaining peace and consolidating democracy in Nigeria. The paper identifies the sources and reasons for intra-party conflict through the use of primary and secondary sources of data collections. It advances some means of tackling the menace, so as to pave way for smooth and free flow of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The paper concludes that until the country embraces intra-party democracy, conflict resolutions mechanism may not be effective.

CONCEPTUAL DISSECTION OF DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL PARTY: SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The literature on comparative politics in general and democratization in particular often paints a picture of a symbiotic relationship between democracy and party politics (Omotola 2008). Given the primary focus of this study, this is to examine ways to ameliorate intra-party conflicts in political party, most especially in PDP, to the achievement of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The democratic theory propounded by Joseph Schumpeter has been adopted as the framework of analysis. Schumpeter (1954) has propounded a more modern theory of democracy based on what has been widely referred to

as the liberal view of democracy (pluralist theory). According to Schumpeter (1954), the classical theory of democracy (in which it was stated that all adult males contributed to the making of public policy) was deficient to the point that it could not explain the concept of popular participation in modern terms. Schumpeter argues further that, at best, it was methodologically good for explaining behavior in small primitive communities, in which face-to-face relations prevail and political issues are simple (Lively 1975; Dode 2010). Others have argued that classical definitions of democracy are faulty because they picture conditions entirely absent in the real world (Lively, 1975). Going by Schumpeter's theory, for a system to be tagged "democratic", the rulers should be chosen by the ruled or their representatives. By this rule, one of the essential functions expected of the electorate in a democracy is that of producing the government. Schumpeter argues further that once this has taken place, the democratic voter is expected to respect the political division of labour by leaving decisions or issues (in government) to the leaders whom they have elected (Schumpeter quoted by Lively, 1975). According to Lively (1975), democracy is a mechanism by which the political system maintains its equilibrium.

As a concept, democracy is a system of government characterized by the participation of the people through their freely elected representatives, by which the recognition and promotion of the basic rights of citizens, including the rights of vulnerable groups such as the minorities (Omotola 2008). This is basically has to do with the ability of the people to control decision making in line with Osaghae (1994) who argues that the central thing about democracy is to ensure that power actually belong to the people. Dahl (2000) pointed out two dimensions of democracy that, democracy in theory (as an ideal, goal, aim or standard) and in practices. This takes us to the concept of political party upon which democracy, both as a standard and practice, should rest ideally.

A political party on the other hand, refers to "any group of politically active persons outside a government who organize to capture government by nominating and electing officials who thereby control the operations of government and determine its policies" (Lemay, 2001). A political party is one of the political institutions in a competitive democracy. Political Parties serve as an index through which democratic governance could be compared in States, in that, the structure and operation of party politics in polities tend to serve as measuring rod for determining the fragility or otherwise of democratic systems (Omodia 2010). That is a situation where political parties are poorly structured to perform articulative, aggregative, communicative and educative functions, such a system is likely going to be associated with poor political culture which tend to make the democratic process so fragile. Conversely in a situation where political parties are well structured to perform articulative, aggregative, communicative and educative functions, such a system is often associated with participant political culture which tends to ensure a stable democratic process (Almond 2010).

In Nigeria, democratic process no doubt has been bedeviled with poor party politics as a result of not only ethnicization of party politics, poor political leadership, excessive westernization of the concept 'democracy', party indiscipline, lack of clear cut party ideologies, the politicization of the higher echelon of the military profession among others but also and worrisomely, lack of internal party democracy (Ntalaja 2000). The factors mentioned above, no doubt, escalated into the abortion of democratic republics in Nigeria and have persistently threatened the survival of the Nigerian emerging democracy.

Theoretically speaking, however, democracy and party politics are symbiotic in relationship. While the former has its defining elements as earlier enumerated, such elements are unthinkable without a viable political party system. Political parties are indispensable institutions of sustainable democracy and democratic societies. Based on this background, it is important to briefly examine the functions of political parties to further appreciate their inevitability on democratic consolidations.

