

Assessment of the Causes and Consequences of Intra-Party Crisis in the Nigerian Democratic Processes and Development

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Abstract

Due in part to the absence of internal democracy inside the party, intra-party disputes within the All Progressive Congress have been a significant problem to address under the Fourth Republic. A variety of techniques for including party members in intra-party discussion and decision-making are referred to as internal democracy. According to some proponents of internal democracy, parties that use these processes are more likely to choose more competent and likable leaders, have better programs, and, as a consequence, have higher electoral success and a peaceful, rancour-free environment. However, the characteristics and trends of party politics, particularly in the fourth republic, have led to numerous disputes and crises that have beyond the boundaries of the political party and, as a result, intensified to the point of elections. Therefore, this study investigated the nature of intra-party disagreements inside the APC. What are the causes of disputes inside the APC party? More significantly, how do intra-party disputes affect Nigerian elections? Prebendalism, weakness, corruption, a lack of internal democracy, a lack of ideology, lingering crises, and overpowering complexities that prevent political parties from carrying out their noble duty of strengthening good governance were the backdrop against which these concerns were examined. Using both primary and secondary data, the study used a mixed research approach. Additionally, the study generated secondary data which were analyzed using content analysis, whereas the interview was analyzed using descriptive methods. Results indicated that intra-party disputes had intensified and impacted Nigeria's election management. Elections have resulted from the APC's inability to control the differences and contours among its members and diverse groupings. It also identified the main causes of intra-party conflicts in the APC, including a lack of transparency in the party's financial administration, a lack of clear ideologies, money bag politics, the use of offensive and unguarded language, the selection of candidates for general elections, the growing extent of political vagrancy based on selfish and local interests, the high level of party indiscipline and intolerance, and issues with leadership recruitment. The research suggested, among other things, that political parties be strengthened with a defined philosophy, openness, internal democratic ideals, and a robust and trustworthy crisis management system. Although the study comes to the conclusion that intra-party disputes give a political party a negative reputation and reduce its ability to win an election, it also emphasizes that disputes cannot be completely avoided in a large political party because such parties are likely to have a variety of viewpoints and interests regarding a political cause.

Keywords: *Intra-Party, Disputes, Democracy, Government, Politics, Elections*

Introduction

Political parties must actively participate in democracy. One of the fundamental instruments of a democracy is the political party. According to Adamu (2019), a democracy needs strong, enduring political parties that can speak for the people and make choices that demonstrate their ability

to govern for the good of all. According to Shively (2021), democracy as a system of governance seeks to realize the generally accepted common good by empowering citizens to propose and debate public policy problems and by granting agents the authority to implement the broad decisions made by the majority vote. Thus, in modern times, democracy has been described as the expression of the public will of the political community through elected representatives (Scarrow 2020). Political parties have long been the most significant intermediary institution in democracies. Students usually associate political parties with democracy (Orji, 2013). Some academics contend that political parties are essential to democracy and democratic societies because they have been romanticized as the "makers" of democracy (Omotola 2019).

Stated differently, the presence of active political parties is essential for the establishment of democracy in any given society (Eme, 2020). According to Oyovbaire (2022), a political party is an association of officials or would-be officials connected to a sizable portion of the populace; the main goal of the organization is to guarantee that its officials get or hold onto power. Parties are distinct entities that carry out a variety of interconnected tasks essential to the democratic system of government. Contesting and winning elections to gain control of the government, bringing together and representing social interests, and selecting and preparing political leaders who will take on a role in administering society are some crucial party functions. Conflicts between Nigerian political parties have persisted since before the country's fourth republic and continue to do so now.

Dode (2019) defines an intra-party crisis as a period of extreme pain, conflict, and suffering that develops within a political party due to the party's incapacity to effectively settle internal disagreements and conflicts. The Action Group leaders in the southwest had a conflict in 1962, primarily between Obafemi Awolowo and Samuel Ladoke Akintola. There was a dispute between Akintola and Awolowo as a result of their divergent political and economic philosophies. The fight between Samuel Ladoke Akintola and Chief Obafemi Awolowo during the first Republic resembled a political scenario in which post-colonial Nigeria had a serious political crisis due to the lack of internal democracy. The crisis that resulted from the disagreements between Awolowo and Akintola, who later formed an alliance with the Northern People's Congress, which was the center of government, was caused by Akintola's rejection and disapproval of Awolowo's persistent and oppressive influence over him, even as Premier of the Western region. Akintola eventually left the Action Group for his own party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party, or NNDP, after rising to the position of Premier of the Western Region. Babangida and his NNDP ruled for a short time as a result of this war (Akintola, 2021).

