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**INTRA AND INTER-PARTY CRISES IN NIGERIA 'S FOURTH REPUBLIC:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY AND CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY  
IN POST THIRD TERM NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Political parties across the globe represent a significant avenue through which difference among individuals and groups in democratic societies are resolved. Also, they provide platform for occupation and succession of candidates to governmental offices. However, the history of political parties activities since 1999 replete with so much crisis that rather than furthering democratic ethos, have indeed become stumbling blocks to attainment of stable democratic order. The implication is that, if the original founders and party faithful are pushed to the wall, they would be left with no alternative but move en mass with their political structures to form new ones. How far the party leadership would go in mending fences would determine the fate of the parties and the roles they are expected to play in a democracy. This research therefore contends that there is a need for adequate grasp of the nature and dynamics of Intra and Inter-Party crises that have characterized Nigeria's Fourth Republic with a view to drawing lessons for a virile party competition that promotes sustainable democracy in post Third-Term Nigeria.

**INTRODUCTION**

The bigger the size of the family, the deeper the problems within. The above dictum seems to be the message the recent split of the ruling party and the major opposition parties at all levels are saying to Nigerians. Since their inception in 1998, 2002 and 2006, the parties have been battling one credible crises or another. In the past seven years, there have been a number of quarrels involving top chieftains and factions of the parties. For instance, if president Obasanjo did not have a misunderstanding with vice president Atiku Abubakar, there was a Skirmish between the former chairman of the party, Chief Audu Ogbe and some of the governors or members of the National Assembly.

For those who understand what is happening, it is time to go on and quite a lot of them have decamped and are teaming up with others to form new political parties in order to provide alternatives to Nigerians. This is, no doubt, a welcome development. According to Neumann (1954) political parties are the lifelines of modern politics and yet they have been the stepchildren of political theory if not of political practice. (1964) on the other hand posits that political parties lie at the heart of democracy, representing the crucial link between what citizens want and what government does. That is why parties are trying continually to change, adapt, and adjust to the popular forces of their time. They want to stay in touch with the voters so that they can gain control of government and the policy making process.

Nnoli (2003) explains: "political parties and party systems constitute an important mechanism used by some ruling classes to consolidate and advance their hold on power. Therefore, their nature and functions tends to conform to the ruling class interest in the survival and advancement of its system of domination. Thus parties and party systems vary in terms of their structure and function with the character of the ruling class and its system of rule..." (Nnoli, 2003:206). Democracy possesses an internal mechanism through which schisms among individuals and groups are resolved without such degenerating into violent crises. One of the means for resolving differences and conflicts in a democratic society is the political party. Today, a political party can be defined as a group of people who share a common conception of how and why state power should be organized and used. This idea is sometimes expressed in a different way.

when it is posited that a political party is an organization concerned with: (a) The expression of preferences regarding the emergence, and consolidation and use of state power, in other words about politics, and (b) Contesting control of the chief policy – making offices of government (Nnoli, 2003:207). In other words, parties regulate and resolve differences and crises especially between and among groups and individual contending for the leadership position(s) in a democratic polity. By this process therefore, parties are forces of democratization. According to Omitola (2003), the history of party politics in NIgeria is synonymous with crises. These crises have undermined the ability of political parties as platform for construction of sustainable democratic environment. The seed of such crises, it would be noted, was sown earlier with the parties organized to contest elective posts under the elective principle introduced by the Clifford constitution of 1923. since the trail blazing crisis that eventually led to the demise of the Nigerian Youth Movement. Party crises in Nigeria body polity has attained greater and violent dimension. Again, the fact that the present political dispensation has witnessed its own share of crises within and between the parties is a further pointer to the fact that time and space have not altered this plague in Nigerian polity (Omitola, 2003:143).

The objectives of this paper are:

- (1) To define and examine the theoretical underpinning of political party, inter and intra-party crisis and Crisis;
- (2) To find out the causes of intra and inter parties crisis in Nigeria's Forth Republic;
- (3) To asses Nigeria's Forth Republic Parties using the variables identified above and
- (4) To proffer solutions to the problems identified.

