AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF INTRA-PARTY CONFLICTS ON DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIATION IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC (1999-2016)

Johnson O. Olaniyi Ph.D

and

Lukman Omomeji Shehu
Department of Political Science
University of llorin

Abstract

Political parties the world over are seen as one of the instruments through which democratic processes are carried out. Their importance in establishing and maintaining a stable democratic order cannot be overemphasized. However, since Nigeria returned to demo critic rule in 1999 political parties have failed to perform their fundamental role of democratic consolidation religiously. This is not unconnected with the fragile inter and intra-party relations and incessant conflicts of varied magnitude. The main objective of the study is to assess how intra-party conflicts have been affecting political parties in contributing to the task of democratic consolidation in Nigeria's fourth Republic. This study examines the causes of intra-party conflicts in Nigeria and their implications on democratic consolidation in the Fourth Republic. In this study, comparative cum historical method serves as the research methodology Findings of this research work reveal that factors such as; lack of internal democracy paucity of party ideology godfatherism, issues relating to candidates' selection, among others, are the causes of intra-party conflicts in Nigeria. The study equally reveals that intra-party conflicts have impacted negatively on the quest for democratic consolidation in Nigeria in a number of ways which include; proliferation of weak political parties, creation of civil unrest and electoral related violence. Based on its findings, the study recommends that political party should adhere to the principles of internal democracy: embrace certain political ideology; and play down the importance of godfatherism in its internal democracy

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Keywords: Intra-Party Conflict, Political Party, Democracy, Democratic Consolidation.

Introduction Political parties are one of the essential tools of any democratic government. One cannot talk of representative democracy without mentioning political parties. According to Scarrow (2005:1) "democracy needs strong and sustainable political parties with the capacity to represent citizens and provide policy choices that demonstrate their ability to govern for public good". Similarly, Muhammad (2008) observes that:

> *"there is consensUS among scholars, politicians and the general public that political parties are major lubricants of democracy. This is evident because, without political parties, democracy based on the majoritarian model would be practically impossible ".*

The primary responsibilities of political parties among other things include: to recruit and prepare candidates for elections. give political education to citizens, interests articulation and aggregation, and more importantly, they check the excesses of government in power especially if they are in opposition. However, political parties can only effectively perform their traditional roles in an atmosphere devoid of internal conflicts. This is however not the case with them in Nigeria as almost all of them operating in Nigeria, especially in the current Fourth Republic are in one way or the other enmeshed in internal conflicts.

The contemporary incident of inter and intra-party squabbles associated with Nigerian political parties is a throw-back to the past which was replete with factions, bickering, intrigues, violence, backbiting and cross-carpeting (Olaniyan, 2009:52). In the First Republic, there were reported cases of intra-parties conflicts in political parties like the Action Group (AG), National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) and Northern Progressive Union (NPC). It is essentially noteworthy that the scenario of intra-party conflicts were borne out of the fact that party politics is about contestation for power between and among ruling elites. Therefore, series of activities that political parties engage in make it imperative for their members to articulate their common or divergent interests and sometimes, this resulted into intra-party conflicts.

Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999 after sixteen years of an uninterrupted military rule. The return to democratic rule saw Nigeria reverting back to multi-party system which was one of the major characteristics of the First and Second Republics. However, since Nigeria returned to democracy, party politics has been characterized by incessant intra-party conflicts of varied magnitude. In some cases, it has led to the creation of factions within some political parties, while in others it has resulted into cross-carpeting by party members. As Olaniyan (2009:53) observes, "the fourth republic in Nigeria has recorded better and acrimonious struggles within parties as well as violent inter party and intra-party relations". The scenario of intra-party conflicts in Nigerian democracy can be attributed to the mind-set and perception of politicians that politics is the most lucrative investment one could go for. This perception was exacerbated by the increasing culture of impunity and flagrant disregard to the rule of law as exhibited by the Nigerian ruling elites (Momodu and Matudi, 2013). Politicians in Nigeria often conceive politics as a big investment to be pursued with deadly seriousness. This investment motive often results into politicians employing means in achieving their political and economic objectives. Therefore, the cases of incessant unwholesome intra-party conflicts have impacted negatively on the Nigeria's democracy and effort towards democratic consolidation. It is as a result of this that this research study examines the implications of intra-party conflict on the democratic consolidation in Nigeria especially in the current Fourth Republic.

The main objective of this study is an examination of the type of implication which inter and intra-party squabbles have on democracy in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

i. Examine the causes of intra-party conflicts in the Nigeria’s Fourth Republic
ii. investigate the implications of intra-party conflicts on democratic consolidation in Nigeria; and

iii. To suggest how the trend of intra-party conflicts could be addressed in order to consolidate democracy in Nigeria. The research methodology for this study is historical comparative method

Conceptual Clarifications

Political Party Conceptualised

Political party has been defined in various ways by different scholars based on their perspectives of the concept. Olaniyi (2013:147) defines political party as a form of political association which seeks to control political offices via elections". A political party is a group of persons bonded in policy and opinion in support ofa general political cause, which essentially is the pursuit, capture and retention, for as long as democratically feasible of government and its offices (Agbaje, 1999). A political party is a group which seeks to elect candidates to public offices by supplying with a label for which they are known to the electorates. As such, political party serves as platform through which candidates are presented to the electorates for the purpose of electing them into public offices.