The AD and APP, the other two main parties, also followed this pattern. Depending on the level of government in the federal structure at which a party holds political sway—for the PDP, this was at the federal, state, and local levels—the souls of all the parties were essentially seated in the pockets of the political chief executives, leading to an even higher turnover rate during the second term, 2003–2007. For the AD, it was the six South West states—Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti—and this was only for the one-term period 1999–2003. This is because, starting in May 2003, the president, who is also from the South West, duped all of the AD's governors into signing a shady agreement that proved to be a massive political suicide. As a result, the AD nearly vanished from the political scene of the nation when the PDP took control of five states, leaving only Lagos, where Governor Bola Tinubu had shown incredible intelligence and refused to fall into President Obasanjo's political trap. Party members who are infatuated with party flirting and are looking for better political opportunities have a ready-made justification thanks to the crisis in the leadership of several chapters of practically all parties. Hence, defection, decamping, and cross-carpeting quickly became commonplace terms in Nigerian politics. These instances are now commonplace and affect all political parties. Furthermore, a minimum of 60 political parties emerged between the general

elections of 2007 and 2011, and around 25 of them were included on the ballots for the 2001 elections.

Politicians have shown no qualms about switching between political parties since the beginning of the current Republic, based on their perceptions of political advantage. Senator Evans Enwerem, the first Senate President in this administration, was initially the All People's Party (APP) candidate for governor of Imo State (Mbah 2019). However, he was unsuccessful in his attempt to represent his party in the general election that followed. Before the general election, he defected to the PDP when the party leadership offered him a senate position. In addition to being elected to the Senate, he was also pushed to the Senate Presidency by Chief Obasanjo's administration and the PDP's national leadership. In 1999, Alhaji Alhassan Shaibu left the All Peoples' Party (APP) in Plateau State for a very trivial cause and joined the PDP. In exchange, he was named a member of the Northern Nigeria Development Company (NNDC) by the President.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the intra-party crisis in Nigeria. A case study of All Progress Congress. The specific objectives are, namely to:

- i. examine the pattern and nature of intra-party conflicts in APC.
- ii. evaluate the factors that incite intra-party conflicts in APC
- iii. assess the effects of intra-party conflicts on elections in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to guide the study;

- i. What is the pattern and nature of intra-party conflicts in APC?
- ii. What factors account for or contributes to intra-party conflicts in APC?
- iii. What are the consequences of intra-party conflicts on elections and its conduct in Nigeria?

Research Methodology

A qualitative research approach was adopted in this study as it is appropriate for the variables investigated in the paper. The suitability of a qualitative approach for small samples and the fact that its outcomes are not quantifiable are two of its well-liked characteristics. The primary advantage of a qualitative research approach is highlighted by Collis & Hussey (2021), when they contend that it offers a comprehensive description and analysis of a research issue without limiting the study's scope or the type of participant responses. The researcher must, of course, have the expertise and agility necessary to fully analyze the case under study while employing a qualitative approach. According to Kothari (2023), a qualitative approach is predicated on the researcher's impressions and perceptions, who offers his or her subjective assessment of attitudes, beliefs, and actions. Instead of measuring, qualitative research concentrates on collecting written and spoken data. Most of the time, it is founded on the respondent's and the researcher's subjective judgments. Thus, the qualitative approach is appropriate for this study since it can effectively handle the research issue in line with the goals of the study.