POLITICAL PARTIES AS BUILDING BLOCKS OF DEMOCRATIC STABILITY

As Schattschneider famously asserted more than half a century ago, that the political parties created democracy and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the political parties (Schattschneider, 1942:1). This affirmation of the centrality of political parties for modern democracy is generally accepted both by contemporary scholars and by policymakers charged with fostering the development of newly emerging democracies or with improving the quality of democracy in established democratic polities (Biezen 2004). While parties were not necessarily seen as inevitable, let alone desirable, political institutions when they first emerged, they have now become firmly rooted in the established democracies and have rapidly acquired relevance in more recently established democracies in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world, to the point that they are widely seen as a *sine qua non* for the organization of the modern democratic polity and for the expression of political pluralism (Dode 2010).

Political parties perform a number of functions and serve building blocks in any political system. Some will be mentioned here to buttress their expected contribution(s) to the achievement of a democratically stable polity. Political parties are principal instruments for contesting elections, the election being staged to select candidates as well as parties to exercise political power or authority (Yaqub 2002). Out of the numerous functions of political Parties are expected to serve as instruments of political education, interest aggregation, political socialization, and political recruitment. Parties are also institutions that help organize, move or affect agenda of government. Almond (2000) argues that there are two major, but multifaceted, functions of political parties in any democracy. The two variables according to him are anchored on Input-Output functional variables and the historical method that provides a perspective background for discerning party politics vis-à-vis the problems associated with political instability in the Nigerian State (Omodia 2010). It is the basis of competently performing these roles that a political party can stand a good chance of displacing and, thereby, taking power from a political party currently in the saddle (government) be it intra and/or inter party politics.

Almond's Input-Output functions constitute seven functional variables which could be classified thus:

Input Functions:

- (i) Political socialization and Recruitment – This refers to the introduction of individual citizens into different roles in the political system, and also selecting them for membership into the political system.
- (ii) Interest Articulation – It refers to the process through which demands are injected into the political system.
- (iii) Interest Aggregation – It involves the formulation of policies in which group interest are combined, accommodated and more or less committed to a particular pattern of public policy.

(iv) Political Communication – It is the channel through which political information is transmitted among the different groups and between the governed and their rulers vice versa.

Output Functions

(i) Rule Making – This is the process through which laws are made. In a democracy, the legislature is basically charged with this function.

(ii) Rule Application – This involve the process of implementing laws and governmental policies. This function falls within the Executive Arm of government.

(iii) Rule Adjudication – This function lies within the province of the judiciary in the sense that the institution performs the basic function of interpreting laws that guides persons and institutions of the state

From the above theoretical background, the changing role of parties can be attributed to an ideational transformation by which parties have gradually come to be seen as necessary and desirable institutions for democracy, and that this has contributed to a changing conception of parties from voluntary private associations towards the political party as a ‘public utility’, i.e. the party as an essential public good for democracy. Recent cases of democratization, where parties were attributed a markedly privileged position within the democratic institutional framework, provide the most unequivocal testimony of such a conception of the relationship between parties and democracy. At the same time, however, fundamental disagreements persist about the meaning of democracy and the actual role of political parties within it.

In the course of preparing to capture state power and exercise authority in the future, the party must devote its attention to recruiting and training people to occupy political positions in the state. They thus, articulate alternative policies, while serving as legal opposition to the party in power. By performing these functions, it is expected that parties will reduce the incidents of anti-nation building factors like ethnic prejudice, intolerance and other “communal and cultural fanaticism, particularly in ethnically and culturally diverse countries like Nigeria” (Yaqub, 2002). Yaqub warns further that if such parties do not perform their democratic functions, it would not be possible, for instance, to recruit a broad section of the people of the country concerned into the party, nor, as a result, would it be capable of mobilizing and deploying resources to obtain majority votes in support of their programs.

ON CONFLICT AND INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY

The concept of conflict is the politics of power, a relationship between people in which some get others to obey them. One basic characteristic common to all human organization according to Dudley (1973:8) is the interaction and interdependence among their members. Conflict in this study is structured around two main hypotheses. First, conflict is inevitable in any society where people are denied their basic human needs for identity, equality, recognition, security, dignity and participation. This was obvious during the PDP last presidential primary election and convention. The second structure is that, conflict is likely wherever the performance of a government policy is biased in favour of a certain group.