Yaqub (2002) in his own view defines political party from functional perspective by asserting that political party is the instrument for contesting elections. According to him, a political party is expected to educate, articulate and aggregate issues that it feels the public are not well informed about, recruit and train political leaders and reduce the salience and potency of ethnic chauvinism, bigotry and other manifestation of intolerance particularly in ethnically and culturally diverse countries. Nnoli (2000) goes beyond conceptualizing political party in terms of presentation of candidates for election by defining it as a group of people who share a common ideology and conception of how and why state power should be organized and used. It differs from other organizations in that, political party does not only seeks to influence government policies but also undertake responsibility of formulating and implementing them.

What is common with all the definitions reviewed above is that they all see political party as an association formed by a group of individuals with the aim of capturing the reins of power in a polity. They achieve this by presenting candidates for elections.

Democracy Explained

Like any other concept in Social Sciences, democracy has enjoyed varied definitions among scholars. The concept has been examined in both classical and contemporary contexts. In classical context, democracy is linked with the small City State of Athens in Greece, where adjudged male adult citizens were allowed to directly participate in decision making and implementation (Osumah and Ikelegbe, 2009). However, with the complex nature of modern day political system in terms of vast territory and population, the classical democracy of the Greek City State is no longer feasible. Thus, in contemporary time, democracy hás been referred to as the expression of the popular will of the political community through elected representatives. Contemporary democracy therefore rests on representative government (Rapheal, 1976). Representatives are however, chosen through a competitive, free and fair elections.

Democracy according to Oyovbaire (1987) is a system of government which seeks to realize a generally recognized common good through a collective initiation, and discussion of policy question concerning public affairs and which delegated authority to agents to implement the decisions made by the people through majority vote. Schumpeter (1990) in his view posits that democracy is an institutional arrangement for arriving at a political decision in which individuals acquire the power to decide on public issue by means of a competitive struggle for people's vote. Based on Schumpeter's definition, a political system can be adjudged to be democratic, if the decision makers are chosen through free, fair and periodic elections.

The main attributes of democracy in a liberal society include the following: periodic elections, respect for the outcome of a well organised election, respect for individual rights such as freedom of association, freedom of expression, the rule of the majority and respect for minority's views.

Democratic Consolidation Conceptualised

The concept of democratic consolidation according to Oyediran and Simeon, (2016) is an identifiable phase in the process of transition from authoritarian regime to democratic system that is critical to the establishment of a stable, institutionalized and lasting democracy. Linz and Stepan (1996) cited in Oyediran and Simeon (2016) see democratic consolidation as a political regime in which democracy, as a complex system of institution, rules and patterned incentives and disincentives has become the only game in town". Hence, a democratic regime is regarded as being consolidated when no significant factors (national, social, political, economic and institutional) will attempt to achieve its objectives either through the creation ofa non-democratic regime or when the overwhelming majority of public opinion is consistently supportive of democratic procedures, processes and institutions as being the only appropriate method of conducting governance and public affairs (Oche, 2002 in Oyediran and Simeon, 2016).

Valenzuela (1990) cited in Akubo and Yakubu (2014) views democratic consolidation as "an affirmation and strengthening of certain institutions such as the electoral system, revitalized or newly created parties, judicial independence and respect for human rights, which have been created or recreated during the course of transition". From Valenzuela's conception of democratic consolidation, it can be deduced that democratic consolidation is a post transitional conditions in which democratic norms are embraced by both the governor and the governed. According to Oshagae (1995:62);

> *Democratic consolidation does not imply defeat of supposedly undemocratic ruler or putting in place of democratic institutions, notably multi-party system and free and fair elections, rather, it survival would depend on its consequences for people; how much it is able to better their material conditions in terms of literacy, security of life and property, and rural development as well as to ensure political stability and thereby save the people from the scourge of war and other violent conflicts.*

A review of the scholars' positions above on democratic consolidation reveals that

democratic consolidation is much more beyond a process whereby a new democracy matures to include institutionalization of democratic norms in the act of governance,

Democracy can be said to be consolidated when all actors (governor and the governed) in a democratic political system are subject to, and act in accordance with the laid down laws, when decisions are arrived at based on a democratic processes or when rule of law became the order of day in governance. This 1S why Diamond (1987) argued that democratic consolidation involves behavioural and institutional changes that normalize democratic politics and narrow its uncertainties.

Conflict Explained

There is no consensus among scholars as to the precise definition of conflict but every effort made at defining the concept often centres on incompatibility of interests of the conflicting parties. Robbins et al (1994) define conflict as "perceived divergence of interests or beliefs that the parties' current aspirations. cannot be achieved simultaneously". Conflict can manifest in any forms, it may be violent or inflict pain and suffering on both parties in conflict and other people who may not be directly involved due to its spillover effects (Momodu and Matudi, 2013).

Wolff (2006:2) observes that conflict is a situation in which two or more actors pursue incompatible, yet from their individual perspectives entirely just goal. Conflict is a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected or about to negatively affects something that the first party cares about. Conflict according to Weber (1971), cited Oyediran and Simeon, (2016) is any action oriented intentionally to carry out actor's own will against the resistance of the other party or parties. Weber asserted further that conflict is every day normal on-going for institutionalized process that is natural of social reality. Conflict refers to some form of friction, disagreement, or discord arising within a group when the beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more members of another group (www.wikipedia.com/conflict). Conflict is like a game, each party in conflict is out to outsmart one another so that the outcome of the conflict will be to its favour. This is why Duverger (1980:179) observes that in political struggle, when men and organizations are in conflict, they tend to employ different kinds of weapons, but the instrument they employed is often influenced by the type of society, the type of government, the composition of the groups in conflict as well as the period of history.