## **DEFINITIONS AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES**

According to International Encyclopedia of Sociology (1992), political parties have been defined both normatively, with respect to the preferences of the analyst, and descriptively, with respect to the activities in which the parties actually engage in. Normative definitions tend to focus on the representative or educational functions of parties which translate

citizens' preferences into policy and also shape citizens preferences. Parties are characterized as "policy seeking".

Schattschnider (1960), Key jnr. (1964), Lawson (1980) Schilesinger (1984 and 1985), Gboyega et al (1991), Agbaje (1997), Elekwa (2001), Nnoli (2003) and Onwudiwe and Suberu (2005) define political parties in terms of their role in linking levels of government to levels of society. Elekwa (2001) defines a political party as a body of men united for promoting their joint endeavours, the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed. As Burke posited, any serious statesman must have ideas about what sound public policy is and if he is responsible; he must avow the intention to put his policy into effects and seek the means to do so. He acts with others of like views and not allows private considerations to break his loyalty. They must hold together as a limit and refuse alliance or leadership incompatible on idea if great importance for the understanding and operation of constitutional government (Sabine and Thorson, 1973). In other words, "a political party is a group that seeks to elect candidates to public office by supplying them with a label – a party identification'- by which they are known to the electorates" (Wilson, 1992:138).

A political party is a group organized to gain control of government in the name of the group by winning election to public office. Note two things about this definition. First, it focuses on office seekers. Thus by implication it excludes from the party all those who see themselves primarily as choosers among parties, that is, electors. Second, the definition implies that office seeking itself has a dominant place in the direction of democratic parties (Schlesinger, 1984 and 1985). Also, Nnoli (2003) stressed that all political parties are organizations and, therefore, differ from unorganized groups of citizens. Party activities relate to the interest of the societies at large; and political parties differ from all other political groups in society by the fact that they do not only take responsibilities for actually formulating and implementing government policy (Nnoli, 2003, 207-208). Lawson (1980) defines parties in terms of their role in linking levels of governments to levels of society. She states, "Parties are seen, both by their members and by others, as agencies for forging links between citizens and policy makers". Beyme (1985) list four "functions" that political parties generally fulfill;

- (1) The identification of goals (ideology and the program);
- (2) The articulation and aggregation of social interests;
- (3) The mobilization and socialization of the general public within the system, particularly at elections; and
- (4) Elite recruitment and government formation (Beyme, 1985:13).

Descriptive definitions also share the observations made by Weber (1968), Schumpeter (1975) and Sartori (1976). They all agreed that parties are organizations of elites who compete in elections for the right to rule for a period. This paper employs a descriptive definition but also investigates how well parties perform functions described in the normative definitions. Thus, political parties are non-governmental institutions that organize and give direction to the masses political desires. Parties bring people who share the same aspiration

together and help them towards common goals. The clearest goal of any political group is power, power to control government and thus bring about one's policy preferences.

The following elements of the concept should be considered in any investigation of party development. All parties have:

1. A common symbol or label;
2. A group of leaders in office;
3. A group of supporters in elections and
4. An organization, however minimal (Hoadley, 1980:758).

Several theories have been put forth to explain how parties come into being (Duverger, 1959, Chambers, 1959, Lapalombara and Weiner (1966), Huntington, 1968 and Beynme 1985) the latter suggests three main theoretical approaches to explain the emergence of political parties: institutional theories, historical crisis, situation theories and modernization theories.