Political parties are one of the institutions that carry out and actualize the democratic principles in any organized democratic society. They have to perform a number of 'institutional guarantees' to effectively discharge what is expected of them in any democracies. Intra-party democracy is one of the institutional requirements. Before a country can be sanitized and developed, there must be a number of internal sanitation and development in the prospective parties that look forward to form government in such society. According to Scarrow (2004), internal democracy describes a wide range of methods for including party members in intra-party deliberation and decision-making. Intra-party democracy is a very broad term describing a wide range of methods for including party members in intra-party deliberation and decision making. Some advocates for intra-party democracy argue, on a pragmatic level, that parties using internally democratic procedures are likely to select more capable and appealing leaders, to have more responsive policies, and, as a result, to enjoy greater electoral success. Some, moreover, converge on the premise that parties that "practice what they preach," in the sense of using internally democratic procedures for their deliberation and decisions, strengthen democratic culture generally. On the contrary and more realistically, we would agree that intra-party democracy is not a panacea: Some procedures are better suited to some circumstances than to others. Moreover, some procedures seem even to entail distinct costs, and there are stable democracies with parties that lack guarantees or regular processes of internal party democracy.

Nevertheless, the ideal of intra-party democracy has gained increasing attention in recent years because of its apparent potential to promote a "virtuous circle" linking ordinary citizens to government, benefiting the parties that adopt it, and more generally contributing to the stability and legitimacy of the democracies in which these parties compete for power. Unfortunately, the case of intra-party democracy in the People Democratic Party (PDP) cannot lay claim to democratic consolidation if it continues with the current mode of organizing her primaries most especially during the 2011 Presidential primary and the just concluded Party National Convention. Intra-party conflicts captures the reality of Nigeria's political parties because political parties had become useful for variety of tasks that required control or communication since political party was initially invented for more limited and self-serving purpose. Hardly a political system adjudged democratic without the central placement of political parties in its political process. This is because it is important and necessary for political parties to have intra-party democracy since political parties are the major vehicles for the expression of an essential feature of the democratic process. By extension, the fate of democracy and the nature of the political system itself lie in the health and resilience of the party system. The idea is that parties must be democratic not only externally in the operations, but also internally in the organizational functions. Those who emphasize the participatory aspects of democracy place the most value on intra-party democracy as an end in itself. They see parties not primarily as intermediaries, but rather as incubators that nurture citizens' political competence. To fulfill this role, parties' decision making structures and processes should provide opportunities for individual citizens to influence the choices that parties offer to voters (see Omotola, 2010:125-145). These opportunities will help citizens expand their civic skills, and inclusive processes can boost the legitimacy of the alternatives they produce. In this way, party institutions can perform useful educative functions while also transferring power to broader sector of society. The interplay and action existing between parties and democracies should show the parties' adherence to internal democratic structures. Intra-party democracy aims at developing more democratic, transparent and effective political parties. It identifies specific challenges in the internal management and functioning of parties and party systems. These include; candidate selection, leadership selection, policy making, membership relations, gender discrimination and party

funding. From this outcome-oriented perspective, parties' organizational structures should be judged above all in terms of how well they help the parties choose policies and personnel that reflect the preferences of their broader electorates.

All these require critical attention on the issue-areas such as: is internal democracy a selling point for parties or does it poses important dangers for parties with regard to internal cohesion? If the above question is answered correctly, then we will be right to assert that internal democracy enhances a viable democratic culture within the party as well as society at large. It has positive effects on the representation of ideas of the electorate and may strengthen the organization by attracting new members and creating space for fresh ideas. Another important effect of intra-party democracy in line with the assertion of Gosnell (1968) is that it provides necessary vertical linkages between different deliberating spheres and horizontal linkage between competing issues. The elements which are instrumental to intra-party democracy cannot be over-emphasized in having effective and working internal democracy. First and foremost, it involves in organizing free, fair and periodic elections of internal positions, as well as candidates for representative bodies. The second entails equal and open participation of all members and member groups in such a way that interests are equally represented.