From the foregoing, it can be posited that in a democratic set up, conflict among competitive parties may turn to violent or crisis involving the use of illegitimate means to achieve a desired political goal (Oyediran and Simeon, 2016). Political crisis may emanate from unhealthy party feud and intense struggle to capture power at all cost leading to intolerance, assassination, thuggery, kidnapping and electoral violence.

Most of the existing literatures on intra – party conflicts in Nigeria in the current Fourth Republic have focused majorly on the crises within Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), whereas, intra – party conflict is a phenomenon which has afflicted almost all political parties that had existed in the past or those still operating in the current political dispensation.

Therefore, this research study moved a step further by looking at intra-party conflict on not only the PDP but also some other political parties including the APC which was registered not too long

ago. This, it is hoped, will unravel the misery of intra-party conflict and brings about decorum within political parties in the country.

An Overview of Intra-party Crises in Nigeria before the Fourth Republic

Intra-party crisis entails a situation of disagreement among members of a political party This situation often arises when members of the same political party pursue incompatible political interests or trying to influence the decision making process of the party to their advantage (Momodu and Matudi, 2013). That is, intra-party conflict arises out of conflicting interests or goals pursue by party members most specifically in the area of selection of candidates either for elective or appointive positions. Abubakar and Ibrahim (2016) are of the view that "intra- party conflict as a social phenomenon is not an unexpected occurrence". It has both functional and dysfunctional consequences depending on how the management of the party perceives the conflict and how it responds to it. Functional conflicts according to the scholars engender creativity, positive growth, and development, mutual understanding and healthy relationship between individuals and groups. Dysfunctional conflicts on the other hand bring disunity, hinder progress and development, affect decision making, and create animosity and hatred between individuals or between groups. Momodu and Matudi (2013), observe that conflict could be constructive and positive if the perceptions and responses of parties in conflict are positive and could be destructive if the perceptions of those in conflict are negative. It is constructive if it affords the warring group members the opportunity of aggregating their divergent interests and come up with an overarching group interest. On the other hand, conflict could be destructive if it results into disunity and alienation among party members.

Intra-party conflicts in Nigeria have assumed negative dimension over ages. This is why Muhammad (2008) describes intra-party conflict as conflict between members of a political party whereby some members employ certain strategies to hijack the party machineries with the ultimate aim of serving their personal interests". Intra-party conflicts have become one of the features of party politics in Nigeria. Factions are created within political parties, discipline is relegated to the background, while most parties are controlled by money bags (Abubakar and Ibrahim, 2016). The consequences are that political parties are not run on the principles of openness, equity, internal democracy and universal standards, rather on informal social relationship.

Furthermore, party politics in Nigeria has been characterized by intra – party squabbles right from the period of colonialism. The 1922 Clifford constitution which introduced elective principle for the first time in the annals of Nigeria's political history necessitated the formation of political parties. The Nigerian National Democratic Party was the first political party to be registered in Nigeria. It was followed by the Lagos Youth Movement which was later metamorphosed to Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM). Party politics at this time was characterized by intra-party conflict. For instance, the NNDP was enmeshed in internal conflict as a result of the inability of its leaders to properly manage their differences. The party was wrecked by personal jealousies and quarrels over spoils of office (Nnadozie, 2005).

The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) was also dismembered as a result of the personality clash between its leaders, particularly between Chief Ernest Ikoli and Chief Samuel Akinsanya (Innocent, 2012:2-3).

The National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), the Action Group (AG), and the Northern People's Congress (NPC) which were the political parties that ushered Nigeria to Independence and they were at different occasions witnessed series of internal crises. The first political party among them to witness internal crisis is NCNC, the party after its victory in the election into the Western Region House of Assembly witnessed landmark cross-carpeting to Action Group (AG). This was to prevent Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe who was the leader of the party from becoming the Premier of the Western Region. This is not unconnected from the fact that Dr. Azikwe was of Ibo extraction. Members who were of Yoruba extraction were brainwashed on the perceived implications of allowing Dr Azikiwe to emerge as the Premier of the region, hence, on the day of their inauguration, they defected en masse into the AG which was believed to be predominated by Yorubas. On the day of the inauguration of the Western Region House Assembly, one of the members of the NCNC, who is a Yoruba man remarked that "Your Excellency (referring to the Governor who doubled as the Speaker of the House) that I don't want to be part of the situation where Yoruba land would be set on fire, so I'm crossing to the other side", this declaration was followed by mass exodus of members of NCNC to the AG (Mbah, 2011).

In AG, the personality clash between Chief Obafemi Awolowo and his erstwhile deputy, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola led to the collapse of Action Group (AG). The clash between the duos was as a result of their different ideological stances. While Akintola rejected and frowned at continuous over-bearing influence of Chief Awolowo on him as the Premier of the Western Region, Awolowo rejected perceived romance of Akintola with NPC led government at the centre (Onyishi, 2016). As a result of the crisis, Akintola later formed his own political party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) and subsequently enter into an alliance with Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC).

