

PARTY-POLITICS AND INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA: A HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes party politics in Nigeria from the First Republic to date. Its input is that the dearth of intra-party democracy in Nigeria's political parties is not a recent phenomenon but is rather endemic despite the variations in scale and intensity. The paper drew its insight from the secondary data and personal experience and observations of the authors. Group theory was used to explicate the tendencies of political parties and their embracing or otherwise of internal democratic doctrines. The paper posits that there is profound lack of intra-party democracy in the operations of political parties in Nigeria and recommended ways of ensuring that intra-party democracy is enforced in Nigeria's political parties.

Key words: *Party Politics, Intra-Party Democracy, Democracy, Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

Political parties are associations formally organized with the explicit and declared purpose of acquiring and or maintaining legal control, either singly or in coalition with other similar associations, over the personnel and the policy of the government of an actual or prospective state (Dowse and Hughes, 1972). Strictly speaking, political parties occupy an enviable position in the representative government in modern states. As a matter of fact, political parties are the major hallmarks of democracy. The extant literature is replete with definitions and tenets of democracy and we do not want to rehearse it here (Dahl, 1971, Makinda, 1995). Since political parties are essential components of a democratic machine, it is imperative that they should be democratic in their internal operations as one cannot give what he does not have. This, therefore, makes internal (intra-party) democracy a crucial feature which political parties must possess in order to be able to make fundamental input to any democratic arrangement and speed up democratic consolidation (Alfa, 2011).

No universal definition exists of the concept of intra-party democracy, although many scholars agree on some basic principles of electivity, accountability, transparency, inclusiveness, participation and representation (Mimpen,ny). This "institutional guarantee" ensures that parties subscribe to and abide by the basic and universal tenets is what is referred to as internal (intra-party) democracy (Magolowondo,ny). A critical assessment of the emergency, growth and operations of political parties in Nigeria reveals that they have manifested apparent lack or inadequacies as far as the doctrines of internal democracy are concerned. This is definitely one of the major road – blocks to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. For Nigerian political parties to be able to make meaningful and effective contribution in the direction of genuine democratic sustenance and fast track

democratic consolidation, the need to imbibe the tenets of intra-party democracy, therefore becomes inevitable (Alfa, 2011).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The paper is anchored on the theoretical construct that "when groups are adequately stated, everything is stated" (Mbah, 2006). Like other political parties elsewhere, Nigeria's political parties have the vested interest in the pursuit and capturing of power to take a lead in the allocation of resources of the Nigerian state (Bentley, 1908, 1948).

It is instructive to note that Nigerian political parties are different groups that have at all times been engrossed in bitter rivalries both in government and in opposition thereby negating, their usefulness. The configuration of politics can only be understood through the dynamics of group interaction. Group theory has been criticized for glossing over the characteristics of individuals and for not considering the nation, the state and the society (Anifowose and Enemu, 1999). It also too vague in definitions of terms, like government and even some of the basic concepts of political science are not defined satisfactorily.

Criticisms of group paradigm notwithstanding, the theory remain a relevant tool in analyzing the life and pattern of political formations and dynamics in Nigeria.

PARTY POLITICS AND ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA IN RETROSPECT

Richard Sklar's (1963) account represents the most thorough singular account on party formation in Nigeria in the 1950s and early 1960s. Mackintosh (1966), Dudley (1974, 1982), Oyediran (1981) and Oyediran and Badeji (1989) among others bring the account up to the demise of the Second Republic. As these accounts show, Nigerian parties have largely revolved around favourite sons who parade themselves as the best people to articulate ethnic positions either in alliance with others or alone in opposition. Issues and ideology have always been secondary considerations, at best, despite the tags of conservatives and progressives, socialists and feudalists, populists and elitists and the like. If the Nigerian party system as it later emerged can trace regional pivot of its component parties to the NNDP, its tendencies to respond to ethnic pressures can be similarly traced to the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM). Originally, the Lagos Youth Movement which in 1939 became the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) was an open political organization. It was open in the sense that it attracted to its fold persons from the different Nigerian groups. Ernest Ikoli, an Ijaw by ethnic extraction, was a visible and active a founding member of the movement as was Samuel Akinsanya J. C. Vaughan and H. O. Davies. The initiation of Nnamdi Azikiwe into the movement broadened faster its ethnic scope (Kalu, 1964). The aspirational aspect of the movement reflected its national membership. The Nigerian Youth Charter' erected for the movement the ideal among others of bringing together the different ethnic groups in the country in addition to raising their collective awareness. As part of the practical approach towards its objective, the movement established branches in the Eastern towns of Aba, Calabar and Port Harcourt, in the Western towns of Benin-City, Ibadan, Ijebu Ode and Warri, and in the North in Jos, Kaduna, Kano and Zaria (Azikiwe, 1957).