Therefore, in order to gather the pertinent data required from the study population that makes up the study's scope, the researcher uses a mixed research design. According to Kothari (2023), a case study is a thorough and meticulous observational method of qualitatively analyzing a social unit that focuses more on the comprehensive examination of a small number of circumstances or occurrences and how they relate to one another. According to Freedman et al. (2019), a clear and well-written case study can disprove a well-established premise, despite reservations about its lack of a scientific feel. Because it emphasizes thorough contextual exegesis of a small number of events and/or situations and their relationships, this research endeavor has thus been centered on case

studies. In a similar vein, this design was selected due to its emphasis on the relationship between occurrences and comparable circumstances in other companies. In order to reecho the proper opium to cushion the causative agents of these internal party conflicts, this study considers a concrete analysis of the effects of intra-party conflicts on elections in Nigeria, paying particular attention to the experiences of the two dominant parties in the country, the All Progressive Congress (APC), at the 2019 general election.

This approach, which falls under the category of non-probability sampling approaches, selects sample members based on their relationships, knowledge, and skills related to a study topic (Saunders et al., 2023). Therefore, in order to delve deeply into the complexities of intra-party conflicts and thoroughly determine their detrimental effects on Nigerian elections, representatives of the chosen political party leadership (APC) two, INEC two, some members of election tribunals three, and some community-based organizations two have been sampled (totaling nine) in this study. This is because of their unique relationship with Nigerian parties and their relevant political experience, particularly with regard to the 2019 general election in Nigeria. Due to time, money, and staffing limitations as well as the fact that the stakeholders are better knowledgeable about numerous intra-party disputes and their impact on Nigerian elections, we have chosen to sample these stakeholders in particular.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Concept of Conflict

There are nearly as many definitions of conflict as there are authors who have written about it, and there is no agreement on what really constitutes conflict (Thomas, 2019). In spite of the fact that there are many different ways to define conflict, we will be looking at a few definitions in this section. Conflict is defined by Rubin et al. (2020) as a perceived difference in interests or convictions that the parties' present goals cannot be met at the same time. Due to its spillover impact, it may take many different forms, some of which may be violent and cause pain and suffering to both sides to the dispute as well as to others who may not be directly involved. Conflict, according to Wolff (2021), is a circumstance in which two or more actors pursue goals that are irreconcilable yet, from their respective points of view, completely right. According to Robbins (2020), conflict starts when one party believes that another party has negatively impacted or is going to negatively impact something that the first party cares about. In a conflict scenario, each party wants to accomplish their own ideals or objectives. Therefore, while they both fight for the valuable resources that are at issue, the parties to the dispute use movements and countermoves to push each other out.

Conflict also arises when people or groups become involved in the pursuit of opposing objectives. However, depending on how the persons involved view and react to the dispute, it may have either functional or dysfunctional effects. On the one hand, if the parties to a disagreement have a favorable opinion of each other, they will respond to the conflict in a good and constructive manner, and vice versa. Creative thinking, constructive development, understanding, and beneficial relationships between individuals and communities are all fostered by functional conflicts. Conflict is a technique for designing social relationships in groups and organizations for positive growth and enhanced productivity, which is why Tjosvold (2019) suggests that conflict may be seen as inevitable in successful companies. On the other side, dysfunctional disputes lead to divisiveness, impede growth and progress, influence decision-making, and foster hatred and hostility within or between organizations as well as between people. It is crucial that an effort be made to characterize intra-party conflict for the sake of this study.

From a political perspective, conflict is described by Lemay (2023) as a competitive scenario when both sides are aware that their potential future positions are irreconcilable and one side wishes to maintain a position that is incompatible with the other's wishes. The nature of intra-party conflict

is eloquently described by this term. However, the question of what intra-party conflict is still essential. When members of the same political party attempt to influence the party's decision-making process for their own benefit or pursue divergent political objectives, this is known as intra-party conflict. When choosing candidates for elected office, both inside and beyond the party, intra-party strife frequently manifests itself. As a social group, political parties are unable to avoid conflict since, whenever people congregate, even to pursue shared goals, there is a tendency for members to prioritize their own interests above those of the group.