Similarly, the ideological differences between Mallam Aminu Kano and other leaders of Northern People's Congress (NPC) particularly Sir Ahmadu Bello, was the root of the internal crisis that rooked the party. Aminu Kano opted out of the part in order to give expression to his "Talakawa" ideology- a socialist ideology that gave expression to the plight of poor people of northern extraction as against the feudal posture of the NPC. Another crisis that rocked the NPC according to Mbah, (2011) was when the leaders of the party from the Middle-Belt led by Joseph Tanka alleged that Northern Minorities were being marginalized by Hausa/Fulani political leaders. As a result of the inability of the leaders of the NPC to resolve this issue of alleged marginalization, Tanka with other members of the NPC from the Middle-Belt later formed the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC).

The experience of internal crisis in Nigerian political parties' cycle repeated itself in the Second Republic. This was because as almost all the political parties that contested the 1979 General Elections were riddled with internal conflicts. According to Abubakar and Ibrahim (2016), internal crisis accounted for the break – up of the alliance between the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP). It equally led to the split of the Great Nigeria

Peoples Party (GNPP) and the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP). In the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), there was personality clash between Chief Obafemi Awolowo who was the leader and Presidential candidate of the party and other leaders such as Chief Adisa Oladosu Akinola, Anthony Enahoro, Richard Akinjide and Akin Omoboriowo. It was as a result the crisis that Chief Akin Omoboriowo defected from the party to the National Party of Nigeria, NPN (Onyishi, 2016).

In a similar vein, Alhaji Abubakar Rimi who was the sitting Governor of Kano State in the Second Republic defected from the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) to the Nigerian Peoples'.Party (NPP) as a result of the disagreement he had with the leaders of PRP particularly Mallam Aminu Kano (Mbah, 2011). The development changed a little bit in the aborted Third Republic. This was because the two political parties that were registered then, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) were product of military decree. The decree did not only establish them but also, dictated their operational guidelines. However, pockets of internal squabbles were reported especially in relation to the nomination of candidates at the states and local government levels (Abubakar and Ibrahim, 2016). Internal crises also occurred in both parties as a result of over-bearing influences of party chairmen both at the National and the States levels. Intra-Party Conflicts in Nigeria's Fourth Republic Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999. This was after sixteen years of military rule. One may conclude that given the encomium that greeted the return to democracy, Nigerian politicians must have learnt a great lesson from the previous Republics in terms of adhering to the principles of internal democracy in the management of their political parties. It is however, unfortunate that given the available data, the spate of intra-party conflict in the country is still very much unabated. This is why Muhammad (2008) concludes that "intra-party feud has remained a predominant feature of partisan politics in Nigeria".

Since 1999 till date, virtually all political parties operating in the country have either been afflicted with internal crises, or are still battling with one crisis or the other. Although the magnitude of the crisis is higher in major political parties than the minor ones, making Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) taking the lead. In fact, PDP has had to contend with series of internal crises in the last eighteen y ears. Internal crises within PDP began with a division within the party when it broke into two factions, one was headed by Chief Sunday Awoniyi and the other camp led by Chief Ume Ezeoke. As a result of the grievous experience of internal crisis in PDP, the party within the first four years of the Fourth Republic had three National Chairmen starting from Chief Solomon Lar who was the pioneer chairman to Chief Bernabas Gemade and later to Chief Audu Ogbe.

The internal crisis within PDP hit the Anambra state chapter of the party in 2003 as a result of the disagreement between the then Governor of the state Dr Chris Ngige and his estrange-political godfather, Chief Chris Uba. The crisis assumed a dangerous dimension to the extent that Dr. Ngige, a sitting Governor was abducted in July 2003, while properties worth million of naira including the State Broadcasting corporation was destroyed. Also, in 2007, the crises

within PDP led to the substitution of Rotimi Amaechi as the gubernatorial candidate of the party in Rivers state with Celestine Omehia. However, Amaechi later reclaimed his nomination and

was subsequently sworn in as Govemor through the Supreme Court ruling (Aleyomi, 2013). In 2007, former Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar who was one of the founding members of PDP was forced to pitch his tent with opposition party, Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) as a result of the disagreement he had with his erstwhile boss, former President Olusegun Obasanjo. The disagreement is not unconnected from the events leading to the nomination of candidates for the 2007 Presidential candidate.

In 2011, the issue of zoning arrangement also created internal squabbles within the ranks and files of PDP. The zoning of office of the President in controversy within the party created the party, the crisis was mainly between members of the party from North and those from the South (Ojukwu and Olaifa, 2011:31, Aleyomi, 2013). Some members of the party from the North argued that it was still the turn of the North to produce the President in 2011, while members of the party from the South claimed that the death of former President Yar'Adua marked the demise of zoning arrangement in PDP. Some members outrightly denied the existence of zoning arrangement. The first person to brew the controversy was the former National Chairman of PDP, Prince Vincent Ögbulafor. Shortly after Jonathan was made the Acting President, He was reported to have said that Jonathan is not eligible to contest the 2011 Presidential election (Awopeju et al, 2012:15). The controversies over the zoning arrangement heated the polity then and fanned the embers of ethnic discord.

