

Intra Party Politics as a Veritable Tool for Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: Assessment of PDP (Peoples Democratic Party) And G5 in 2023 General Election

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ABSTRACT

This paper clearly investigates the role of intra party politics as a tool for democratic consolidation in Nigeria, with a search light in Peoples Democratic Party and the role of G5. In doing this the researchers uses purposive sampling technique in selecting four different States where 30 respondents each were randomly selected from political science department. A structured questionnaire was adopted as instrument for this study, using simple percentage and Paired Sample Statistics method for its data analysis. The findings shows the indispensability of intra party politics on the sustenance of democracy in the country as well as some hindrances because of players egocentric attitudes. In conclusion certain recommendations were made by the researcher; respecting the fundamental rights of other people in the field, playing the political games by its rules and participation in politics with the spirit of sportsmanship (just to participate and not to win by do or die affair).

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

INTRODUCTION

For any democratic system to experience political stability, interest articulation and aggregation of public opinion coupling with popular participation as well as promoting masses political education are inevitable for national integration. In order to achieve these virtues existence of viable political parties are indispensable for the consolidation of such democratic milieu. In as much as this remains in indisputable fact many democracies in Africa in general and Nigeria is facing some challenges making their democratic experience sour and bitter instead of producing the expected benefits or the so called dividends of democracy. Some of these identified obstacles are lack of visionary and dedicated leadership, poor harmonious relationship between and among members of the same political party, pursuance of egocentric motive/ambition, etc.

Statement of the Problem

It is an indisputable fact that political parties plays significant roles in the progress of democracy any democratize society Nigeria inclusive. Therefore, without political parties there is no democracy. Presently throughout the countries that are practicing democracy political parties facilitates political stability and more importantly facilitates democratic consolidation. Despite these laudable positive contributions, some challenges are still facing political parties most especially in Nigeria. In brief, some these challenges facing political parties in Nigeria revolve primarily around the following:

1. Party Leadership

2. Intra-Party Conflicts and Lack of Intra-Party Democracy, which is the area of focus of this paper
3. Poor Relations between Political Parties-Mutual Suspicion and Conflict
4. Policy/Programme Development
5. The Management and Administration of the Internal Affairs of the Party.

The objectives the Study

The objectives of this research include:

1. To examine the impacts of intra-party conflicts on Democratic consolidation in Nigeria.
2. To investigate the extent of intra-party conflicts and democratic setback in Nigeria.
3. To suggest ways to reduce incidence of intra-party conflicts achievement of political stability in Nigeria.

Hypothesis to be tested

1. There is no significant relationship between intra-party conflicts and Democratic consolidation in Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between intra-party conflicts and democratic setback in Nigeria.
3. There is no significant relationship between intra-party conflicts and achievement of political stability in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology adopted in the study is the quantitative technique. The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. This is because the researchers used both questionnaire to elicit responses from people and sourced also from newspapers, relevant books, Journals, publications and the internet materials.

Conceptual clarification

Political parties have an instrumental central role to play in emerging democracies, by identifying, politicizing and representing social divisions including ethnicities, religious, classes and geographies. It is for this reason that it has been contended perhaps more than any other factor, the success of democratic consolidation in a country is contingent on the effectiveness of political parties in structuring political conflict. Political parties can discharge these roles adequately, provided that they live up to their responsibilities. But this is seldom the case in some emerging democracies, especially in Africa. From a comparative African perspective, studies have shown that political parties falter in the representation of social groups, becoming instead tools for the promotion of neo-patrimonialism and violence. The responsibilities of political parties operate on three levels: electorate-related functions, government-related functions and linkage-related functions Dahl R. (2011).

A political party according to Edmund Burke (2002) is “a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest upon some particular principles which they all agreed”. Elaborating on this definition, Lapalombara and Anderson define a political party as “any political group, in possession of an official label and a formal organization that links centre to locality that presents at elections and it is capable of placing through elections, candidates for public offices. Anifowose a respected Nigerian political scientist said political parties are means of organizing the people so that they can select for themselves an elite group which will control the process of public decision making on their behalf. In this view, Herbert Simon defines a party as “a system of interdependent activities characterized by a high degree of rational direction of behaviour towards ends that are object of common acknowledgement and expectation”. Elsewhere

lopalombara defines a political party as “a universally adopted tail for mobilizing large numbers of persons to engage in forms of political participation, voluntary or coerced that are not limited to voting”. Flowing from the foregoing, political parties have a responsibility to present candidate for elections, with the primary aim of capturing political power for the furtherance of the common good. This responsibility becomes much more challenging, tasking in plural societies consensus on critical national questions Abubakar, D. (2005).