### **INSTITUTIONAL THEORIES**

Institutional theories explain the emergence of parties as largely due to the way representative institutions function. Parties first emerged from opposing factions in parliament. According to Huntington (1968), party development is a process taking place in four stages. Hoadley(1980), posits that in the first stage, factionalism, groups form in the legislature over a variety of issues and personalities. These factions are rarely organized and last for only a short time. In the second stage, mobilization, these factions are stabilized into more permanent legislative groups, which oppose each other over a broad range of issues. This coalescence into polar groups is frequently set off by a single issue of overriding importance or by the cumulation of several cleavages. In the third stage, expansion, the public is drawn into the process of party development, usually after the extension of suffrage. Electoral committees may arise at the local level to influence decision makers or may be created by office holders to strengthen their own positions. In either case, at this stage party affiliation become significant factors in the electoral process. In the fourth and final stage, institutionalization, a permanent linkage is created between the parliamentary group and its electoral committees. At this point some type of national organization should begin to direct and coordinate the party activities. Hoadley, (1980:757-758) maintains that continuity, according to such theories seem most relevant to countries with continuously functioning representative bodies like the United States of America, the Scandinavia countries, Great Britain and Belgium among others.

In criticizing this thesis Beyme (1985) posits that institutional theories do not explain developments well in some countries like France, Italy and Nigeria, because continuity of parliament has been absent, and its strength and independence has come repeatedly into question. The timing of the franchise is also relevant, but its effects are indeterminate because party system was often partly established before franchise was fully extended. Moreover, liberal bourgeois parties that help establish parliamentary government were often opposed to extending the franchise to the lower classes, while leaders like Bismark or

Napoleon III sometimes extended the franchise in non-parliamentary systems for tactical political reasons (Beyme, 1985:16) (see also Bernstein, 1990 and Roskin, 1992). Related to the above is the fact that voting laws and a late and sudden extension of the franchise sometimes, contributed to working class radicalism, because the lower classes were not slowly integrated into an existing party.

### **CRISIS THEORIES**

This thesis assumes that critical juncture in a country's history may generate new political tendencies or parties. Crisis theories are closely associated with the Social Science Research Council's project on political development led by Lapalo Mbara and Weiner respectively. According to SSRC Scholars, five such crises can be identified in political development: the crises of national identity, state legitimacy, political participation, distribution of resources, and state penetration of society. The sequence in which these crises are resolved (if only temporarily) and the extent to which they may coincide can affect the emerging party system. Berman and Murphy (1996) stated that the piling up of all five crises in mid-nineteenth century America contributed to the emergence of the Republican Party. According to them, in the last two hundred years, there have been only five political parties that have achieved and held in position in American politics for any amount of time. Of these five, only the Democrats and the Republicans hold such a position today.

From a slightly different perspective, Beyme (1985) identified three historical crisis points that generated parties. First; the forces of nationalism and of integration during the nation-building process often look on roles as political parties. Second, party system has been affected by breaks in legitimacy as a result of dynastic rivalries, as between legitimists, orleanists and Bonapartists in mid-nineteenth-century France. Third, the collapse of parliamentary democracies to fascism produced characteristic features in the party system of post authoritarian democracies: "a deep distrust of the traditional right" an attempt to unify the center right; and a split on the left between the socialistic and the communists: (Beyme;1985:19).

### **MODERNIZATION THEORIES**

This thesis posits that parties will not come into existence unless a measure of modernization has taken place. It also identified a check list of indices to include a market economy, and entrepreneurial class, acceleration of communications and transportation, increase in social and geographic mobility, an increase in societal trust, increase education and urbanization group in an orderly manner. It is the realization of this fact that political parties in the modern world are expected to resolve internal disputes (intra-party) and disputes between and among parties (inter-party) within the democratic process. In other words; a linkage exists between democracy and the resolution of conflicts and crises, which ensures amicable resolution of contestation among groups and parties without such necessarily resulting into violence. It is when individuals, parties and groups, refuse to avail themselves of the opportunity offered by democratic process into the resolution of conflicts and differences that what often follows is the use of extra-democratic means of settling differences and conflicts

such as violent clash, kidnapping contestants, arsons, political assassination among others (Omitola, 2003:144-5).