THE BANE OF INTRA-PARTY CONFLICTS IN PDP

Party politics in Nigeria is associated with the pattern of colonial governance in the state. It could be recalled that decolonization as envisaged by the British in what later became the Nigerian State was viewed as a gradual process of constitutional transformations that would give greater freedom to the Nigerian people in form of participation in governance through partyism before the attainment of political independence. Thus, the nature and pattern of party politics during colonialism was to a great extent determined by the constitutional concessions permitted by the British Colonial System. For instance, while the 1922 Clifford Constitution gave birth to the first political party in Nigeria known as the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1992, party politics in the State was restricted to just two cities; Lagos and Calabar. The implication is that party democracy during this era was restricted to two cities, and even in the cities, franchise was restricted because of property qualification coupled with the fact that the system was purely one party system. However, shortly before the 1946 Richards Constitution, party democracy was widened with the birth of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) in 1934. As a result, Nigerians in the two cities of Lagos and Calabar had the opportunity of choice between the NNDP and the NYM. With the operation of the 1951 Macperson Constitution, the Action Group (AG), the Northern People's Congress (NPC) was registered and they became a major player with the NCNC in the march towards Nigeria's independence (Adigwe, 1997).

At the dawn of Nigeria's political independence in October 1, 1960, several manners of political parties have emerged. In the First Republic, there were parties like National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), Northern People Congress (NPP) and Action Group (AG). The Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP), National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Great Nigerian People's Party (GNPP), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), People Redemption Party (PRP) and later the Nigerian Advance Party (NAP), which was later registered in 1982, were formed in the Second Republic (Oshaghae, 1998; Omotola, 2010). Nigeria had Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC) during the abortive Third Republic. In the present dispensation (Forth Republic), a lot of political parties have emerged with PDP stands out in the sense that for over one

decade now, the PDP remains comfortably in charge of the government, while the opposition has continued to fragment into smaller parties with trifling electoral impact judging by the number of states they captured in 2007 and 2011 elections.

PDP came into being on the August 19, 1998. It was formed by a group called G.34 committee headed by Dr. Alex Ekwueme, the Second Republic Vice-President of Nigeria. According to Ojukwu and Olaifa (2011), PDP arose from three main sources. First, were the politicians who were denied registration by General Sanni Abacha (a onetime Nigeria Head of State) during his self-succession project. They later changed to G.34 Men, a committee that petitioned against the self-succession project against Abacha. The second sources of PDP are those politicians who were not opposed to the self-succession of Abacha and not also part of his machine. The group was known as All Nigeria congress (ANG) which was led by Chief Sunday Awoniyi. The third were those who were the followers of the late General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua under Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM). Chief Tony Anenih and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar (the former Vice-President of Nigeria) belonged to this group.

AN ILLUSION OF PARTY UNITY: PDP

Since May 1999, PDP has been the ruling political party. Although part of the PDP's dominance is attributable to Nigeria's use of the first-past-the post electoral model, this electoral system is not the only factor that makes it difficult for opposition parties to make any headway in the polls. In addition, a lack of party funding and the external and internal regulatory framework equally affect the performance of parties. Despite these realities, the weak point of the opposition parties is their failure to cooperate and form coalitions. Had opposition parties done this in the past, they would have won more constituencies from the ruling party judging by intra-party conflict in PDP.

To further dwell on the intra-party conflict in PDP, it is crucial to ask how intra-party democracy can be implemented. What are some of the ways of expanding inclusiveness in party procedures, and what are some of the practical considerations associated with such techniques? It is impossible to give a complete inventory of the many ways in which parties have sought to incorporate supporters within their basic decision structures, but it is a bit easier to outline some of the primary choices that parties must make when implementing the more common forms of intra-party democracy. These choices fall under three main headings: selecting party candidates, selecting party leaders, and defining policy positions. The following causes are essential challenges. There is no doubt that internal democracy has some challenges and these are obvious in PDP

Poverty of Party Ideology

Despite all pretences to the contrary through their manifestoes, as much as the superficial classifications as the "left" and "right", "progressive" and "conservative", Nigerian parties seem to be bereft of clear ideological commitments. Whatever the case, it is important to note that at the very heart of the success or otherwise of political party is the important question of political ideology (Omotola 2009). The issue of ideology has been so central to the activities of political parties across time and space that Morse (1896:76) has argued that ideology, being the durable convictions held in common by party members in respect to the most desirable form, institutions, spirit and course of action of the state, determines the natural attitude of a party towards every public question (cf. Iyare, 2004:81). Strickler and Davies (1996:1025) similarly argue that "ideology functions as planks", that is, single issue statements within the platform, the exact ideological orientation of which is often

used as a bargaining chip in seeking party unity. Here, the platform connotes a statement of the official party position on a variety of issues. Nnoli (2003:177-82) also concludes that ideology is a very crucial aspect of politics, not only by serving as a cognitive structure for looking at society generally and providing a prescriptive formula, that is, a guide to individual action and judgment, but also as a powerful instrument of conflict management, self identification, popular mobilization and legitimization.