The ambition of former President Goodluck Jonathan to re-contest in the 2015 Presidential election generated another round of controversy within his party, PDP. He was accused of failing to honour the agreement he purportedly entered into with members of PDP, most especially those from the North, where he promised not to contest in the 2015 Presidential election (Premium Times, February 27, 2013). The agreement he was alleged to e reneged. This coupled with some other controversial issues precipitated a major crisis that eventually rocked the party in 2013 at the Abuja Mini National Convention of the party where former Vice President Atiku Abubakar led some aggrieved party members including seven sitting Governors out of the convention. They later formed a splinter group called the New PDP" which was chaired by a former Acting National Chairman of PDP, Alhaji Kawu Baraje. Aside the purported re-contesting bid of Jonathan, the group was also against the leadership style of the then PDP National Chairman, Alhaji Bamanga Tukr, they accused Bamanga Tukur of subverting internal democracy within PDP and running of the party like personal business entity. To buttress their points, they argued that the suspension of Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola as the National Secretary of the party by Tukur – led National Working Committee (NWC) was illegal and that all efforts to reverse the suspension were rebuffed. The group with the exception of former Governors of Niger and. Jigawa states, Babangida Aliyu and Sule Lamido respectively, later defected to the newly formed All Progressive Congress (APC). Another serious conflict ravaged the PDP was the leadership crisis in relation to the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party between the Ahmed Makarfi led faction and that of Ali Modu Sheriff. Efforts by the party "Big Wigs" to settle the crisis have proved abortive as both factions stood their grounds. The crisis went through series of litigations most especially in the High Court and Court of Appeal, but was settled in favour of Ahmed

Makarfi faction by the Supreme Court on July 12, 2017.

The spate of internal crisis within political parties in Nigeria is not peculiar or limited to PDP alone as other political parties at one time or the other experienced intra-party conflict Although the rate at which each political party experienced internal wrangling is largely dependent on its size and organisation, All Peoples Party (APP) which later metamorphosed to All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) also had its own fair share of internal conflict. The crises within the party started at its formal launching in Lagos between the two associations that formed the party, Conference of Fused Association (CFA) and the Southern Leaders Forum (SLF) headed by Alhaji Usman Shinkafi and Chief Bola Ige respectively. One group wanted the party to bear Nigeria in its name, while the other group disagreed. It was the inability of the party to resolve the issue that led to the pulling out of the Southern Leaders Forum from the APP (Jinadu, 2001). In 2002, a major crisis erupted in the state chapter of the party in Kwara State. The crisis was mainly between the supporters of the then Governor, Mohammed Lawal on one hand and the supporters of Dr Olusola Saraki on the other hand (Alanamu, 2005). It was as a result of the crisis that Dr Olusola Saraki defected to the PDP.

Another crisis that also rocked the ANPP arose as a fall-out of the 2003 Presidential primary election of the party. The candidacy of Dr Olusola Saraki generated serious controversies within the party; the party later accused Saraki of anti-party politics and was eventually suspended from the party (Abubakar and Ibrahim, 2016). In 2007, the inability of former Governor Attahiru Bafarawa of Sokoto State to clinch ANPP Presidential ticket led to the formation Democratic Peoples' Party (DPP), the party under which he contested the 2007 Presidential Election which he lost to the candidate of PDP.

The Alliance for Democracy (AD) also had its own share of internal crisis which resulted into loss of many members of the party and also culminated into severe defeat which the party suffered in its stronghold, the South West geo-political zone of the country after the 2003 general elections. Before the 2003 General Elections, former President Olusegun Obasanjo tricked five Governors of the South West into a deceptive pact that turned out to be monumental suicide for the party in the South West geo-political zone. The pact generated serious controversies within parties. As a result of the controversies, a faction of the party led by former Governor of Lagos State, Bola Tinubu who was against the pact later formed the Action Congress (AC) which later changed to Action Congress of Nigeria, ACN (Onyishi, 2016).

All Progressives Congress (APC) which is currently the ruling party at the federal level came into being on February 6, 2013 through the merger of the three major opposition political parties in the country then; ACN, CPC, ANPP and a faction of APGA led by Imo State Governor, Rochas Okorocha (www.en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/All Progressive Congress). Although, the party emerged victorious in the 2015 General Elections but this is not to say that it is crisis free. One of the crises that threatened the existence of the party at a very tender stage was when members of the New PDP defected into its fold. Part of the agreement reached by the leadership of the party and that of the New PDP was that the party machineries in various States where defecting members came from will be handed over to them. This did not go down well with some leaders of the party in the affected States. The insistence of the party leadership to go ahead with the agreement led to the defection of key members who were privy to the merger, such as

former Governors Atairu Bafarawa of Sokoto State and Ibrahim Shekarau of Kano State, as well as the former gubernatorial candidate of ACN in Kwara State, Muhammed Dele Belgore -to the PDP(Pointed Blank News, , 2014).

The National Convention organized by APC in June 2014 to elect new National Working Committees sof the party after the expiration of the tenure of the interim NWC members, also generated crisis within the ranks of the party and it equally culminated into cross-carpeting of Chief Tom lkmi from the party to the PDP In June 2015, the peace of the party was threatened by the emergence of Dr Abubakar Bukola Saraki as the Nigerian Senate Preside and Mr Yakubu Dogara as the Speaker of the House of Representatives against the directive of the party which favoured Senator Ahmed Lawan from Yobe State and Honourable Femi Gbajabiamila rom Lagos State respectively. The crisis did not only create factions among members of the National Assembly but also robbed the party the opportunity of producing new Deputy Senate President. The splits in the ranks as well as decamping of party members which have afflicted various political parties in Nigeria especially in the current Fourth Republic are indications that most of these parties lack the seal to accommodate differing opinions.