In the view of the above, Omoruyi (2001) concludes: "that the political parties in Nigeria are still in search of role, hence since 1999 the role of political parties in Nigeria is still fluid. In many cases the so-called political parties since 1999 have become a major part of the problem in Nigeria..." Omoruyi (2001:1). Lapalombara (1966) and Weiner posit that the emergence of parties requires one or both of two circumstances: a change in citizen attitudes whereby they come to perceive a "right to influence the existence of power", or some group of elites or potential elites may aspire to gain or maintain power through public support. Clearly, not all elements of modernization are necessary, since the first party system, (in USA and Britain) emerged in pre-modern, agrarian, and religious societies. Also, not all modernization themes are functionalist.

### **INTRA AND INTER PARTY CRISES**

Hermann (1993) posits that the term crisis comes from the Greek Krinein, meaning to separate. He goes on to argue that scholarship and analysis in world politics has stipulated more specific meanings for crisis. At least three alternative definitions deserve attention. They represent not only definitional distinctions but also different levels of analysis and alternative theoretical and practical concerns. Thus it is possible to distinguish between systematic crises international confrontation crises, and decision-making crises. For our purpose, we shall concentrate on the former. Thus a systematic crisis is a strong shock to the structure that holds the system together. This crisis apart from threatening the stability of the system, it also creates the possibility of a system transformation. For example, the systematic crisis in the four major parties and the collapse of the third term agenda led to an increase in the number of parties in Nigeria's fourth Republic.

From the above therefore, intra-party crisis refers to as a time of great shock, difficulty and distress created in a political party due to the inability of the party concerned to resolve and reconcile effectively its internal differences or disputes. For example, it is a known fact that many parties are factionalized (mainly the PDP, AD, ANPP and APGA) and it is the duty of politicians to resolve their differences within the ambit of the law. All these parties have failed to reconcile their differences. Inter party crisis on the other hand refers to a time of great strain, difficulty, distress and shock between or among parties to electoral competition who refuse to abide by the outcome of electoral returns. For example, the 2003 presidential election litigation between Buhari's ANPP and Obasanjo's PDP. Omitola (2003) quoting Awa (1996:14) adduced reasons while commenting on the Nigerian party politics competition and its capacity to often degenerate into crisis. According to Awa (1996)... "elections are rigged in a flagrant manner, thereby putting into doubt the result as reflecting voters' preferences". The end result of these practices again according to Awa is that "party competition, not only did not meet the values assigned to them in Western political thinking but often resulted in pitching one ethnic group against others and thereby retarded the integration of the country (Omitola, 2003:145).

## **INTRA AND INTER-PARTY CRISES IN NIGERIA - CAUSES AND DEVELOPMENT SINCE 1999**

If party proliferation is an indication of how healthy a nation's democracy is, then Nigeria has not done badly at all. To date, the number of political parties in the country has risen to forty-one (41), up from the thirty (30) that existed in 2003. They range from the serious, to the not so serious and the downright comical. Even so, it ought to be a good omen for our young democracy. The more alternative the voters have the better for the nation (Ifionu, 2006:14). Harmel and Janda (1982) explain: "the democratic political party is a creature of its environment. The most important aspect of the environment are those that shape the expectations and ambitions of the most important people in parties, their office seekers" (Schlesinger, 1985:1152-1153).

Schlesinger, (1966 and 1985) goes on to assert that "to understand changes taking place within political parties we must work for a realistic theory; one that accept these parties as office-seeking conditions. On that premise, I lay out three interacting sets of variables (1) The structure of political opportunities, or the rules for office seeking and the ways they are treated, (2) the party system; or the competitive relations among parties, define the expectations of politicians and thus lead them to create and (3) party organizations, or the collective effort to gain and retain office" (Schlesinger, 1985:1152). Propositions derived from the linkages among these variables allow us to examine changes in Nigerian parties since the fourth republic- (especially after the aborted third term saga).