It may, therefore, be correct to assert that the first and most important vehicle of a political party, under an ideal situation, should be its ideological stance. In reality, however, this is seldom the case. Perhaps, due to the shallowness of democratic roots especially in Nigeria and the developing countries as a whole, other force of identity particularly ethnicity and religion would appear to have taken the place of ideology. The rising influence of money politics represents another crucial limiting dimension (see, Nugent, 1999; 2001; Omotola, 2004). What is the situation with Nigerian parties? Put differently, do Nigerian parties have ideology? This conception has since changed and ideology has come to embody the ideas themselves. As a result of the changes, ideology has come to be presented as a subject representing two contradictory realities – the good and the bad, the former depicting ideology as “a system of thought that animates social or political action”, and the latter as a “misleading, illusory or one-sided criticism or condemnation” (cf Nnoli, 2003:178-79).

Ideology is like a superstructure upon which every other thing is built on. It consolidates political party. It precedes party structure, organization and manifesto. It is a set of ideas, beliefs and representations common to a specific social group. It consists of ethical interpretations and principles that set forth the purposes, organizations and boundaries of political life. One of the ways to assess the degree of internal democracy in a party is to ask who helps determine the content of the party’s electoral promises which are in line with party ideology. In the most inclusive of parties, individual party members may be asked to vote on specific policy positions. More usually, parties do choose the less inclusive option of asking party conference delegates to endorse a set of commitments prepared by a platform committee. Often, the deliberation process may be more open than the actual vote. Party policy committees may take pains to show that they are listening to different viewpoints, for instance by holding consultation meetings around the country or soliciting comments via local (wards), State National Executives or Internet. Similarly, party leaders may permit an airing of viewpoints during debates at party conferences (see Wayne, 2001).

The point of such open consultation is to demonstrate that the party’s policies have been developed in cooperation with the party’s members, who are presumed to be representative of the party’s most devoted supporters. Today, Peoples Democratic Party is functioning without an ‘identified’ ideology. The major question is what is the ideology of PDP? The PDP has capitalist and conservative dispositions without clear policy positions as a basis of popular mobilization and legitimacy of its (PDP) actions. Judging by their activities, it has been observed that “there is almost nothing to chose, between PDP and other parties in terms of ideological learning” (Iyare, 2004:92). Until poverty of ideology is addressed, problem of intra-party democracy will continue lingering in PDP and other political parties in Nigeria.

Party Funding

The crux of party funding and campaign financing against the background of the institutional designs guiding such activities in PDP is another fundamental reason for intra-party conflict in the party. Fisher and Eisenstadt (2004) argue that ironically, despite extensive studies on virtually all aspects of parties, financial issues seem to have eluded and escape the attention of academic researchers. For any political party to function effectively there is need for solid financial backing it enjoys from members. The importance of party funding is underscored by the contribution money can make in democracy and especially in developing economies where few elites control both the sources and distribution of money (Kura 2011). By implication, money more than anything, is a source of political power and political power in turn is a source of economic power. Little wonder, Karl Marx argued on the ‘materialist conception of history’, that it is the economy that serves as the foundation upon which is erected the superstructure of culture, law and government (Olaniyi, 2001:28).

The centrality of party funding is underlined by how it contributes to general crises affecting political party institutions. For example, Hopkin (2006) argues that the manner in which parties fund their activities has been quite embarrassing. The diversities of democracies as well as different typologies of parties suggest that party financing activities differ from one democracy to another and from one types of party to another. In contemporary clientele democracies, poverty, low level of education and general economic underdevelopment as well as the socio-cultural nature of such societies contribute to the “success” of clientelistic strategies of party funding. Perhaps, because of its complexities and susceptibility to corruption and absolute abuse, certain mechanisms are designed to regulate party funding. In 2002, the PDP campaign team organized a launching to boost the campaign for 2003 elections. In that event, over six billion naira was realized. At the end, the donors were compensated with contracts and political appointments. Looking at Anambra State chapter of PDP between 1999 and 2006, Chief Emeka offor and Chris Uba made the state ungovernable because they were one of the outstanding PDP financiers. Chief Emeka Offor not only tormented Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju, the then governor of Anambra State, but also dominated the running of the affairs of the State. The pinnacle of the ugly situation was the abduction of Dr. Chris Ngige (former governor) in July 2003 because Ngige opposed to the move of Chris Uba (godfather) to colonize the State. Interestingly, PDP did not bother to carry out any investigation or disciplinary actions rather Ngige was made to leave the party with ignominy. It will be correct to infer that PDP has been inadvertently hijacked by plutocrats and kleptocrats.