Causes of Intra-party Conflicts within Nigerian Political Parties in the Fourth Republic

Scholars have identified several factors as the causes of intra-party conflicts in any democratic system. Shale and Matolsa (2008:13) cited in Momodu and Matudi (2013) identified Favouritism (promoting one's kith and kin); unequal 'sharing of resources (leader's constituency gets a lion share); lack of regular meetings; and centralized authority. Ntalaja (2000) was of the view that ethnicization of party politics, poor political leadership, excessive westernization of the concept of democracy, party indiscipline, lack of clear-cut party ideology, the politicization of the higher echelon of the military profession are the causes of intra-party conflicts in Nigeria. However, some important factors which have resulted into intra-party conflicts that will be discussed in this research study are as follow:

i. Absence of Internal Democracy

Scarrow (2005) described internal democracy as a wide range of methods for including party members in intra-party deliberations and decision making. Internal democracy articulates basic tenets of democracy within political parties and the extent to which parties subscribe to these democratic values. The essence of internal democracy is to create a level-playing ground for every party member to participate in the affairs of the party. However, absence of internal democracy within political parties in Nigeria has often created a scenario where some powerful individual in a political party would want to foist their will on the party (Momodu and Matudi, 2013). It was as a result of lack of internal democracy that some powerful individuals will feel too big to respect party directives or majority decisions. For instance, in September 201 6, National Leader of APC, Bola Tinubu fought tooth and nail to overturn the Governorship primary of the party which was won by Rotimi Akeredolu so as to favour his preferred candidate, Olusegun Abraham (Daily Post, 2016). It was as a result of lack of internal democracy that State Governors will want have their grips on the party

structure in their various States against all odds. This is why Metuh, (2010) posits out that one thing I have noticed in States where there is crisis, is that the governors don't want to let go their

grips on the party structures and other stalwarts insist there must be separation of party from government". In a grave disregard to principle of internal democracy, the primary election that produced former Governor Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers State in 2007 was overturned by the leadership of PDP and replaced Amaechi with Celestine Omehia. However, the candidacy of Amaechi was later restored by the Supreme Court in October 2007.

ii. Paucity of ldeology

Ideology is one of the essential ingredients that consolidate any political party. It is the superstructure upon which every other thing is built on. Party ideology precedes party structure, manifesto, and organization (Ojukwu and Olaifa, 2011). Morse (1896:76) defines party ideology as durable convictions held in common by party members in respect to the most desirable form, institution, spirit and course of the state, which determines the natural attitude of a party towards every public question (Momodu and Matudi, 2013). Party ideology consists of ethical interpretations and principles that set forth the purposes, organizations and boundaries of political life. Nigeria since inception of the current Fourth Republic can be argued not to be fortunate of having political parties with sound ideological base and this has created a scenario whereby, party activities are not run on the basis of formalized principles but on the basis of whims and caprices of powerful few within the party. Politicians in Nigeria usually view party politics as money-making venture because of lack of clear-cut party ideology and this explain why most politicians in Nigeria are being regarded as "prostitute". This is because the moment they were unable to realize their ambitions in one political party, they will dump that party to pursue their ambitions on the platform of another party. Party ideology is a set of principles that every party members must subscribe to and as such it prevent incessant cases of cross-carpeting which was the case among Nigerian politicians. For instance, in 2015, Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State defected from PDP to APC because he failed to realize his gubernatorial ambition in the party. This was also the reason why Mr Labaran Maku a former Federal Minister in Dr Goodluck Jonathan's administration left PDP for APGA.

iii. Selection of Candidates

Ideally, candidates' selection in any political party should be through a well-organized and transparent primary election which begins with transparent selection of party delegates. The exercise must follow a laid down procedures and not on the basis of whom their godfathers are or the amount of money they are ready to give party delegates. As Scarrow (2005) notes recruiting and selecting candidates is a crucial task for parties, because parties' profiles during elections and while in office, are largely determined by which candidates are chosen and where their loyalties lie. Whichever procedure adopted, the most important thing is that the selection of candidates should be devoid of prejudice, class or ethnic chauvinism. However, selecting candidates within political parties in Nigeria is problematic because strong party members or "the money bags" are always out to ensure that the selection is done to their own 'favour' or to the favour of their preferred candidates. In Kogi State for instance, the emergence of Governor Yahaya Bello following the sudden death of Abubakar Audu

who was favoured to win the race pitched Audu's running mate, Hon, James Faleke against the party. Heeven turned down the offer to be deputy governor under Bello. Also , with almost two

years in office, Sokoto State Governor, Aminu Tambuwal is still in court defending a suit filed against him by Senator Umaru Dairu over the 2015 Governorship primary in the State (This Day, 2017). The phenomenon of candidates' selection has undermined internal democracy within political party in Nigeria and is also one of the bane of intra-party conflict in Nigeria.