Lapalombara and Weiner (1966), lapalombara (1974) and Omoruyi (2001) have tried to apply the theories of political development to the emergence of political parties as creatures of systematic political crises. Of all the crises identified in the literature on political development, three of them are critical to understanding of political parties in the post-military regime. They are the crisis of legitimacy, the crisis of participation and crisis of integration. Omoruyi (2001) goes to state that in the former, scholars of Nigerian political parties (such as Coleman (1960); Sklar (1963); Whitaker (1970) Dudley (1968) and Post and Vickers (1973) among others) would want to know to what extent are the political parties that evolved in 1999 capable of providing alternative order to the military in the minds of Nigerians. This is the legitimacy question, second is the crisis of integration. Scholars could want to know to what extent have political parties that evolved in 1999 approximated the federal union. This is the political integration question and third, is the crisis of participation. Scholars would also want to know to what extent have the political parties that evolved since 1999 meet the need of those who want to participate in the political process (Omoruyi 2001:2).Omoruyi goes on to posit that only those who are living on this confused state of affairs would tell one what we have in Nigeria since 1999 are political parties. They would have to meet the test set by Lapalombara (1974); that a political party so called, if there is an inter generational transfer of political affiliation.

There are many studies that link stability of any democracy to the inter generation transfer of political affiliation. What would these parties be like in 2007 and 2015? Do Nigerians believe

that these political parties would still be there in 2007 or 2015? (Omoruyi, 2001:2). He concludes by positing that "what we have since 1999 in Nigeria as political parties have nothing in common with the political parties of the First, Second and Third Republics. Their composition is fluid and unstable; they can be viewed as instrument of transition from military to civilian rule and for the future and with the prospect of more parties. They raise more questions than as answers to the lingering political problems of Nigeria. These theses will be examined below using the major parties in Nigeria:

### **PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)**

PDP, in terms of composition, is a coat of many colours. Its membership could be broadly divided into four, namely: The Institute of Civil Society (ICS) better known as G34. That is, those so called politicians, who were denied registration by General Sanni Abacha during his self-succession project. The later combined in their lukewarm opposition through the law court against Sanni Abacha. This group came into force after the All Political Summit of December 14, 1995 under the chairmanship of Dr. Alex Ekwueme. Nigerians of every ideological divide (view); from every part of the country gathered together at Eko Hotel, Lagos to assess the broadcast which General Abacha made regarding the transition to civil rule. This group called itself the G34 committee from the fact that petition against self-succession project, was signed by 34 men and delivered to General Sanni Abacha by Chief S.D.Lar and Dr. Alex Ekwueme.

Second were those politicians, who were former followers of the defunct National Party of Nigeria (NPN) who were not opposed to self-succession of General Abacha but were not part of his machine, nevertheless. This group called itself the All Nigerian Congress (ANC) and was led by Chief S.B. Awoniyi. They are the conservatives of PDP. Third were those who were the followers of the Late General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua as the Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM). The Yar'Adua-Military establishment had Chief Anienih and Alhaji Abubarkar Atiku. It was this group that 'ambushed' Obasanjo into the PDP and subsequently, the presidential race. The military establishment within the PDP has more than 1000 retired military officers in its fold and has Ibrahim Babangida, as its godfather. In ideological parlance, members of this group (faction) are the centrists.

This group has suffered most of the losses in the battle for supremacy within the PDP and now forms the core of Advance Congress of Democrats (ACD). Four were those who called themselves social democrats (the progressives) with the name, Social Progressive Party (SPP). This was the collection of politicians from different parts of Nigeria that failed to make their position known today in the party. They have been together since the Second Republic days of the progressive governors' club. Thereafter, they were in the Social Democratic Party, SDP, in the aborted Third Republic. Some of the leading lights of the group include Solomon Lar, Jim Nwobodo, Sule Lamido, Abubarkar Rimi and Iyorchia Ayu among others. According to Na'Abba (2001), the PDP is a mixed bag of persons with diverse political background with one and only one purpose. It was meant to send a message to the military that the political class meant business with sending the military back to the barracks.