However, the promise of the National front it held forth was not realized. In 1941, the NYM, to intents and purposes, shed its national character. Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Ibo members of the movement together with Samuel Akinsanya and the Ijebu Yoruba left the movement. The reason being that the non-Ijebu Yoruba had supported the victorious

candidacy of the Ijaw, Ernest Ikoli, to the legislative council over that of Samuel Akinsanya. This incident marked as much the coming event of the tribalisation of the National Congress of Nigeria and the Cameroon's (NCNC) which succeeded the NYM in nationalist appeal, just as it marked the interethnic disagreements that made the Action Group (AG) that was formed later the weak party it was despite its superior organization. The ethnic sentiment undermined internal democratic values of these parties.

The NCNC (1946-1966) was formally inaugurated on 26 August 1946 in Lagos. Some members of the Nigerian Union of Students had prevailed upon Herbert Macaulay and Nnamdi Azikiwe to rise to the leadership demand of the dispersed nationalist energies in the country to weld the heterogeneous masses of Nigeria in one solid block (Coleman, 1963). The nationalist reach of the NCNC was shown in its imaginative spatial links, its comprehensive of its leadership core, the universal causes it espoused, and in its somewhat mass character. Herbert Macaulay, the founder of the NNDP, was elected the president of the party in 1946 and the link with the generation that most members of the NYM fell in was established through Nnamdi Azikiwe who became the General Secretary of the party. The organizational affiliates of the party link it with an assortment that include literacy groups, social clubs, tribal associations, trade association, trade unions and athletic clubs in an imaginative mobilization scheme (Coleman, 1963). The leadership of its eventual radical core, the Zikist movement, was multi-ethnic in composition. The founders included an Edo, a Yoruba, an Ibo, and in time an Ebira, H. R. Abdallah became president of the movement. To be mentioned too is the remarkable Mallam Sa'ad Zungar from Bauchi who rose to the position of general secretary. The NCNC delegation to London in 1947 included Mallam Bukar Dispharima, a Kanuri, Chief Nyong Esien, an Ibiobio, P. M. Kale, a Bakwerri (in the present Cameroon Republic), and Mrs. R. Kuti, a Yoruba among others (Coleman, 1963). There was therefore a great degree of internal democracy in the NCNC as at that time.

However, the NCNC started gravitating towards the regionalist tendencies as from 1943 and especially in 1948 when Dr. Nnamdi was elected president of the Ibo State Union, an ethnic organization, and his speech the following year in that capacity dented his nationalist image. In a remarkable chauvinistic pronouncement, Azikiwe noted that "the governing of Africa has specially created the Ibo nation to lead the children of Africa from the bondage of the ages.... the Ibo nation cannot shirk its responsibility (Azikiwe, 1937). A statement such as this contributed with his pan-Nigerian and Indeed pan-racialist pronouncements as that which saw as African no matter where he was born whether at ... Zungeru.... Bathurst....Accra.... Tuscaloosa (or) Nairobi...." (K.W.J. Post, 1963). If the earlier statement motivated the Ibo state union to seek to bring the Ibo linguistic group into a political unit in accordance with the NCNC freedom charter, the latter succeeded in presenting Azikiwe still correctly as one of the great fathers of Nationalism. By 1959, the NCNC which had begun in 1946 as a promising national organization had been reduced to regional proportions and its support more reliably drawn from an ethnic group. These drift towards primordial cleavages made NCNC to negate the tenets of internal democracy in its operations.

There was a major cultural challenge to the nationalist promises of the NCNC and thus the Nigerian party system as it had then developed organizational roots in the formation of

the Action Group (AG) in 1951. From the onset, there was no room to doubt the biases of the AG (1951-1966). The document that announced the party's birth described it frankly as a Western Regional Political Organization, pure and simple (K.W.J. Post, 1963). The fact that the AG identified with just a part of the South, the West, was acknowledgment of the administrative division of the South into East and West in 1939. But even within the Western Region, the AG consciously cultivated a particular cultural group, the Yoruba, and their less distant kin groups who excluded Ibo speakers of the region. This deliberate exclusion, besides its regional bias is antithetical to the doctrines of intra-party party democracy.