iv. Godfatherismn

The phernomenon of godfatherism has become one of the central features of party politics in Nigeria. Godfatherism has been defined by Ogundiya (2009:286) as "an ideology which is based on the idea that certain individuals have considerable means of 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 (2006), godfatherism is characterized by devious and undemocratic actions such as violence, bribery and corruption in order to affirm, protect and achieve the wishes of the Godfather. Godfather politics tries to ensure that results are announced publicly even when there is no proof that voting actually took place. It typically plays party politics with disregard to the established rules. The phenomenon of godfatherism has resulted into the rejection of the outcome of primary elections and the attendant crises that follow when candidates are imposed against popular wish. For instance, in 2003, former Governor Mohammed Lawal of Kwara State fought his erstwhile political godfather as a result of his over-bearing influence on him even as the Governor of the State (Alanamu, 200S). Similarly in Anambra State, Chief Emeka Ofor almost made the State ungovernable for his political godson, former, Governor Chinwoke Mbadinuu as over the leadership of their party in the State. Also in Oyo State, in 2005, former Governor Rashidi Ladoja was illegally impeached in order to satisfy the whims and caprices of his godfather, Late Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu who want the Governor out of office at all cost due to the disagreement they had then (Onyishi, 2016).

v. Favouritism and Tribalism

Favouritism is another factor that causes intra-party conflict in Nigeria. According to Shale and Matlosa (2008:13), favouritism is promoting one's kith and kin at the expense of the other people. This has become a constant practice in most Nigerian political parties. Fringe benefits within the party are shared not on the basis of due process but on the basis of dominant group getting the larger share. This in most cases often triggers reactions and counter reactions from the disadvantaged and advantage groups. The gale of defections which PDP witnessed in 2013 can be attributed to the tribal nature of party politics in Nigeria if one looks at the calibre of members that defected and the reason adduced for such defections. Favouritism and tribalism also account for the reason why most political parties in Nigeria are divided along ethnic line.

Implications of Intra-party Conflict on Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

Intra-party crises have impacted negatively on democratic practice in Nigeria beginning from the period of colonialism to the period after independence. However, with reference to the current Nigeria's Fourth republic the following are the implications of intra – party conflicts on

the operations of democracy and democratic consolidation.

i. **Proliferation of weak Political Parties:** Lack of internal democracy within most political parties operating in Nigeria has created rifts within and among them and has forced many aggrieved party members and their followers into decamping to another party or form a new political party. This has led to the formation of political parties that may not pass viability test. Okosi-Simbine (2004) is of the view that proliferation of political parties has created a tendency of having a sprawling party on one hand, and "too-weak-to constitute opposition parties" on the other hand. The implication this has created for political development according to Oyediran and Simeon, (2016) is that opposition parties are weakened and destroyed, and the government in power has no check on its activities. This is true of the current political situation in the Nigeria in which case, Peoples Democratic Party which ought to provide credible opposition to the ruling APC is being scattered on daily basis as a result of internal wrangling. The current Fourth Republic took off with three political parties namely, PDP, APP and AD but as of today, there are forty-six registered political parties in Nigeria. Some of these political parties were formed by break-away factions of one political party or the other. For instance, the Progressive Peoples' Alliance (PPA) was formed by Governor Orji Uzo Kalu ofAbia State as a result of the disagreement he had with leadership of the PDP. Also in 2011, Dr Olusola Saraki injected life into the Allied Congress Party of Nigeria (ACPN) as fall-out of conflict between him and his son, Dr Bukola Saraki who was incidentally the then Governor of Kwara State over who should be the gubernatorial candidate of PDP in the State. The party after the election cannot boast of a single member even at the State House Assembly. Political parties like Advance Peoples Democratic Alliance (APDA), National Conscience Party (NCP), Mega Peoples Political Party (MPPP), Demoiratic Peoples' Party (DPP) and some other minor political parties that were registered by INEC were formed by splinter groups of one political party or the other.

ii. **Over-heating of the Polity:** Intra-party conflicts have led to the over-heating of the country's political landscape. This portends a great danger to the democratic sustainability of the country. The continuous registration of new political parties has raised the phenomenon of cross-carpeting and has further oiled the zero-sumness" of Nigerian political landscape. This action end up heating up the polity; a situation that portend greater danger to democratic consolidation. For instance, on December 22, 2005, supporters Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu led eighteen members of Oyo State House of Assembly with sophisticated weapons as a prelude to the impeachment of former Governor Rashidi Ladoja (Shaapera et al, 2014).

Also in December 2015, Rivers State witnessed another spate of turmoil as result of the re-run election conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission TNEC). This violence is not unconnected from the political differences between Former Governor Rotimi Amaechi and his successor, Governor Nyesome Wike. Both Amaechi and Wike were former political allies. This scenario of intra – party conflict has resulted into high level of political abduction, harassment, arson and

assassination, withdrawal of credible and qualified professionals from the race (Aleyomi, 2013).