To this extent, the founders covered all political a sundry and political persuasion: conservatives, radicals and progressives. Clearly, the ruling PDP is no longer the Noah's Ark; it seemed to be in its early days. A lot has happened since its formation when greats like Alex Ekwueme, Bamanga Tukur, Yahaya Kwande, Isiaku Ibrahim, among others, were on board. Today what is left in the ruling party is a rump that has proved to be no more than President Obasanjo's chamberlains. If any evidence was needed of this, the aborted third term agenda was a convincing one. The current PDP speaks only one language: perpetuating Obasanjo's legacy as life leader as if it was such an enviable legacy. To say that the PDP has lost a sense of true democracy may be controversial but certainly the party has become far less inspiring today than it was eight years back. So many of the indices that made it attractive then have faded away. In terms of ideology; manifesto, discipline it offers next to nothing. These combined with the tactlessness of its principal officers, has made it far less popular. The PDP cannot be said to be a baby in managing crisis in the party – the emergence of a faction – has some of the major features of a coup d' et at. It was planned in secret and carried in the minds of the plotters for a long time. When it was eventually hatched at a press conference Abuja on June 9, it was too late for the Ahmadu Ali-led PDP to wield the big stick. Many fear that the PDP may not be able to surmount it before the 2007 polls.

Nigerians were told through the press conference that the new PDP was born. They were told that it was formidable and strategic. The parallel group would have the former national chairman of the PDP as its leader. The new Interim Management Committee also named the former deputy national chairman North and West, Ibrahim Safana and Shaibu Oyedokun to their former posts. The faction located its head office at the Mabushi area of Abuja, where it hosted the PDP flag colorfully. The group posits that this faction became necessary because since the tenure of the last National Working Committee ended in Abuja in November 2005, no elective convention was held to elect new leaders to steer the affairs of the party, as provided for in the constitution. The Ali-led faction of the PDP has also sued Lar, Oyedokun and Safana for alleged forging and impersonation. It is in the context of the inherent contradictions in the PDP then one is perhaps excited by the birth of the advanced congress of democrats (ACD) the movement for the Restoration and Defense of Democracy (MRDD); the Democratic Peoples Party (PDP), and a host of others blossoming in the political landscape. At least they have helped to deepen the quality of opposition, such that even the PDP, which at some point sought to deregister members, is now at wits end on how to retain those left behind. That the PDP is talking about reconciliation after talking down at us bears eloquent testimony to what gains the new parties have brought to the party as well as how far their challenge to the ruling party has progressed. It needs no gain saying that PDP is not sure of winning the 2007 elections.

### **THE ALL NIGERIAN PEOPLES PARTY (ANPP)**

The ANPP carried a stigma of a party that has a preponderance of politicians who spear headed the campaign for the self-succession plot of Late General Sanni Abacha. That was the reason given by the Peoples Consultative Forum (PCF), the political arm of Afenifere, a pan

Yoruba socio-political organization, and its allies the Southern Leaders Forum (SLF), for pulling out of ANPP, on the eve of the deadline for the submission of registration documents.

As soon as the PCF and allies left to form the Alliance for Democracy, AD the ANPP was subjected to centrifugal force, emanating from conflicting political interests. Members who were goaded mainly by ambition led the factions that ensued. Olusola Saraki, a former presidential aspirant, leads one of such factions. Even then some of the party leaders made effort to bring people in AD back to the fold. But when the efforts did not yield results the national executive went into alliance talks with AD. Now the grounds well of opinion was that AD had more credible candidates than ANPP. So seeing the return of the AD, as a way of denying them the presidential ticket, Saraki, Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu amongst others mobilized against the alliance talks. For those who understand what is happening it is time to move on. And quite a lot of them have decamped and are teaming up with others to form new political parties in order to provide alternatives to Nigerians. But then, Mahmood Waziri led executive committee managed to subdue the protests by the saraki faction that attempted to sack the leadership. Waziri was later to announce the suspension of some party leaders, for anti-party activities. The ANPP convention produced Ogbonna Onu as the presidential candidate. Apart from the alleged hanky-panky at the convention where Saraki and others were said to have been sidelined, the dropping of Onu for Olu Falale, the AD candidate, for the electoral alliance thickened the crises in ANPP. Saraki even campaigned for Olusegun Obasanjo, who ran on the platform of the PDP. Saraki, Iwuanyanwu among others latter left ANPP for PDP.