Political Party

A political party is any group of politically active people outside of a government who unite to take control by selecting and electing delegates who will then govern and establish its policies (Kenneth, 2021). In democratic regimes, political parties offer a legitimate means of ensuring representation in elected posts. In essence, political parties carry out a number of tasks to guarantee the expansion and continuation of the democracy process. Political parties are the vehicles of representative democracy, per a 2010 study on institutionalizing political parties in Kenya by The Friedrich Ebert Foundation Centre for Governance and Development (CGD). They are essential to the realization of representative democracy in a number of ways. These include: a) representing the interests of society in the state (by serving in Parliament); b) educating political leaders about democracy and democratic participation; c) conducting political education and communication (by disseminating information that voters can use to choose candidates before them); d) conducting political mobilization and urging the public to vote in elections; e) recruiting political leaders; f) combining and expressing interests; g) fostering pluralistic discussions by putting forward alternative policy platforms; and h) integrating the various groups within a nation into a single, cohesive nation.

Similar to this, political parties serve a variety of purposes, including: i. combining and expressing the needs and issues that members and supporters have identified; ii. educating and enlightening voters and citizens about the electoral process and how political parties operate; iii. balancing conflicting demands and turning them into general policies; iv. energizing and mobilizing citizens to participate in political decisions and turning their opinions into workable policy options; v. directing public opinion toward the government; and vi. enlisting and preparing candidates for public office. Additionally, according to Almond (2000), political parties serve two main but complex purposes in any democracy. These purposes are based on input-output functional variables and the historical method, which offers a background perspective for identifying party politics in relation to the issues surrounding political instability in the Nigerian State (Omodia, 2020). The seven functional variables that make up Almond's input-output functions may be divided into two categories: input functions and output functions. Since the composition and functioning of party politics in politics tend to act as a yardstick for assessing the degree of fragility of democratic systems, political parties are typically used as a means of comparing democratic governance among states (Omodia 2020). Political parties are active and essential participants in the democratization process because of the various roles they play in the democratic system.

Concept of Intra-Party Crisis

Despite differences in organizational structure, philosophy, size, roles, and objectives, political parties are essential to any democracy. By organizing the political landscape, they serve as a conduit or agent between the people and the government, assisting voters in making decisions (Nnoli, 2022). Additionally, Omodia (2019) asserted that political parties are fundamental to democracy, serving as the vital conduit between the will of the people and the actions of the government. Depending on their perspectives and opinions, different scholars have given the idea of political parties a variety of meanings that range from exceedingly wide to extremely limited.

According to Dowse & Hughes (2017), political parties are organizations that are formally formed with the specific and stated goal of gaining and/or retaining legal control over the government's personnel and policies of a current or potential state. They can do this alone or in cooperation with other organizations of a similar nature. In contemporary nations, political parties play an important role in representative governance. The primary characteristics of democracy are, in reality, political parties. "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" is what a political party is, according to Lemay (2023).

In a competitive democracy, one of the political institutions is a political party. Since the composition and functioning of party politics in polities tend to act as a yardstick for assessing the degree of fragility of democratic systems, political parties provide a means of comparing democratic governance across states (Neuman 2023). Political parties must be democratic in their internal operations as they are vital parts of a democratic machine. After all, one cannot offer what one does not have. Therefore, in order to contribute fundamentally to any democratic arrangement and expedite the consolidation of democracy, political parties must have internal (intra-party) democracy (Alfa, 2017). Bozoki (2021) emphasized that although all political parties are organizations, they are not the same as disorganized citizen groups. Political parties vary from all other political groupings in society in that they are not solely responsible for creating and carrying out government policies. Party activities are related to the interests of society as a whole (Nnoli, 2022). Parties are defined by Matolsa (2018) in terms of their function in connecting governmental and social levels. It is crucial to note that conflict is inevitable in any human organization or group. Nonetheless, it is crucial that the interests of the organization as a whole take precedence over those of its individuals.