The limited electoral successes of the AG in the West as in all of Nigeria – it lost to the NCNC in its regional base in the 1954 election – compared with the strength of the NCNC and the NPC in their respective regional bases may be attributed to its excessive cultural emphasis in a region that was not culturally monolithic and in a country where the region was neither the largest numerically nor the entire people culturally indifferent.

- i) In 1951, the NPC proclaimed itself a formal political party and true to its descriptive reference, its objectives were northern.

It is important to observe that the exclusive regional, emphasis of the NPC was a reaction to the Southern factor within the North as well. In 1948, Sir Abubakar T. Balewa, founder – member of the NPC as well as its most articulated spokesman, destined eleven years later to become the country's first Prime Minister, could still reason that: "Many Nigerian deceive themselves by thinking that Nigeria is one... this pretence of unity is artificial ... the Southern tribes ... now pouring into the North do not mix with Northern look upon them as invaders" (Whitaker, 1970). This aptly captures the picture of how the party structurally and practically circumscribed the principles of openness and equity and as such, hamstrung intra-party democracy from blossoming. Leadership is central to organizations. This is particularly true of political parties where the orientation and behaviour of leaders determine what the party will do. In underdeveloped societies such as Nigeria, where the masses are predominantly illiterate, the elites seem to have greater freedom in what they do, and are not necessarily responsive to popular feelings and aspirations. Politics in such societies is seen more as an elite game and a luxury to the masses. In short, the generality of the population are pawns in the elite game of politics. In such societies, if the elites can unite, they can inspire their followers to the same. If they fail to unite, they can become the centres for sectional affiliation. This was the Nigerian experience up to 1964.

Before 1959, the three major political leaders remained as regional premiers, leaving national politics to their lieutenants. Perhaps the main reason for this disposition was because internal self-government was granted to the regions while the central administration was still under the control of colonial officials. The effect of this behaviour pattern was that the centre was placed in the inferior position to the regions in terms of perception of effective power. The regions were seen as the real bases of power. Since the premiers depended on regional support for the exercise of power, they had to defend regional interests. Their attachment to the regions worked to the detriment of national integration. After 1959, the premiers of the Eastern Western Regions decided to enter federal politics. The leader of the NPC, the Sardauna of Sokoto, remained in the Northern

Region and left his subordinates as the national Prime Minister. This arrangement did not give national politics the prestige it needed at this critical point. Attachment to the federalist cause remained a matter of political expediency, and each party and leader aspired to control power at the centre, while maintaining their hold on their respective regions.

The three major parties at the time of independence in 1960 were each identified with a region in terms of support base. Despite pretensions, none of them was a national organization in the real sense of the term. Competition for power at the centre took the form of a contest among the regions with its gross disregard for the tenets of intra-party democracy in their modus operandi. In the 1959 election, none of the parties was able to secure a majority of seats to govern by itself. After protracted negotiations, the NPC and the NCNC agreed to form a coalition government. Alhaji Tafawa Balewa of the NPC became the federal Prime Minister while Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of the NCNC became Governor-General. Though, the task of this study may not necessitate a detailed account of the events that unfolded, the failure of the political actors to abide by the tenets of democracy and by implication, intra-party democracy must be noted. After the Western Regional Elections of 1965, the country descended into chaos. A day after the commonwealth Conference ended on 15 January 1966, a military coup occurred and ended the first Republic.

Structurally, it is obvious that the Nigerian party system violated conditions for political stability in the three-pronged party formation and the exclusiveness of their membership. As a consequence, there were no organizations with criss-crossing membership that could have acted as catalysts for national unity. With the three major parties entrenched in a region, Nigeria had what Etzioni (1965) has called a three-elite unit where each participant is constantly confronted with the possibility that the two (or more) others will form a coalition against him. This probability became a reality in 1959 when the NPC and the NCNC ganged up against the AG, and in 1964, when the NCNC and the AG grouped against the NPC. Such a setting has not always been conducive to national unity and integration. The rigid posture of the ruling party and its dictatorial tendencies alienated the Eastern, Western and Mid-Western Regions. The federal government became more a northern government. Likewise, in other regions, each party attempted to isolate its rivals from fair competition. Each region was in fact a one-party regime. The climate in Nigeria was one of mistrust which only the arrival of the soldiers helped to clear.