Selection of Candidate

Just like party funding, candidate selection and nomination procedures differ among democracies and among typologies of parties. The related question is: Who determines eligibility of party candidate(s) or leaders? This question tries to infer who keeps the definitive membership records and how do the leaders and candidates selected as the party flag bearers in any general election. In any case, candidate nomination, which in broader terms is synonymous with recruitment, is one of the important functions of political parties across democracies. In fact, many party scholars define a political party in terms of this function (See Sartori, 1976; Schlesinger, 1991). Generally, this is done by either locally or nationally. Katz (2001:277) notes that candidate selection “is a vital activity in the life of any political party. It is the primary screening device in the

process through which the party in office is reproduced. National party authorities may want to centralize this process, possibly fearing that local parties may be too lax in enforcing eligibility rules or that they may selectively enforce these rules in a way that will undermine the perceived fairness of the process. The method(s) which a party(s) employs in candidate selections and nominations has incontrovertible implications on those selected or elected and indeed how they behave in either party or public office (Gallagher and Marsh, 1988; Mainwaring and Shugart, 1997).

However, in some cases, particularly in Nigeria where there are “open” primaries, it may be civic authorities who are the de facto adjudicators of eligibility (in the sense that some selected or appointed party members across the country will be eligible to vote may participate). In fact, this may be one reason some parties find it attractive to use an open primary which PDP ‘purported’ to be using, because it avoids the potential difficulty of putting party authorities in a position to deny participation rights to those who might oppose them. With respect to inclusive candidate selection procedures, the main alternative to the primary election is selection at a party meeting. Recruiting candidates is a crucial task for parties. Parties’ profiles during elections and while in office are largely determined by how candidates are chosen and where their loyalties lie. It is important to ask who selects the party members that desire to contest in an election. What are the lay down processes for selecting a candidate in a party?

Whatever the way in which members or supporters are incorporated into the selection process, one important consideration is whether party rules limit their choices. For instance, some parties require that would-be candidates be approved by a party-selection board prior to being eligible to participate in party primaries or caucuses. In other parties, central party authorities reserve the right to withhold *ex post facto* the nominations of individuals selected in intra-party contests (Ponguntke, 1998; Scarrow, 2005; Omotola, 2010). Such rules are intended to ensure that candidates are well qualified as both campaigners and representatives of party principles. They can also make it more difficult for those who do not support party policies somehow to “steal” nominations and embarrass the party. Whichever way, it is the responsibility of the party to decide who is eligible to contest in the election. Selection of party candidates should be devoid of prejudices. This is a serious problem in PDP. 2003 and 2007 elections, were characterized by long legal battles most of which were caused by intra-party squabbles over nomination of candidates at the primaries by the PDP. A notorious instance of what happened between Rotimi Amaechi and Celestine Omehia as well as the Ifeanyi Araraume examples in Rivers and Imo states respectively readily come to mind in this regard. In 2007, Musa Yar’Adua was single handedly imposed on the party by Obasanjo as his successor. The act caused a lot of party faithful cross-carpeted and defected to another party. Atiku was forced to leave the party for Action Congress (now Action Congress of Nigeria).

Another striking example was what happened in Anambra State chapter of the PDP where Professor Charles Soludo was imposed on the chapter as governorship candidate for the state by the National Executive of the party. The act triggered a spate of petition writing. The effect brought about factions in the party and last minute cross-carpeting of some PDP members to another parties. The current imposition of Bamanga Tukur as the new PDP chairman is anti-core value of intra-party democracy. The imposition of Tukur was against the wish and consent of the people who had already voted Babayo ab initio as the representative from North East zone, where PDP had zoned it chairmanship seat to. Babayo won the zonal primaries

but when it got to the PDP national convention his victory at the zonal level was put on the back burner and he was shortchanged.