i. **Civil unrest and election motivated violence**: Abubakar and Ibrahim (2016), were of the view that intra-party conflict has turns a particular State to be chaotic and cripples the State's administration thereby making it ungovernable. This was experienced in Anambra and Kwara States in 2003. In Anambra State, it was between the then State Governor Chris Ngige and his estranged godfather, Chier Uba. The crisis between the duos resulted into series of violent crises that culminated into the abduction of the Governor by political thugs believed to be loyal to Chief Chris Uba. In Kwara State, it was between the then Governor. Alhaji Muhammed Lawal and his political godfather, Dr Olusola Saraki. The crisis led to the destruction of the office of the National Pilot, a Newspaper House believed to be owned by Dr Bukola Saraki who was a gubernatorial candidate then. It also led to series of politically motivated killings in the State, including the killing of one Pele Musa who was one of the Supporters of Dr. Olusola Saraki at a campaign rally in Ajase-Ipo, Ifelodun Local Government Area of the State (Alanamu, 2005). States like Oyo, Ekiti and Rivers equally witnessed turmoil at different times as a result of internal crises within various political parties in these States. In Rivers State, the conduct of 20 15 General Elections in the State witnessed an unprecedented crisis which seriously undermined the outcome of the elections. This was not unconnected with the crisis between the former Governor of the State Rotimi Amaechi and his former political ally, Barrister Nyesome Wike who incidentally is the current Governor of the State.

ii. **Implications on finance and operations of Political Parties:** Most political partiesin Nigeria depend on financial supports from wealthy party members for their survival. Therefore, whenever there is internal crisis within the party, aggrieved party members will first and foremost withdraw their financial supports from the party, thereby crippling the operations of the party. For instance, it was reported in November, 2016 that former Lagos State Governor Bola Tinubu who is one of the financiers of APC withdrew his financial supports from the party as a result of the disagreement he had with the leadership of the party over the outcome of the gubernatorial primary of the party in Ondo State. Also in 2013, the aggrieved PDP members who defected from the party did not only withdraw their membership from the party but also stopped their financial supports.

iii. **Implications on the viability and stability of Political Party:** Intra-party conflict also has adverse effects on the chances of political party in an election. The internal squabbles and its attendant factionalization and defection that occurred in PDP between 2011 and 2014 culminated into the defeat of the party during the 2015 Presidential Election. Also, the Alliance Democracy (AD) suffered la severe defeat in the 2003 General Elections especially in its stronghold, the South West asa result of internal wrangling within the party then.

Conclusion

An Assessment of the Implications of Intra-party Conflicts on Democratic Consolidation. This study has given insight into a number of findings as regards the type of implication which intra-party crisis has on democratic practice in Nigeria. As stated earlier, the methodology adopted in this research study was historical cum comparative method. The literature that were reviewed revealed that intra-party conflicts within Nigeria political parties are caused by factors such as; lack of internal democracy within political parties, paucity of ideology (that is, political parties in Nigeria are not ideologically inclined), issues relating to candidates selection for elective or appointive positions, the menace of Godfather syndrome which makes godfathers not to subscribe or adhere to the principle of equality in the conduct of party affairs; and favouritism, which promotes one's kith and kin at the expense of others. The study also revealed that the menace of intra-party conflict afflicts almost all the political parties that operated or still operating in Nigeria in the current Fourth Republic. Although the intensity of the internal conflict differs, the study has revealed that major political parties with large members witnessed spate of internal conflicts than the minor ones with Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) taking the lead.

On the implications of intra-party conflict on democratic institution in Nigeria, the study has revealed that intra-party conflict has impacted on democracy and democratic consolidation in a number of ways such as; proliferation of weak political parties, result into election – induced violence which has at different occasions overheat the polity, negative impact on the viability and sustainability of political parties, as well as incessant cases of cross-carpeting.

From the findings highlighted above, the study posits that political party whether the ruling party or the opposition party, has a significant role to play in any democracy. The ruling party assists the government in the formulation and implementation of policies for the general well-being of the populace while the opposition party provides constructive checks on the excesses of government. They can however, perform these functions in an atmosphere devoid of rancour and acrimony. Political parties in Nigeria are hindered in the performance of their traditional roles by incessant internal wrangling. Therefore, based on the findings in this research study the following suggestions are proposed as a panacea for curbing the menace of incessant internal crisis and also ensuring that political parties become an effective institution that will promote rather than impede democratic process in Nigeria:

i. Internal democracy must be entrenched in the conduct of the affairs of political parties. Every party member must be given equal stake in the party affairs.
ii. Political parties must subscribe to a particular political ideology, their activities must be guided by certain ideological positions. This will ensure streamlining of the party activities.
iii. Political parties must ensure that discipline is instilled in their members. Indiscipline should be frowned at and sanctions should be imposed on any erring members.
iv. Party constitutions and other codes of conduct must be strictly adhered to in the conduct of the affairs of the political parties including selection of candidates.
v. Political parties must ensure that level playing ground is provided for all party members. Party activities should not be based on influence, power, financial status or ethnic affiliation.
vi. Personal interests of party members should give ways to larger interests.

On a final note, intra-party conflict bedevils democratic sustainability. A nation that overlooks internal crises within political parties is often besieged with lawlessness and instability which can cripple its very existence. Intra-party conflict is a serious impediment to the sustainable democratic development particularly in developing countries. The more a threat to its democratic sustainability political parties in a country continue to wallow in intra-party crises, the e more they constitute

To achieve democratic consolidation in Nigeria, the negative misconception of politics as an avenue for amassing wealth must be changed to a positive perception and understanding of politics as an art of developing public good which tends towards improving the quality of lives of the citizenry and not about satisfying the greed of a few privileged class of individuals. This can be achieved through value re-orientation programmes for every stakeholder in Nigeria's democratic experiment.

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