The concepts of intra-party conflicts and peacekeeping Democratic consolidation are the main focus of this paper hence, some scholarly works are reviewed. Conflict is used in two senses. It refers to an incompatibility in a multi-party or multi-issue situation, in other words, a state of affairs in which two or more irreconcilable views or options are posited towards the solution of a particular problem. In the second sense, conflict refers to the violent expression of this incompatibility of irreconcilability. Even though the two conceptions overlap, it is in the later sense that the term conflict is used within the context of this work.

Conflict

The term conflict is derived etymologically from latin verb *confligere* (to clash, engage in a fight). It refers to a confrontation between individuals or a group resulting from opposite or incompatible ends or means. Alex Schmid (2002) further added that, conflict as an antagonistic situation or adversarial process between at least two individuals or collective actors over means or ends such as: resources, power, status, values, goals, relations or interest. To him, the range of outcomes includes victory, defeat, domination, surrender, neutralization, conversion, coercion, injury or destruction and elimination of opposite party, or alternatively the solution, settlement or transformation of conflict issue. According to Diller (1997:6) conflict is any form of confrontation between two or more parties resulting from a situation where (these) two or more independent groups or system of actions have incompatible goals. Danrendorf (1959:135) sees conflict as ‘A contest competition, dispute and tensions as well as manifest clashes between social forces’, Boulding (1978:5)... is a situation of competition in which the parties are aware of the incompatibility of the potential future position and in which the aims of the group or individuals involved are not only obtain the desired values but to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals’.

Intra-Party Crisis in Nigeria

According to Nwodo, O. (2010) point out that the unthinkable had finally come to friction. The self proclaimed largest political party in Nigeria and Africa had split into two. This is a very serious development for the members of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). The party prospect for holding on to the presidency has been diminished hence a house divided against itself cannot stand.

Many intra-party conflicts have confronted P.D.P. in the past one was Former vice president of Nigeria and the presidential candidate of P.D.P. in 2023 general elections, Atiku Abubakar and seven others P.D.P governors had one time broke away from the leadership of the national chairman of the party Bamanga Tukur and formed another faction of same party with Alhaji Kawu Baraje as chairman. Incidentally Mr. Baraje was once the national chairman of P.D.P. The governors involved in the muting against the chairman of the party and the president are: Adamawa state governor; Murtal Nyako, Niger State governor: Babaginda Aliyu, Sokoto State governor; Sule Lamido, Kano State Governor; Rabiun Kwakwanso River State governor; Roteimi Amachi and Kwara state governor; Abdul Fatai Ahmed.

These governors have been airing their grievances for sometime and demanded ouster of Bamanga Tukur as pre condition for peace in P.D.P. This is very serious development because these governors are effect heads of the party in their states and holds the government bureaucracy, exerts undue influence on state assemblies, members and control state party machine. Their departure and control state party machine. Their departure from P.D.P mean(s) that there power and influence will move with them.

What is the reason for the problem bedeviling Nigeria political parties? The reason are greed, ego, power and above all, lack of internal democracy

For the 2023 general elections, which is the main focus of this research, the so called G5 governors which are Mr Wike, other governors who are members of the G5 are Samuel Ortom (Benue), Ifeanyi Ugwanyi (Enugu), Okezie Ikpeazu (Abia) and **Seyi Makinde** (Oyo), decided to stand against the decision of the party by maintaining their position known that party National chairman (Iyorchia Ayu) and the party presidential candidate (Alhaji Atiku Abubakar) must not and can not come from the same political zone of the country in order to allow principle of equity and fairness with zoning formular within the party, which was their position till after the general elections because these G5 governors supported different presidential candidates of other political parties which was believed to have responsible for the lost of the party at the poll.