### **THE ALLIANCE FOR DEMOCRACY**

The Alliance for Democracy, AD, was the last political association to be registered by the Independent Electoral Commission. It was formed by the Peoples Consultative Forum and the Southern Leaders Forum and the Eastern Mandate Union. The groups had opted out of the Peoples Democratic Party, and later the All Nigerian Peoples Party. Their reasons were that the parties had been infiltrated by Abacha politicians and that they would not compromise on such issues as restructuring and power shift. And while the PDP and ANPP were threatened by crisis arising from post primaries grievances, AD had the image of being the most organized and disciplined. That was before the nomination process for the offices of the national legislature and the presidency. The loud protests of some aspirants for the national legislature were no match to the subdued disenchantment that the choice of Olu Falae over Bola Ige created in and out of the party. Many supporters and admirers of Ige felt that the other AD leaders deliberately slighted the erudite lawyer and picked Falae. Not a few people condemned the decision of the party to pick a more liberal candidate who would be acceptable to the North as a remarkable departure from the principled stand hitherto taken by the party. The prevailing mood also played some role in the outcome of the presidential election.

According to Ifionu (2006), none of the parties in existence is spared the bug of balkanization. The AD, which had so much promise in 1999, not only lost five of its

governorship positions in 2003, but also has become so fractured that it is unable to fly. And of course the AD is today breathing its last breath, with the resolution by the dominant two factions (Akande and Akinfenwa) in the party to merge with other parties (ACD and DPA). As for the ANPP; the National Democratic Party, and the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), the picture remains closely and under that it is difficult to know which of the factions is authentic since each camp in these parties insists that they are legally recognized to operate. Ifionu (2006) explains the reason behind the crisis in these parties in the following ways: The split in some of the parties that contested the last general elections was not altogether unexpected. Quite a number of them lost the election because of poor leadership and the attendant poor organizations ability. Admitted, the ruling PDP over played itself in the bid to retain power. The barefaced manner that the polls were rigged was quite symptomatic of a party without scruples. Still, much of that electoral heist could take place only because the so-called opposition parties were more or less nonchalant. The vigilance expected of them was not there in sufficient degree to curb the excess of the PDP (Ifionu, 2006:14).

Ifionu (2006) goes on to posit that a party out of power is party prone to internal strife. The essence of party politics is to acquire power and to implement party policies and programmes. When a party misses the opportunity, it is prone to retreat into bitter recriminations that often lead to internal wrangling which in turn leads to divisions and some times defections. For example, after the 2003 elections both AD and ANPP got fractured, with various factions laying claim to the some of the party. The intra party crisis absorbed them so much that they hardly had time to offer meaningful challenge to the PDP. The ANPP, as the biggest opposition party (with seven governors) was expected to rise to the challenge but this was not to be; despite the spirited efforts of Governor Attahiru Bafarawa of Sokoto (now a Chieftain of the newly registered Democratic Peoples Party). In opposition to Bafarawa's efforts, some of his fellow ANPP Chieftains often spoke and acted as though they were part of the ruling PDP. The former ANPP chairman Chief Don Etiebet for instance proved his accusers right when he resigned from the party and joined the ruling PDP. Chief Etiebet was not surprisingly accused of being a PDP mole within ANPP. When he openly declared support for president Obasanjo's third term bid, it raised eye brows in many quarters, but those who know him very well said it only consistent with his character. He had never been a man of strong principles and character.

The newly registered party known as the Democratic Peoples Alliance (DPA) is already engulfed in trouble over the refusal of one of the factional leaders of the parties that gave birth to it to call it quits with the interim national chairman over Sundry issues regarding the 2007 pools. While the interim national chairman, who was a former minister and presidential aspirant, is said to have favoured a romance with the former military president who is interested in returning to Aso Rock, the factional leader is said to have disagreed; insisting that he was not involved in the negotiations which gave birth to the new party at the final stage. Crises broke out in APGA soon after the 2003 general elections when chief Umeh, then national treasurer challenged the chief Chekwes Okorie leadership over mismanagement of party fund. Each of the groups has been working hard to ensure the Independent National

Electoral Commission does not recognize the other. The two factions have been to court for sometimes over which is the authentic executive committee of APGA.