Nigerian political parties failed to build bridges across ethnic and linguistic lines and instead reinforced existing societal cleavages. They could not perform the integrative functions which political parties must perform if the federal experiments are to succeed. Understandably, therefore, the system collapsed, giving way to a long period of military rule. When the ban on partisan politics was lifted, associations sought registration as political parties. At the end, five political parties out of fifty political associations that applied for registration were given the nod to function as parties. These parties were the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP), the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), The Nigeria People's Party (NPP), People's Redemption Party (PRP), and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). From a plethora of analytical perceptions, it was generally accepted that with the exception of the GNPP all the other parties were to a certain extent, reincarnations of

political parties of the moribund first republic (Yaqub, 2002). Politics was therefore practiced not in tandem with the principles of internal democracy and universal standards but hinged principally on clientelism and prebendalism (Joseph, 1987). Consequently, the scope of electoral support par se may not necessarily bring about political stability and national integration. The experiences of the 1962 Action group crises as well as the examples in other states in the second republic are quite illuminating in this regards (Ollawa, 1989).

Apart from the break-up of the NPN – NPP accord, bitter splits occurred in the GNPP, NPP and PRP between 1980 and 1982 which seriously affected the stability of the party leadership and its support bases as well as the transactional relationships between individual legislators and their parties. Certainly much of the tension between the NPN and the alliance of the so-called progressive parties – UPN, NPP, and factions of PRP and GNPP which also spilled over into the operations of the National Assembly as evidenced by the unnecessary delays in the passage of important legislation including the revenue allocation bill, and the annual budgets, can be traced to the peculiarity of Nigerian party politics (Ollawa, 1989). The paradox of party politics in the second republic is that intuitional attempt to evolve a party system which would promote stable contest between parties presumably characterized by different programmes manifested in issue-oriented ideologies, which would work towards the integration of the people with the governing of the society, what emerged in practice was transactional politics based on opportunistic and informal networks of politicking replete with intra-party factionalism that constantly led to shifting of alliances, a situation which unavoidably supplanted the formal structures of party organization.

Preparatory to the 1983 elections, almost all the political parties circumvented internal democratic norms in nominating their flag-bearers. Even though Shagari did not exhibit readiness to re-contest early enough, ostensibly due to the zoning arrangement in NPN which fell into Zone 'B', a situation which made Chief M.K.O. Abiola to indicate interest to contest, early in 1982, Umaru Dikko, undoubtedly the most influential, confident of President Shagari, put the renomination machine of Shagari into motion. By May, it was possible for the national executive committee to favour the renomination of Shagari for a second term. In June 1982 the party planned a special convention to choose a presidential candidate. When nomination closed at 12:30pm on 5 June 1982, Shagari was the only candidate who had filed nomination papers. Umaru Dikko, alias "Mr. Fix it" was the main architect of this victory". Dikko, using a Hausa proverb warned interested candidates before the convention that 'a rich man should be content to remain a king's friend, rather than try to become the king himself. The day he tries to do so, that day people will show him his limits (the New Nigerian 12, June 1982, p.3). To that extent therefore, Chief M.K.O Abiola was frustrated in his ambition in flagrant abuse of normal provisions for the emergence of party flag-bearers and in outright disregard for the doctrines of intra-party democracy.

It is instructive to note that for the other political parties, the question of a presidential candidate was not a problem as only one candidate was in the running. On 9 December 1982, the national president of the UPN, Chief Obafemi Awolowo was unanimously nominated as the party's candidate at its fifth yearly congress in Lagos. He was also

recommended to the summit of the PPA meeting later that month, for adoption as the presidential candidate of the alliance. Nnamdi Azikiwe was chosen as the NPP presidential candidate at the party's fourth national convention in Port-Harcourt on 18 December 1982.

It is imperative to state that for the NPN and more so for the UPN serious attempts were made to seek the views of the members of the party in each state, senatorial district, and constituency on the candidate with the largest following for the various positions. This use or abuse of primaries caused serious cleavages in these parties in many areas and in particular in states where the party was in control of state administration. In some cases, the political parties were unable to heal the wound. Defection of aggrieved members to other political parties became the order of the day. For the UPN in three of the five states in which the party was in power, the deputy governors resigned not only their position but also their membership of the party to join the opposition party, the UPN. Suffice it is to say that the way the primaries for the 1983 elections were held created room for manipulation, particularly in the UPN States where the governor was also the chairman of the party. Even in the UPN states like Benue, Rivers, Kwara, where the governors were not the state chairman of the party, the primaries cannot be said to have been free of manipulation by the incumbent governor and his supporters as there were no recourse to strict adherence to the tenets of intra-party democracy. The mutilation of Nigeria's body politic is undoubtedly the proximate cause of the collapse of the second republic on 31 December, 1983.