Democracy

Therefore is of no need over-flogging on this particular concept again. The only definition of democracy which will be considered here among many others is; Democracy is a system of government that empowers the electorates(masses) to hire and fire, in a free fair and credible election (which means a system of government that give electorates the mandate “*power*” to determine their representatives among many contestants by voting-“*hiring*”, and when such a representative failed, they still have the power of “*firing*” voting him/her out of office through the same process of voting in an ideal setting/state. (Adisa, 2011).

Democratic Consolidation

Juan L. (2016) mention that the light of prevalence of neo-patrimonial systems and practices, it is very important that newly established democracies should take very seriously the important phase of democratic consolidation. The phase of democratic consolidation is critical to the institutionalization process of newly established democracies. Consolidation of democracy has been defined as the process by which democracy becomes so broadly and profoundly legitimate and so habitual practiced and observed that is very unlikely to break down.

Juan Linz and Alfred Stephen (2016) have identified three interrelated developments that signal a movement toward consolidation. These are:

1. Behaviorally: when no significant national, social, economic, political or institutional actor in the country spends significant resources attempting to achieve his objectives by creating a non-democratic regime or by seceding from the state.
2. Attitudinally: when a strong majority of public opinion(s) hold(s) the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life in a society such as theirs and support for anti-system, alternatives is small and isolated.
3. Constitutionally: when government and non-governmental forces became habituated to the resolution of conflict within the specific laws, procedures and institution sanctioned by the new democratic process.

Although democratic consolidation is a conceptually identifiable phase in the democratization process. In practice, it is actually impacted by a number of variables for example, a country with a prior history of democratic practice will stand a better chance of consolidating its democracy than one that does not possess such a history. Furthermore, a recent history of a widely discredited authoritarian regime also provides a favourable premise for the consolidation of democracy. Untimely, consolidation depends upon a complexity of factors and tasks which elect political leader which must be apprehend and tackle. Leaders must build,

reform and if necessary dissolve institutions in order to strengthen democracy. Because the recently democratizing states of Africa are economically weak states. Political leader must find ways to improve the economic well-being of other peoples as well as the major problems that their societies are confronted with. At the end of, the burden rest primarily upon elected leaders to build the legitimacy of democracy as an essential basis for its consolidation Juan L. (2016).

In his contribution towards democratic consolidation Claude Ake argues in favour of a number of foci which democracies in Africa should emphasize in view of the existential realities of the continent. Firstly he argues in support of a form of democracy that would be more relevant to the social realities of Africa which he refers to as ‘social democracy’. This is the type of democracy that would place more emphasis upon the economic empowerment of the ordinary people and the removal of structural impediments to their participation in politics.

Secondly, he argues for a process of democratization that has a developmental basis. This is premised on the logic that the severe crisis of under-development that afflicts most African states is capable of undermining the democratic effort. Economic growth is a factor that legitimizes democracy and facilitates the process of consolidation. Thirdly desideratum is the imperative of consolidating the African state itself.

The democratic system that develop on the African continent have been criticized for their non-renewal of the leadership class. Instead, these system enable the prolongation of leadership by individuals (sit tight rules) or even the legitimization of the leadership of autocrats through the means of manipulated elections.

Fourthly, Ake (2000) argues in favour of a reduction in the powers of the presidency coupled with a greater balance of power between the three arms of government. Typically, African Constitutions give so much power to the president that some cases it becomes different to distinguish them in practice from dictatorship. This concentration of power in a single arm of government concomitantly reduces the powers that are exercisable by the other arms of government.

Finally; the need to spread and deepen the democratization process requires the strengthening of local government systems to enhance local participation in the political and governance process and also to ensure the provision of necessary government services to the local and rural populace. The development of a civil society is also necessary for the consolidation process. Because the character of African politics is capable of alienating broad segments of the society. It is important to ensure as broad a form of participation as possible which civil society provides. Civil society, diverse ways also acts to check oversee and help to guide the process of governance.