ZONING ARRANGEMENT

Another reason for intra-party conflict is the PDP convention that permits zoning arrangement of its offices. The zoning formula for the office of the presidency in PDP has divided the Party particularly between the North and South. Some members of the party majorly from the North argued that it was still the turn of the Northern zone to produce the president in 2011 election, other members, some from the North and majority from the South claimed that the death of Yar'Adua marked the demise of zoning arrangement in PDP. Some group in the party denied zoning formula in PDP. The first to brew the controversy was the former National Chairman of PDP, Prince Vincent Ogbulafor shortly after Jonathan was made Acting President that Jonathan was not eligible to contest the 2011 presidential elections. His position was based on Article 7(2c) of the PDP constitution, which defines how elective and party offices should be shared. Obasanjo who first benefitted in the zoning arrangement claimed ignorance of such arrangement in the party in an interview with the Voice of America. Alex Ekwueme, a founding member of the party and former Vice-President, debunked Obasanjo's claim. Although Obasanjo is the PDP Board of Trustees' Chairman and the first notable member to announce the eligibility of Jonathan to contest the 2011 presidential primaries of the party, but the zoning arrangement crisis was provoked when the former National Chairman Okwesilieze Nwodo declared the party's presidential primaries open to every qualified aspirants irrespective of their birth place because the party's zoning policy could be revisited and was non-existent. Dumping zoning policy was not only suicidal for PDP but also suggests that some politicians are using their advantaged positions in government to pervert democratic practice. The zoning arrangement in PDP according to Azazi (2012) is one of the reasons that hiking the level of insecurity in the entire country (see also, The Punch April 28, 2012).

Party Executive Arrogance

According to Angelo (1988), Parties dominated by a single leader generally construct their appeal around the popularity, perceived integrity, and sometimes financial resources, of that individual. This leader articulates and embodies the party's programmatic aspirations. The People Democratic Party in Nigeria democracy fit this description, either originating as or becoming (at least for a while) the vehicle for a single dominant leader (for example, the former president, Olusegun Obasanjo). In such parties, the leader may be self-selected (perhaps as the party founders e.g. the likes of Dr. Alex Ekwueme, Chief Tony Anenih, Late Gen. Shehu Musa Yar'Adua and Alhaji Atiku Abubaka), may be anointed by an outgoing leader, or may come to the fore as a result of demonstrated electoral appeal. He or she may gain the position with the formal endorsement of a party conference, but in practice the leader can dominate party decisions while holding a variety of formal positions within the organization—or even while holding none at all. Such parties may use local branches and party assemblies to mobilize support, but their main characteristic is that the power to shape the party's political direction is tightly held at the center. Intra-party crisis in PDP, without mincing words took its root in party executive since the birth of PDP in 1998. This affirms the saying that if the foundation of a building is faulty the building cannot stand well and if care and necessary action is not promptly taking, the building will collapse. The truth is that some PDP executives mostly at the National level believe that they can dictate the tune of the party at will. Between 1999 and 2007, Obasanjo took over the

affair of the National Assembly and feud with the major key actors of the party who were not ready to dance to his tune. Some of these personalities included; Audu Ogbah, Atiku Abubakar, Ibikunle Amosun, Tony Anieh, Orji Uzor Kalu among others. This led to decamping of many founding fathers of the party such as Ibikunle Amosun and Orji Uzor Kalu among others

Conduct of Primaries

The best way to test the tenacity and authenticity of any party's internal democracy is the conduct of primary elections. It has been proven from many studies that some primaries conducted in some political parties are sheer promotional agenda as they do not contribute positively to empowerment of the rank and file in those parties. Intra-party democracy can be questioned if party members are not aware about the choices they face. What happened in December 16, 2006 PDP's presidential primaries is fresh in memories. Researches reveal that Yar'Adua, the then Governor of Katsina State would emerge winner few days to the primaries. This was connected with the 'hide and see' games played by the power that be which resulted not only to quick and unexpected withdrawal of some aspirants like Peter Odili, Donald Duke and Sam Egwu from the race but also forced to support Yar'Adua's candidacy. Little wonder, the party submitted that it only adopted 'consensus' approach at the eleventh hour. Consensus exists when people agree on something and not forced to agree.