Fourth Republic Political Parties

General Babangida who assumed power on August 27, 1985, imposed two political parties on Nigerians. The National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). The ward elections of 26 May, 1990 provided the political associations that had been forced underground the first new opportunity to ensure that their former supporter were elected. The open-ballot system of this election did not prevent the influence of the disbanded associations in the election of the ward officials and delegates to the local government level. (Nigerian Economist, 1990).

The local government level party and delegate elections took place on 16 June, 1990 but it was not until after the state congresses of the parties – on 7 July, 1990 – that the influence of the banned politicians and disqualified political associations started coming more clearly to the fore. In Lagos State, for instance, the role of Alhaji Lateef Jakande, the former second Republic UPN governor of the state, was reported to be strong in ensuring that Alhaji Muniru Baruwa (for PSP) Chairman in he state became the SDP chairman. (Newswatch, 1990:23 July). In Kwara State, Olusola Saraki, the multimillionaire Senate leader for the NPN in the second republic, had broken with the party towards the end of that republic. With the beginning of the formation of associations for the third republic, Saraki was said to have supported the L.C. When the L.C. opted for the NRC as a result of Babangida's intervention, Saraki's refusal to have anything with those having NPN roots saw him offer support to the SPD. Thus, the LC chairman who was reported to be Saraki's candidate became the SPD chairman after the state party congress of the SDP (Ibid). Although reported by a number of the national dailies, the event concerned was allowed to pass without its significance being

appreciated at the time. The new military heads of state, General Abubakar, had invited most of the country's most retired military generals for a special parley on his democratization programme and how best to move Nigeria forward (Adekanye, 1999).

Above other considerations, the military factor and the need to place the aggrieved South-West after June 12, 1993 presidential election annulment saga saw Obasanjo nominated as his party's flag-bearer on February 15, 1999 (Adekanye, 1999). Under the Abacha's transition programme, eighteen political associations applied for registration as political parties, out of which five were registered, viz: the Congress for National Consensus (CNC), the Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN), the Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM), the National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN) and the United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP). Particularly, the UNCP became the platform for actualizing Abacha's political gimmick. Along the line, the parties operated outside the confines of intra-party and democratic ethos as all of the then adopted Abacha as their presidential flag-bearer and negated the basic institutional requirement of intra-party democracy.

THE AUTHORITARIAN NATURE OF POLITICAL PARTIES, PRIMARY ELECTIONS AND DEARTH OF INTERNAL DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

Nigeria has been having a consistent democratic rule since 1999 but one thing that seems to be lacking is the adoption of internal democracy within the political parties. The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP), the Congress of Progressive Change (CPC) and the Action Congress of Nigeria are the major political parties in the country. The PDP, ANPP and CPC are considered as conservative parties while the ACN is seen as progressive in inclination. Political observers are of the opinion that no mainstream political party in Nigeria can honestly boast of a complete and sound internal democracy. While a progressive party like the ACN is expected to be people-oriented in its decision making process, the party has been a snub of internal democracy tenets and has been more or less reinforcing the theory of the party is always right even when majority of its members opposed the party's decision in the choice of candidates for elections (Esan, 2011).

In this section, four political parties are examined. They include the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN). These parties can be described as the leading parties in Nigeria in the contemporary era not because of the extent of their institutionalization, but based on the fact that they have contested and won elections at various levels of government despite certain metamorphoses at various level of government between 1999 to date. This is, however, not to suggest that they can be described as institutionalized (Tenuche, 2011). In the views of Saliu and Mohammed (2011), party institutionalization is the process by which parties become established, acquire value and enduring stability. Placed side by side the criteria for affirming party institutionalization – party age, count of splits and mergers, electoral stability, legislative stability and leadership change the leading parties have fallen short of institutionalized status. Party members also take more formal roles in administration like participating in internal polls for leadership positions or in selecting the party's candidates in upcoming elections. Such parties also work actively to enhance the role of traditionally, under-represented groups in their organizations". These policies,

procedures and processes usually result in positive public perception of political parties and consequently, in their electoral fortunes (Esan, 2011)

However, in Nigeria's young and often fractured political parties, ideological foundations and internal political cultures are largely non-existent or dysfunctional. The electoral structures are controlled by the party leadership and its candidates in public office; therefore, the role of these political parties during elections tend to focus, first and foremost, on winning the ballot and controlling the branches of government. Such partisan interests lead to elections fraught with violence and illegal practices, where voter intimidation, ballot stuffing, underage and multiple voting, and the absence or late arrival of election materials are the order of the day.