Data Presentation Table 1

S/N	ITEMS	YES	%	NO	%
1.	Adequate party ideology must be provided for the political parties to foster Democratic consolidation	110	91.67	10	8.33
2.	Party discipline must be emphasized to cement Democratic consolidation	106	14	14	11.67
3.	Cross carpeting of party members must be discouraged with severe constitutional punishment to consolidate democratic tenets.	118	98.33	2	1.67
4.	Intra-Party conflicts was due to domineering attitude of certain set of people or section(s) of the country	113	94.17	7	5.83
5.	Intra Party conflicts could leads to ethno-religious conflicts	109	90.83	11	9.16
6.	Intra Party conflicts makes concerned members to bribe judge at the expense of other members	111	92.5	9	7.5

7.	Intra Party conflict can lead to disqualify party flag bearer disqualification	107	89.17	13	10.83
8.	Intra Party conflict leads to election rigging	100	83.33	20	16.67
9.	Intra party crises lead to discouragement of party stalwarts.	105	87.5	15	12.5
10.	Intra party conflict leads to party factions in Nigeria	117	97.5	3	2.5
11.	Intra Party conflict leads to party lost of opportunity in any electoral contest	109	90.83	11	9.16
12.	Competition among political parties can enable political stability in the country.	112	92.33	8	6.67
13.	Intra-Party conflicts have caused politics of bitterness to Nigeria political system.	115	95.83	5	4.17
14.	Poor conduct of party primary elections leads to Intra-Party conflicts	101	84.17	19	15.83
15.	Intra party conflicts promotes political intolerance	114	95	6	5
16	Intra Party crises causes postelection violence	99	82.5	21	17.5
17	Intra party conflict leads to political instability in the country.	93	77.25	27	22.5

Compiled by Author, Fieldwork 2023

Data Analysis and Interpretation Table 2

S/N	QUESTIONS	YES	%	NO	%
1.	Adequate party ideology must be provided for the political parties to foster Democratic consolidation	110	91.67	10	8.33
2.	Party discipline must be emphasized to cement Democratic consolidation	106	14	14	11.67
3.	Cross carpeting of party members must be discouraged with severe constitutional punishment to consolidate democratic tenets.	118	98.33	2	1.67

On hypothesis 1: Which says; . There is no significant relationship between intra-party conflicts and Democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Table 3: Paired Sample Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Pair YES	111.3333	3	6.11010	3.52767			
1 NO	8.6667	3	6.11010	3.52767	14.552	2	.005

From the above analysis, it is clear that t-calculated is greater than t-table. The interpretation of which is that the hypothetical statement will be rejected. Which is to be restated that *there is significant relationship between intra-party conflicts and Democratic consolidation in Nigeria*. Meaning that if intra-party conflicts are not amicably resolved, there will not be consolidation of democratic tenets in Nigeria.

Table 4. On hypothesis 2: Which says; There is no significant relationship between intra-party conflicts and democratic setback in Nigeria.

S/N	QUESTIONS	YES	%	NO	
4.	Intra-Party conflicts was due to domineering attitude of certain set of people or section(s) of the country	113	94.17	7	5.83
5.	Intra Party conflicts could leads to ethno-religious conflicts	109	90.83	11	9.16
6.	Intra Party conflicts makes concerned members to bribe judge at the expense of other members	111	92.5	9	7.5
7.	Intra Party conflict can lead to disqualify party flag bearer disqualification	107	89.17	13	10.83
8.	Intra Party conflict leads to election rigging	100	83.33	20	16.67
9.	Intra party crises lead to discouragement of party stalwarts.	105	87.5	15	12.5
10.	Intra party conflict leads to party factions in Nigeria	117	97.5	3	2.5
11	Intra Party conflict leads to party lost of opportunity in any electoral contest	109	90.83	11	9.16

Table 5: Paired Sample Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Pair YES	108.8750	8	5.13914	1.81696	26.899	7	.000
1 NO	11.1250	8	5.13914	1.81696			

From the above analysis, it is clear that t-calculated is greater than t-table. The interpretation of which is that the hypothetical statement will be rejected. Which is to be restated that *there is significant relationship between intra-party conflicts and Democratic setback in Nigeria*. Meaning that intra-party conflicts breeds a lot of Democratic setback in Nigeria.

Table 6. On hypothesis 3: Which says; There is no significant relationship between intra-party conflicts and achievement of political stability in Nigeria.