Causes of Intra-Party Conflicts

In a democratic system, a number of factors can be identified as the causes of intra-party conflicts. For example, Shale and Lawson (2022) identified the following: the concentration of power at the top (Rubin et al., 2024); the unequal distribution of resources (the leader's constituency receives the largest share); and favoritism (promoting one's family members). For example, the democratic process in Nigeria has been marked by poor party politics due to a number of factors, including the politicization of the highest levels of the military, ethnicization of party politics, lack of clear-cut party ideologies, poor political leadership, ethnicization of party politics, and indiscipline. More concerning, however, is the absence of internal party democracy (Ntalaja 2020). This research study will address a few key and crucial elements that lead to intra-party disputes. The factors are as follows:

Lack of Internal Democracy

One of the issues facing and impeding democratic consolidation in Nigeria's fourth republic is the absence of internal democracy (Abutudu, 2020). Political parties that allow its members to express themselves freely and take part in decision-making are said to practice internal democracy. It also refers to conducting business in an open, equitable, and just manner while adhering to established and accepted regulations. Political parties' internal party democracy also refers to the extent and strategies of including party members in internal party structure decision-making and discussion (Kari and Uchenna, 2022). Scarrow (2019) asserts that a variety of methods for including and enlisting party members in intra-party discussion and decision-making may be explained by internal democracy. In terms of choosing candidates for elective office, disciplining dissident members, running party congresses, and the general behavior of all party members, internal democracy describes the basic democratic principles within political parties and the extent to which these parties uphold these principles within their internal structures.

However, because Nigerian political parties lack internal democracy, it frequently leads to a situation where some influential and powerful elites want to force their own self-interest—or, in certain cases, their preferred candidates or their candidatures—on their party (Momodu & Matudi, 2013). According to Metuh (2019), one thing I have noticed in crisis-ridden states is that the governors tightly control the party structures, while other stalwarts have insisted that the party and the administration must be kept apart. Although the governors provide funding for the party, I disagree that they need to be in control of managing its operations. According to Andrea Ceron (2019), when factions choose to disregard established protocols, such as splitting during roll call votes or forming a new rival party prior to the election campaign, it has an indirect impact on party strategy and a direct impact on the entire party system. As a result, the fight for political dominance sparks disputes inside or across parties, which hinders Nigeria's democratic transition.

Godfatherism

Godfatherism is becoming a common occurrence and a key component of Nigeria's party structure. "A benign political accretion of the position of either political notables or dreaded political rascals who are recalcitrant to the deterrence of the legal regime," according to (Ayoade, 2018), is what a godfather is. According to Ogundiya (2019), Godfatherism is "an ideology which is based on the idea that certain individuals have considerable means to independently determine who clinch or get the party ticket to run for an election and who comes out victorious in an electoral contest". According to Ayoade (2018), Godfatherism is defined by cunning and undemocratic practices including bribery, brutality, and corruption that are used to uphold, defend, and fulfill the Godfather's desires.

Even in cases when there is no evidence that voting really occurred, godfather politics attempts to guarantee that the results are made public. It generally exhibits little moral constraint in its understanding of what behavior is suitable in a democratic political regime and plays electoral politics with disrespect or contempt for the established standards of conduct controlling the process. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that those deemed losers always contest election results, whether they are held at the intra-party or general election levels. Indeed, since 1999, the courts have intervened in each of the three presidential elections (Abutudu, 2020).

Party Funding

Strong financial support from the party's members is necessary for any political party to function effectively. The impact that money may have on democracies, particularly in developing nations where a small number of elites control both the sources and the distribution of funds, highlights the significance of party finance (Kura 2022). More than anything else, money is implied to be a source of political power, and political power is a source of economic power. The growth of internal party democracy can be significantly improved by the use of public funds (Mimpen, 2021). The allocation technique is a prerequisite to take into account. Public funds can generally be allocated in one of three ways: (1) equally to all (parliamentary) parties; (2) based on the number of votes cast; (3) based on the number of parliamentary seats; or any combination of these. While many other nations employ a hybrid approach, the majority of Latin American nations have chosen the second option (Griner, 2019). Poverty, poor educational attainment, and overall economic underdevelopment, together with the sociocultural makeup of these nations, all contribute to the "success" of clientelistic party finance techniques in modern clientele democracies. Perhaps some systems are in place to control party finance because of its complexity, vulnerability to corruption, and potential for complete misuse (Aleyomi, 2023).