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)

In the conduct of the PDP Presidential primary election on 13th January 2011, it was alleged that there was apparent lack of openness and fairness in the primary which flagrantly violated the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended), PDP constitution and the PDP presidential primary election guidelines. The composition of the National Convention Committee, which had the overall mandate of planning and executing the primary election programme, was not made public until 72 hours before the convention. This violated paragraph 7(b) of the PDP Electoral Guidelines 2010. Similarly, the identities of members of the screening committee were also not released until 72 hours before the screening of presidential aspirants of 11 January, 2011.

The ground rules governing the primary election ought to have been agreed upon and signed by all the parties involved, and such an agreement should also have been publicized and widely advertised in the print media. This is stipulated in paragraph 8(b) of the PDP Electoral guidelines 2010. The agreement on the special convention ground rules would have been one major way to ensure that the primary election process was objective, impartial, fair and not programmed to produce a predetermined end. But the PDP leadership refused to be guided by these basic democratic norms. Also, the list of delegates who would vote at the primary election ought to have been published and widely advertised in the print media prior to the primary as spelt out under paragraph 8(b) of the PDP Electoral Guidelines 2010, so as to forestall the list either being tampered with or its integrity being substantially compromised. But the list of delegates was sighted for the first time by the other camp while voting was in progress.

No special congresses were held anywhere in the country for the purpose of electing the 774 special delegates who voted in the primary. Names of presidential functionaries, including Ministers and Advisers as well as trusted aides of state governors were merely compiled and passed off as national delegates. This negated the provisions of Part II (A) (i) of the PDP Electoral Guidelines 2010. Names of State Working Committee Members, Local Government Chairmen, etc were changed days to the primary election and known supporters of the president were allowed to vote in place of those disenfranchised statutory delegates. On the PDP presidential primaries, the BBC of January 14, 2011 reports the primary in these words, "in the language of Nigerian negotiation, the matter of whom the ruling Peoples Democratic Party delegates chooses as their presidential candidate for April's election is "settled". Cash has been dispensed; favours and gifts

have been granted; and political support given in return. Thousands of smiling P.D.P. members, their wallets swollen with booty are packing up to leave with the jamboree in the capital, Abuja that commentators call "the cash and carry primary." (BBC, 2011).

Congress for Progressive Change (CPC)

The Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) confirmed General Muhammed Buhari as its presidential flag-bearer for the 2011 elections. Buhari was sole candidate for the post and delegates gave him tumultuous ratification. In retrospect, in 2007 at the ANPP national convention, Buhari was returned unopposed when several other contenders stepped down "voluntarily". The Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) which is largely a splinter group from the ANPP did not control any state government until the current dispensation. It now controls Nasarawa State following the defeat of the PDP candidate former governor Aliyu Akwe-Doma by its candidate now Governor Tanko Almakura. The CPC primaries were also subjects of manipulations and litigation as was the case in Kano. In Jos, Plateau State. The ensued violence resulted in the killing of about six persons. (The Punch, 5 January 2011).

The CPC seems to be the most guilty of all political parties in the observance of internal democracy. The party got entangled in controversies over the choice of candidates for the April 2011 election. In states like Kano, Katsina and Bauchi to mention just a few, there was alleged imposition of candidates for the governorship race by the leadership of the party. Those who were alleged to have won primaries conducted by the party had their name changed for the favoured candidates by party leadership. This led to series of court cases that eventually cost the party (CPC) victories in many states.

Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN)

In selecting candidates for elective positions, the party most often either failed to adopt primaries or where the primaries were conducted, the outcome of such primaries were not strictly adhered to in choosing of candidates. In the build up to the April 2011 general elections, no primaries were conducted in the selection of ACN presidential candidates, as the party leaders just put heads together and picked former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu as its presidential candidate to the surprise of other presidential aspirants like former Sokoto State Governor, Alhaji Attahiru Bafarawa. The same scenario played itself out in the selection of candidates for various elective positions in all states where ACN fielded candidates. Perhaps the highest disregards for internal democracy took place in the Lagos State Chapter of the party during the build up to the October, 22 local government elections as there were protests of imposition of candidates by party members in almost all the 57 local government areas and the Local Council Development Areas (LCDA). Although a central primary was said to have been conducted at the party secretariat, the leadership of the party did not follow the outcome of the primaries in the selection of candidates for the election (Esan, 2011).

The ACN leaders, most especially in states where the party governs and where it appear to have high prospects of winning, collected various outrageous sums from prospective aspirants and thereafter refused to organize primaries, in most cases, for the different aspirants. One Mr. Seun Williams, an aspirant for the Lagos State House of Assembly seat

was quoted thus by the Independent of 20 January, 2011: "I can't count how many times I meet with members and supporters of the party since 2008, I spent my money gathering information from them and equipping myself with details on how to better their lot when I get to serve them in the Assembly. I have been assumed by the ACN members I would get their votes regardless of the party platform I contest under. He recounted that he won the 2007 primaries under the ACN platform but was asked by Tinubu to step down for Ademola Adegunle, now a lawmaker. "My feeling was that I would get back my mandate this year, but there were no primaries as far as am concerned. The party hierarchy cannot deny this fact".

The Vanguard of January 14, 2011 also fielded this report on the ACN primaries in Lagos state. "An INEC Officer on ground of anonymity spoke to the Vanguard thus: the candidates emerged under questionable circumstances. After you media was asked to leave the election venue, we were equally ushered out while the officers took the ballot boxes into a room. Later they came out a paper where the results were written and asked us to sign which we refused. It took the mercy of security personnel to see us safely to our cars and the result sheet is in our office and we have officially written our reports. The absence of agents for aspirants, which the party did not allow is the first indication that all is not well with the election".

All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP)

The ANPP has now become a shadow of what it was in 1998, at the beginning of the current civilian rule. At the moment, the party has been decimated by series of defections into the PDP and CPC – a direct political fall out of its opportunistic self-serving alliance with the PDP at the center. Despite the not too bright prospect for the ANPP in the 2011 elections, its primaries, particular in state where in controls or was active, were characterized by the same negative features prevalent in the PDP. For instance, only the very rich or those backed by the rich and or those who held political offices have been able to secure the party tickets across the country and of course, have created massive condemnations and resentment across the country amongst the party rank-and-file.

On Friday January 28, the ANPP governorship candidate in Borno State was gunned down in his father's house in Maiduguri alongside six other persons including a brother of the former governor, Ali Modu Sheriff. The former governor was of view that the gruesome murder was carried out by those who felt shortchanged in the party's primaries (The Punch, 5 January 2011). Harry Akande noted that he left the ANPP, a party he nurtured for 12 years and committed a lot of resources, because some people had taken over the party, using their wealth. He said; "I trusted the ideology of the founding fathers of the party. I have known ANPP to be a sectional party long ago. But I was very optimistic that we can change the party from within. But the last two elections convinced me that I was just banging my head of the rock. There are some people who have technically taken over the party. It looks like the party is now in the hands of what I have always called a cabal and they are not more than four or five people".

CONSEQUENCES OF THE LACK OF INTERNAL DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

The conspicuous dearth of internal democracy in Nigerian political parties since the emergence of the nascent democracy in the Fourth Republic has far reaching implications for the survival of the democratic project. As Tenuche (2011) aptly asserts: "the immediate fall out of compromised primary elections since the commencement of the Fourth Republic has been tragic for the democratic project in Nigeria". Some of these include the bitter conflicts between "Godfathers" and their "anointed political sons", gruesome murder of candidates, inter-party violent conflicts, carpet – crossing, ballot snatching and kidnapping and elongated judicial processes, that ended up annulling the election of those that claimed victory at the polls". The extant literature is replete with classical examples of political feud that sprout from refusal of political sons to stick to the terms of covenant between them and their godfathers such as that between Chris Ngige of Anambra and his godfather, Andy Uba during which Ngige was kidnapped, while serving as the Governor of the state – (2003 – 2007) (Tenuche, 2011).