S/N	QUESTIONS	YES	%	NO	%
12.	Competition among political parties can enable political stability in the country.	112	92.33	8	6.67
13	Intra-Party conflicts have caused politics of bitterness to Nigeria political system.	115	95.83	5	4.17
14.	Poor conduct of party primary elections leads to Intra-Party conflicts	101	84.17	19	15.83
15.	Intra party conflicts promotes political intolerance	114	95	6	5
16.	Intra Party crises causes postelection violence	99	82.5	21	17.5
17.	Intra party conflict leads to political instability in the country.	93	77.25	27	22.5

Do intra-party conflicts hinder the achievement of political stability in Nigeria?

Table 7: Paired Sample Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Pair YES	105.6667	6	9.20145	3.75648			
1 NO	14.3333	6	9.20145	3.75648	12.157	5	.000

From the above analysis, it is clear that t -calculated is greater than t -table. The interpretation of which is that the hypothetical statement will be rejected. Which is to be restated that *there is significant relationship between intra-party conflicts and achievement of political stability in Nigeria*. Meaning that various intra-party conflicts that has been well managed have bee disallowing political stability in one way or the other in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Researchers through this work to reveals the challenges of internal democracy within political parties for the democratic consolidation in Nigeria. It is crystally clear from the research that lack of internal democracy among the Nigerian political parties is inimical to democratic consolidation. The essential elements of internal democracy which include equal participation among party members must be put in place. There must be all inclusiveness in the within decision of political parties.

Besides, the assumption is that internal democracy in political parties thrives more in societies that strongly uphold democratic principles, values and other tenets. The most widely accepted criteria for identifying a country as democratic have been put forward by Robert Dahl to include civil and political rights, fair, competitive and inclusive elections. Dahl calls countries that meet these criteria ‘polyarchies’. But they are more commonly referred to as liberal democracies. It is concluded that for democracy to thrive well intra party conflicts must be amicably resolved among members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having examined some of the challenges of internal democracy among the Nigeria political parties in the fourth republic, most especially with the focus on PDP and 2023 general elections, the study is of the view that if the anomalies of lack of internal democracy such as non-observances of the code of conduct document (party Constitution- Written or unwritten) which all the political parties assented to and endorsed to guide their conduct and performance, the non-transparent system of choosing candidate in primary elections as well as in party leadership executive positive and the executive arrogance within the parties which have not only turn many parties apart but also occasioned the cross carpeting of many party stalwarts can be addressed through the suggestions below, democratic consolidation would be attainable.

First, the adoption of some of recommendation made by international organization for sustainable development (OSD) which are contained in a communiqué issued at the end of a national workshop on “enhancing internal Democracy of political parties” and that of National dialogues focus on political parties in Nigeria. Mali and India organized by international idea in January and February 2006 in Nigeria and India. Some of these recommendations are; regular convening of their national executive meetings, elective and non elective conventions as stipulated in their constitution, observance of party financial guidelines, internal dispute resolution mechanisms, transparency in party financial administration and conclusive party primaries; reforming of the legislative framework governing party registration and functioning; measures to limit the role of ‘God fathers’ and barons in party politics reform of political financing, that is, the introduction of measure to strengthen parties to raise their own funds and also enhance their capacity to be more accountable and transparent in matters of party and campaign financing.

It should be stressed here that only non-patriotic Nigerian that will enjoy his country to swim in trouble from this study, that the researcher had given the following recommendation for further study.

- There should be adequate compare to rules and regulations guiding the operation of political party internally and externally.
- There should be transparency in conducting party primaries which will be acceptable to all party faithfuls so that there will be little or no litigation on the results.

- Government should provide adequate security during the election to eradicate election rigging in the country.
- Only competent and eligible aspirants should be allowed to contest within the party in order to disallow the opposition parties to have a lope hole in contesting the part's flag bearer.
- Party leaders or stakeholder must not be biased in addressing issues within and outside the party.
- There should be a transparent penalty for any erring member to serve as deterrent to other who might likely intend to do such again.
- Party leaders or stakeholder must not be skewly selected to have demonstrated a particular ethnic domination, but rather allow for even distribution on the basis of equity, fairness and justice.

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