Another major cause of intra-party strife within the PDP is the origins of party and campaign money against the backdrop of the institutional frameworks governing such operations. To strengthen their campaign for the 2003 election, the PDP campaign team raised six billion naira in 2002. Contracts and political posts were given to the contributors. Between 1999 and 2006, the PDP's Anambra State chapter was led by Chris Uba and Chief Emeka Offor, two outstanding and significant PDP financiers who rendered the state ungoverned. Chief Emeka Offor controlled the management of Anambra State's affairs in addition to torturing Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju, the state's governor at the time. When former governor Dr. Chris Ngige was kidnapped in July 2003 for opposing Godfather Chris Uba's plan to colonize the state, it was the height of the terrible scenario (Aleyomi, 2023).

Internal Conflicts in the All Progressive Congress from the Inception

Four political parties-the CPC, ANPP, ACN, and certain members of the APGA and PDP-came together to create the All Progressive Congress (APC) in 2015. The primary justification for this merger was the need to unseat the PDP, which had controlled the nation for sixteen years. In order to include their political views and interests that were not satisfied by previous political parties, the APC was founded as a result of internal disputes that were seriously destroying the foundations of these parties. With the domineering instincts of the elites, the self-serving interests of each of the parties that joined the coalition began to surface, which in turn sparked intra-party conflicts that have been growing within the All Progressive Congress over the past few years. This political party, as it were, was not perhaps formulated with specific ideologies that affected the necessary quality it deserved as a party.

In particular, denying party members the opportunity to compete as candidates was the root cause of several intraparty disputes. The difficulties associated with choosing the Senate President in 2015 sparked internal strife within the APC. The complicated interaction of forces, influence, and powers from influential people, groups, and aspects of the nation and the party led to an intense competition that forced groups like the new PDP to take over. This resulted in a new shift in the balance of power in the Senate, with Dr. Bukola Saraki as president, which went against the interests of the newly elected APC leadership and the presidency (Obiora & Chiamogu, 2020). Different viewpoints and attitudes were expressed when Dr. Bukola Saraki was elected as the new Senate President of the 8th National Assembly. The Kwara-born politician's political accomplishment was criticized by both APC leaders and members. After causing unanticipated conflict inside the party, certain groups started to oppose and reveal the party's illegal acts and inactions.

More precisely, these irate elements or factions of the party declared the conduct to be a disrespect to the nation's legal system when the party purposefully postponed its elective party congresses and conventions. The illegal extension of the party's National Working Committee's term was provocative because it caused inevitable disarray, which forced the Lagos State APC and Zamfara State Governor Abdulaziz Yari to quietly abandon all matters pertaining to the NEC. Consequently, a party member from Imo state in the southeast sued the APC to the Federal High Court in Abuja, requesting that it dismiss the party's National Working Committee, which was chaired by Chief John Odigie Oyegun (Ojo, 2018). The APC has undoubtedly struggled with crises in a variety of ways, particularly when the party intends to make a final choice on its leadership structure. In particular, compared to the previous elections, the way the party primaries were conducted in advance of the 2019 general elections caused more serious intra-party conflicts (Akhaine, 2019).

Due to its enormous numbers of followers and/or members and its demanding requirements for managing the vast number of party members across the nation, the APC was rife with internal strife and squabbling. Similarly, the elites' tendency to control all party decision-making, especially when it came to choosing leaders, led to another incendiary power dilemma for the party when it

came to the election of governors for several states. Due in large part to his alleged stubbornness toward the party's national leaders who asked for his total loyalty and subservience, the then governor of Lagos State was shockingly denied the party's ticket to run for a second term in 2019. However, the governor had since defended his position to ensure that the state remained free from the political influence and impositions of the APC's national leaders. Serious conflicts of interest arose in Imo, Rivers, Adamawa, Zamfara, Kaduna, and Ogun States as a consequence of the party leaders' desire to install certain candidates against the will of the general public or, in some cases, the incumbent governor. In addition to the formation of formations by some departing governors who were determined to fulfill their own and their preferred candidates' goals against party interests, the selection of state and national assembly candidates caused the most controversy and resulted in a large number of APC lawmakers defecting to the national assembly.