Though the INEC has recognized Okorie's faction as the authentic leader of APGA in its letter dated June 14, 2006. The AD/ACD merger has equally headed towards a showdown. Both factions have disagreed on leadership issues, especially over the distribution of offices in the emerging party. One of the key issues is that of who produces the chairman of the new mega party. But while AD wanted the national chairmanship of the party; the pro-Atiku ACD thinks otherwise. Part of the Bisi Akande-led-AD's condition was that it would produce the national chairman of the party. But that was before the consumption of the merger talks. A meeting, which held to iron out this aspect of the arrangement, was said to have failed in resolving it.

## **FINDINGS**

Since the inauguration of the Forth Republic, a pattern is already emerging which points to the fact that political elites have not learnt much from the mistakes of the past. The various crises plaguing the major parties and emerging ones and the various inter-party crisis of the defections in the National Assembly, cross carpeting of governors among others are vivid instances of this tendency. Lack of party discipline continues to feature prominently in all the major parties. One of the fallouts of lack of party discipline among party men is factionalization within the parties. The registration of new parties in preparation of 2007 has raised the phenomenon of carpet crossing and decamping. This tendency has further oiled "the zero-sumness" of Nigerian political landscape. This action end up heating up the polity; a situation that portend dangers to democratic consolidation. This danger has resulted to the high level of political abduction, harassment, arson, and assassinations, withdrawal of credible and qualified professionals in the race. The registration of more parties which ordinarily should have led to increase in political participation and political competition however appears not to be meeting this goal. This is because rather than meeting this challenge, both the existing and newly registered ones are only interested in funding from INEC. Again, crash opportunism, greed lust for power, and lack of trust among elites feature predominantly in the relationship between elective office holders and the various arms of government since the collapse of the third term. Animosity between governors and their deputies; godfathers and godson's, the legislature and the executive and the security apparatus and elected officials have increased. These animosities are the primary reasons for the various intra parties crisis among the parties. In some states the deputies and governors, elected legislators are either forced to resign like in Abia, Sokoto, Lagos, and Ekiti or impeached or recalled or impeachment treats given to them.

Finally, monetization of politics continue to determine and dictate party politics since 1999 and continues to promote inter and intra-party rivalries. In view of the above theses, the emergence of factions in ruling and opposition parties at a time the parties are trying to reconcile with its aggrieved members nationwide, biggest the 2007 elections will be no easy

role for the parties and if care is not taken, there may be no 2007, possible installation of an interim government and if care is not taken, a possible military coup.

### **THE WAYS OUT**

In proffering solutions to the lingering inter and intra-party crisis, the under listed should be taken very seriously. There is a need for a thorough networking; especially the parties and organized civil society need serious homework before confronting the PDP. This can be achieved if the quarrel among the civil society groups such as PRONACO and major opposition parties are resolved. There is need for effective communication that enhances unity of purpose. No room should be given to the oppressors to claim even psychological victory. A house divided cannot stand, that was the message Abraham Lincoln gave Americans several years ago. It remains very relevant today. Also emphasis should be placed on the concepts of representative government, the rule of law, separation of powers and checks and balances rather than on democracy in Nigeria.

Again, party discipline should be a *watel wisel* for the parties. In this regard, the leadership of the parties should be answerable to the members and members, in turn, will be required to respect and obey the leadership. Further more, politicians should avoid unguided statement that could ignite violence in the body policy. That is, politicians should play according to the universally accepted norms and values of democracy. The parties therefore need to train and educate their members in the art of democratic governance. INEC and Center for Democratic and Value Education should be constituted to do this. Moreover, universities should be encouraged to run election administration and related courses at undergraduate and post-graduate levels. Finally, there is need for a well-funded and independent electoral body that is capable of conducting a free and fair election. INEC should be forceful in enforcing every aspect of the electoral laws especially the areas that pertains to security, electoral violence, funding and regulation of campaign financing.

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