In Kwara State, Governor Bukola Saraki and his father and godfather got engrossed in a well publicized political loggerheads as a result of the former's refusal to dance to the whims and caprices of the former in the choice of who succeeds him as governor of Kwara State. Also, in neighbouring Kogi State, accusations and counter-accusations of insubordination and political intrigues and horse-trading led to a stalemate between Governor Ibrahim Idris and the winner of the January 2011 gubernatorial primaries, Alhaji Jibrin Isa Echocho. Thus, when the tenure of five state governors including Kogi State were extended beyond May 2011, Governor Idris shifted his 'political blessing' to Captain Idris Wada in a rescheduled primaries in September, 2011 and Wada became victorious both in the primaries and the governorship election on December 3, 2011 (Alfa, 2011). This however, remains a subject of litigation (Ogundele and Bashir, 2012). Stolen primaries have also culminated in high rate of politically related killings (Tenuche, 2011, Omotola 2010 and Alfa, 2011). As Omodia (2009) captures "in Nigerian, just like most of the countries in Africa, elections especially its freeness and fairness constitute the central factor in ensuring democratic survival. This is because the lack of free and fair elections often tends to threaten the democratic process as a result of legitimacy question". This factor, no doubt, has characterized the democratic experiment of the Nigeria's fourth republic in that there have been persistent crises of legitimacy in governance arising from poor electoral system. This legitimacy crisis often dovetail into political wrangling of disturbing frequencies and concomitant vices of thuggery, assassination and abduction of real and imaginary enemies. (Omotola, 2009). For example, in Kwara State, supporters of the governor and the leading gubernatorial candidate were in conflict, leading to the killing of a state party chairman in August, 2002 and the bombing of a newspaper office in November, 2002. Some of the worst violence took place during the primaries of 2002 (Africa Action, 2003).

The inability of political parties to enforce or play politics according to the rules of the game both within the party and in the art of governance have turned politics to warfare. This has led to a legion of politically motivated killings across political parties. Some prominent ones include the assassination of Chief Bola Ige of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) while serving as a minister under PDP's government, Chief Harry Marshal, the vice

chairman of All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) now ANPP, South-South; Ahmed Pategi, Kwara State PDP chairman; Asari Dikibo, vice Chairman of PDP South-South, Luke Shigaba, Chairman of Bassa Local Government Area, Kogi State; Philip Olorunnipa, Chairman of the Kogi State Electoral Commission (Osisioma, 2007; Ogundiya and Baba, 2005, Omotola, 2010).

According to Azazi (2012), the escalation of the atrocities perpetrated by the "Boko Haram" sect especially in the Northern parts of the country is a corollary of the absence of Internal democracy in the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) zoning arrangement would have kept power in the North till 2015 but President Goodluck Jonathan used incumbency power to circumvent the arrangement (Alfa, 2011). Defection or cross-carpeting is also a major hallmark of absence of internal democracy in political parties in Nigeria. More often than not, politicians who feel short-changed during primary elections find succour in other political parties. After being deregistered in 2007, former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar found favour with the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) and flagged the party's ticket in the 2007 elections. He however, quickly dumped the ACN and re-joined the PDP. After the 2011 primaries of the ANPP, which produced Alhaji Ibrahim Shekarau as the presidential candidate, two frontline aspirants, Chief Harry Akande and Alhaji Dauda Birma defected to the ruling PDP (Alfa, 2011).

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The paper has unveiled, through the foregoing assessment that there has been and there is still abysmal lack of intra party (internal) democracy in Nigerian political parties. This has been a missing spoke in the democratic machine in Nigeria and circumscribes the efficiency and potency of political parties in their input to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Taking a look at the contemporary realities of Nigeria's party politics, to ensure that internal democratic doctrines, all activities and systems within the party should be guided by internal rules and procedures consistent with the expectations of party members and the legally established statutory organs; holding of democratic, periodic elections of party leaders, and a non-personalized leadership that willingly submits itself, to these periodic elections. Thus, the question of life chairman or life patron should never arise; internal debate of issues and democratized decision making; equal and open participation of all members in the decision making process in such a way that various interests are more or less equally represented, especially disadvantaged groups such as women and youth; transparency and accountability in the administration of the party; democratization of party funding, such that the party does not rely on a few wealthy individuals only for its financing, and equally fundamental, there should be the adoption of inclusive, democratic processes for the holding of party conventions, and the selection of the party's election candidates, that is, the use of primaries. A. strict adherence to these prescriptions will reposition Nigerian political parties and enhance their contribution to democratic consolidation in Nigeria (Okorounmu, 2010).

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