Discussion of Findings

In order to increase the need and rational ways of resolving the problems that cause internal strife, this research endeavor has been adapted to the consequential reality of intra-party conflicts on elections in the All Progressive Congress. It has focused on the ongoing chaos that has ensnared Nigeria's most prominent political party. As a result, the study identified a number of variables that contribute to intra-party strife inside the All Progressive Congress, namely the impact these factors have on electioneering. These issues are highlighted in the following main points:

Based on its goals, this paper has determined some conclusions. Therefore, we believe it is essential to match each of these results to its proper goal in order to support the fulfillment of the main goal of the study, which is to determine how intra-party disputes affect Nigerian elections.

Objective 1: to examine the pattern and nature of intra-party conflicts in All Progressive Congress

Finding: Party members of Nigerian political parties are always at odds, especially when prospective leaders (candidates) are forced upon them, despite the fact that disputes across social groupings are inevitable. To put it another way, a leadership problem arises in the majority of internal disputes within the All Progressive Congress because a president can serve as the party's deep leader. Governors also attempt to serve as the party's state chairman, which is completely against the Nigerian Constitution.

In other words, the elite use their influence and ability to force candidates on the party, while disenfranchised and resentful party members resist this pressure and question the illegal activities of the so-called moneybags, as their aspirations to run for office are snatched away. In the All Progressive Congress, intra-party disputes are essentially characterized by conflicts of interest; these are instances in which members of the party become completely at odds with one another in the pursuit of political objectives, while attempting to sway the decision-making process to benefit their own parties. To further magnify their voices and concerns in line with their political objectives, party members typically form their own factions.

Objective 2: To evaluate factors that account and incite intra-party conflicts in APC

Findings: The study finds that the absence of distinct party doctrines has contributed significantly to the prevalence of intra-party disputes in Nigeria. The rationale is that party programs and activities are intended to be governed by ideology. A political party's existence depends so heavily on its ideology that, among other things, a lack of it may result in internal conflicts and a lack of direction. Promiscuity and greed are viewed by Nigerian political elites as characteristics that undermine the party's welfare and political norms.

Intra-party disputes are created by a lack of internal democracy. This is evident when party leaders and elites, in order to satisfy their own desires, boycott the party's constitution, which strengthens democracy. Since it has been noted that choosing candidates for elective positions in general elections through party primaries typically leads to division or disputes within the majority of Nigerian political parties, internal democracy is most necessary when choosing candidates for elective positions both inside and outside of elections. Intra-party conflicts in the All Progressive Congress are fueled by a number of factors, including the ethnicization of party politics, an overabundance of Western influence on democracy, ineffective leadership, and a lack of discipline inside the party. Since political actors from other parties came together to establish the APC due to their diverse political goals, it is also found that the party's lineage is specifically linked to the inevitable internal disputes of the party. Therefore, it is necessary to compete for positions based on the ambitions of each of these political gladiators, who have come together from various affiliations and backgrounds, making it tough and complex to choose the best candidate to win an election.

As a political organization, the APC has a lot of ambiguous party policy stances, and when considering the ideological foundations of the various political parties in Nigeria, there is hardly any distinction between them. We discovered that political parties in Nigeria take a similar path when forming their ideologies because politicians frequently switch between parties and influence their new ones. As a result, they all use the same outdated approach and philosophy for party management, which may not be well received by many party members.

Objective 3: To assess the consequences of intra-party conflicts on elections and their conduct in Nigeria.

Findings: Conflicts inside the party compromise its reputation, which leads to the public's unfavorable perception of that political party. Because of this, people believe it is deceptive to encourage others to join or support a political party where disputes are rarely resolved, as doing so only serves to encourage corruption, dictatorship, nepotism, disintegration, and backwardness in the nation's developmental trajectory.

Well-meaning people are deterred from joining political parties in their whole since the majority of Nigerian political parties function on similar ideology entwined with internal strife and tyranny. Political parties, particularly the APC, are finding it difficult to field a credible candidate, which has cost them the chance to win the general election in 2019. Crucially, only when reconciliation committees are effective in reducing tensions caused by the atrocities that groups within a party are likely to perpetrate can decent and peaceful elections be anticipated. Stated differently, the study discovered that disgruntled party members who have planned and orchestrated splits inside the party take their internal disputes and complaints to the polls by conspiring to rig elections. Due to the lack of unity and unwavering allegiance among party members-which was stoked by the party leaders' political propaganda and candidate impositions-opposition parties, particularly the PDP, were hesitant to contest or petition the outcome of the general election.