In line with the above, President Jonathan sent a bill to the National Assembly seeking for the amendment of the 2010 Electoral Act. He demanded for an amendment of Section 87(8) of the Electoral Act to allow the political appointees of the president and states Governors as delegates at party conventions and primaries. Findings reveal that the section in question may not permit the President and Governors an important cheap figure of votes from political appointees. Interestingly, the House of Senate rejected the bill on the ground that it was laden with 'toxic provisions' (The Punch Editorial, 2010)

CONCLUSION: THE WAY FORWARD

This paper has examined the intra-party conflicts in the PDP. These include, non-adherence to party ideology (if it has one), non-transparent of candidates' selections in primary elections as well as in party leadership executive positions, the executive arrogance within the parties which have not only torn PDP apart but also occasioned the decampment of many party stalwarts. To check the undemocratic attitudes in Nigeria's political parties the following way forward are important

- a. There should be regular meetings of parties' National Executives. The regular meeting of the party stalwarts will help in checkmating the activities of the party in accordance with the party's constitution.
- b. Another way to ensure internal democracy in PDP is to have party structure that is highly institutionalized. The notion of party institutionalization may be invoked to cover a wide range of features, including a party's autonomy from other actors or a self-acclaimed or anointed leader. This will democratize the extent of its internal organizational development, and the extent to which supporters identify with the party and view it as an important actor (Randall and Svasand, 2002). In a more narrowly organizational sense, two key features defining the level of party institutionalization are the degree to which internal decision procedures are formalized, and the extent to which the party has coordinated structures throughout its target constituency (see also, Zabach, 2001). Low institutionalization tends to be a characteristic of newer parties (which PDP is not), primarily because it takes time to develop formal structures and develop a broad organizational network. But the obverse is not true; established

parties are not necessarily highly institutionalized. Similarly, parties with high degrees of intra-party democracy are generally highly institutionalized because they need rules that define who is eligible to participate and what constitutes victory in internal contests.

- c. There should be ideological commitments and transparency in party financial administration. Ideology often plays some role in shaping parties' organizational decisions. This can be seen most clearly in parties whose organizational forms are closely linked to their ideological identities. All party members must be aware and observe the party financial guidelines. This will prevent kleptocrats from hijacking the party.
- d. The imposition of candidates into any elective position should be abolished. The right of every member must be respected and preserved. Consensus candidature and selection of candidates must be played down at all level. Candidate emergence must be given constitutional backing instead of substituting such person for a candidate of selective approval.
- e. PDP should embrace the concept of reforms and review the zoning arrangement. Nigeria's Constitution of 1999 (as amended) is silent about any zoning formula. Therefore, the PDP should embark on genuine reform agenda majorly on the issue of zoning to allow improvement into the party and the entire country. The People Democratic Party should adopt a wide range of approaches to their internal organization, and they should constantly experiment with new structures and new procedures to cope with internal and external pressures.
- f. There is need to infuse a mechanism for social harmony and peace building. Any organization that lacks this mechanism may find it difficult to function effectively. This mechanism also represents the degree of social cohesion in communities and associational life, such as; social trust, tolerance, cooperation and mutual understanding, reciprocity and other networks of civic engagement that facilitate coordination and communication through which information about trustworthiness of other individuals and groups can flow, be tested and verified (see Putnam, 1993)

Finally, building effective party structures for intra-party democracy is an endless task. Healthy organization can and will adapt to changing circumstances. Be that as it may, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) must stick and attach much importance to the legal framework of election in Nigeria's constitution and the Electoral Act of 2010 since it is a critical starting point for conducting credible, sustainable and effective elections in Nigeria. In a country like Nigeria, where there is widespread of lack of expectation with politicians and parties full of detractions, and where there is growing interest in democratic self-determination. It will take responsive parties to rightly decide that they would be well advised to adopt more transparent and inclusive internal procedures. In such cases, the changes the parties make to benefit themselves may prove beneficial for the wider society—and for the stability and legitimacy of democratic institutions. Without intra-party democracy, government pronouncements to conduct free and fair elections coupled with sustainable development will be a mirage. Conclusive respects for the will of the majority for free, fair and credible elections must be guaranteed in other to get intra-Party conflicts reduced. Be that as it may, there is need for a truly Independent Electoral Commission that would not only concentrate on electorate matters, but which will also monitor the structure and operation of parties in terms of membership recruitment, party financing and party discipline.

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