According to the study, the overwhelming number of petitions and court proceedings filed by party members against the impositions of the party's leaders during the 2019 elections revealed a lack of internal democracy inside the APC. This therefore impacted the opposing party's moral entitlement to voice excessive grievances with the general election's outcome.

Most often, intra-party disputes create a negative perception of the political party, which undermines and/or sabotages the party's ability to win an election without the use of money politics or election tampering, as the case may be, because voters lose faith in such a party. If the strongest opposition party also struggles within, the government would be elected because they are trusted by the people, and the situation would continue to fester until after the elections.

Recommendations and Conclusion

This study highlights the impact of intra-party disagreements in the All Progressive Congress and makes the following recommendations:

Nigerian political parties must act quickly to bring their party philosophies to life outside of the office. The lack of party ideas in Nigerian political parties has been emphasized by several academics; nevertheless, this is not the issue because the parties' party constitutions explicitly outline their philosophies. Nonetheless, Nigerian political parties must always specify and carry out their party ideals in their political activities.

Internal conflicts should be brought up and resolved right away. When a contentious topic arises inside a political party, the party's leadership should decide when to bring the matter up and promptly call everyone to order. This will undoubtedly increase the electorate's and party members' confidence in their ability to support and identify with a reliable party. Conflicts that are permitted to persist for an extended length of time, however, become extremely painful for the party leadership to handle. Politicians who like cross-carpeting should be subject to strict rules and sanctions. In essence, these requirements ought to be included in the resignation of an elected post held by a person with such personality. Otiose crisscrossing, which is common among Nigerian political gladiators, will slow down as a result.

It is essential to ensure that internal political structures are created in a way that not only strengthens the party but also adequately positions it to satisfy the needs of the Nigerian populace. The rationale is that when political parties function properly, greater governance and the promise of democratic dividends for the general public follow naturally.

Finally, given Nigeria's current political situation, political re-engineering is very necessary. To achieve this, active and purposeful reorientation programs should be planned with the goal of teaching, illuminating, and informing party members, voters, and stakeholders about Nigeria's political system.

This study endeavor's overarching perspective is based on the observation that internal disputes among Nigerian political parties impact the nation's democratic process in a variety of subtle and evident ways. The overwhelming desire to seize political power at the expense of party doctrine and public support has been linked to the glaringly commercial views of politics held by the majority of Nigerian politicians. The tendency of other party members to form factions that will guarantee inclusion in its policies—a group that will not be unduly focused on the elite but rather on the welfare of all party members—has been a significant contributing factor to intra-party conflict.

Factionalization, on the other hand, is a syndrome that should not be promoted in a political party as it detracts from the party's appeal to voters and the general public, which in turn impacts how well the party does during electioneering. Furthermore, this study emphasizes that disputes cannot be completely avoided in a large political party since such parties are likely to have a range of viewpoints and interests on a political cause. Naturally, the fundamental principle of complete representation can be readily abandoned in intra-party disputes. Internal democracy must be maintained in order for political parties to fulfill a number of institutional guarantees that will enable them to perform above and beyond expectations.

Well-meaning and well-intentioned individuals may not join a political party and, as a result, well-intentioned people may not gain power, as this work demonstrates, unless the internal political operations of a party are commendable and alluring. This will quickly bring to mind the widely held notion that the worst among us are in charge of the finest of us. Since it has been noted that the selection of candidates through party primaries for elective positions in general elections typically leads to factionalization or conflicts in the majority of Nigerian political parties, internal democracy is most necessary when choosing candidates for elective positions both inside and outside of elections. Intra-party disputes in Nigeria are fueled by a number of factors, including the

ethnicization of party politics, an overabundance of Western influence on democracy, ineffective leadership, and a lack of discipline inside the party.

Conflicts inside the party compromise its reputation, which leads to the public's unfavorable perception of that political party. Because of this, people believe it is deceptive to encourage others to join or support a political party where disputes are rarely resolved, as doing so only serves to encourage corruption, dictatorship, nepotism, disintegration, and backwardness in the nation's developmental trajectory.

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