

INFLUENCE OF PEACEBUILDING STRATEGIES ON INTERNAL DEMOCRACY OF ALL PROGRESSIVES CONGRESS IN NIGERIA

<https://doi.org/10.47743/jopafl-2024-31-21>

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Abstract: *This research looked at the relationship between the All-Progressive Congress's internal democracy in Lagos State, Nigeria, and peacebuilding strategies. To provide direction for the investigation, two hypotheses (tested at the 0.05 level of significance) were established. All political players in the state were included in the population, which was stratified into senatorial districts to provide a sample size of 289 using correlational and descriptive research techniques. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Analysis was used to evaluate the data. Findings indicate that there is no significant relationship between peacebuilding strategies in terms of conflict transformation and internal democracy of All Progressives Congress in Lagos State ($r = .004, \rho > 0.05$), and the study also further found that there is a positive, moderate and significant relationship between peacebuilding strategies in terms of conflict-sensitive policies and internal democracy of All Progressives Congress in Lagos State ($r = .537, \rho < 0.05$). It is found that internal democracy in political parties has had favourable results in Lagos State.*

Keywords: *Peacebuilding, Internal democracy, Conflict transformation, Conflict-sensitive policies, All Progressives Congress.*

Introduction

In the dynamic political landscape of Nigeria, the All-Progressives Congress (APC) has maintained its stronghold in Lagos State for over two decades since the advent of democracy in the country. While various factors have contributed to the party's sustained power, the implementation of effective peacebuilding strategies has played a crucial role. This article examines how peacebuilding efforts have helped the APC maintain its dominance in Lagos State, exploring the significance and impact of these strategies. One of the primary contributions of peacebuilding strategies to the APC's longevity in Lagos State has been the promotion of stability and unity within the party and among its supporters. By fostering an environment conducive to peaceful coexistence, the party has been able to mitigate internal conflicts and maintain a united front. This has allowed the APC to present a strong and united political force, bolstering its electoral prospects and consolidating its power over time.

Peacebuilding strategies often involve engaging in dialogue and reconciliation processes, which have proven effective in resolving conflicts and bridging divides within the APC in Lagos State. By encouraging open and constructive discussions, the party has been able to address grievances and foster understanding among different factions, ensuring that internal disputes do not escalate and undermine its stability. Moreover, the APC's commitment to reconciliation has extended beyond its own ranks. The party has actively sought to reconcile with opposition parties and individuals, promoting a culture of inclusivity and cooperation. By embracing dialogue and reconciliation with political rivals, the APC has built bridges and expanded its support base, making it an attractive choice for voters seeking stability and progress.

Another crucial aspect of the APC's peacebuilding strategies in Lagos State has been its focus on development and empowerment. The party recognizes that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without addressing the underlying socio-economic challenges faced by its constituents. By implementing policies that prioritize infrastructural development, job creation, and social empowerment, the APC has been able to improve the quality of life for many Lagosians, thereby reducing the potential for social unrest and political instability. Furthermore, the party's commitment to inclusive development has helped bridge the gap between different communities within Lagos State. By ensuring equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, the APC has fostered a sense of belonging and shared prosperity among diverse groups. This has not only strengthened social cohesion but has also enhanced the party's electoral prospects, as it resonates with a broader cross-section of the population. Unquestionably, democracy as a system of government rises above all others across the world. According to Egobueze (2020), Abraham Lincoln stated succinctly that "democracy is the government of the people, by the people, and for the people." According to the description above, democracy is a people-oriented government. No surprise, the majority of the world's prospering nations, including the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and others, use this form of governance. Although democracy began in ancient Greece, it has gained global recognition and practice in the Western World, including the United Kingdom, France, the United States, and Germany. With the advent of imperialism, it extended to other parts of the world, including Africa and Nigeria (Egobueze, 2020).

It is vital to emphasize that Nigeria, as a developing democracy, is more of a process than a destination. Democratization is a shift to more political reforms and a push toward greater democracy. The process of democratization necessitates pragmatic nurturing with the required democratic ideas and values. The ideas and structure include ideologically driven political parties, an open and accessible electoral process, adherence to the rule of law, liberty, and equality, a party constitution and electoral guidelines, responsive representation based on accountability, transparency, and trustworthiness, among other things. A detailed examination of the Nigerian political environment reveals bleak images of persistent disagreement, particularly in party politics. This may be traced back to the recurrent widespread and excessive need for personal happiness, which is antagonistic to the collective interest of the political party and party members. As admirable as the dream of political parties is, intra-party fighting tramples on internal democracy and amputates democratization. Yahaya (2018) and Momodu and Matudi (2013) discovered that internal squabbling among political parties disrupts the democratic process.

According to Muriithi (2007), peace building is an all-encompassing procedure that addresses issues at several levels. The endeavor is to surmount the systemic, interpersonal, and cultural inconsistencies that serve as the foundation for conflict in order to facilitate the establishment and maintenance of peace. Fundamentally, maintaining peace entails addressing the underlying causes of conflict and empowering the parties involved to continue offering solutions via dialogue and, if needed, mediation.

The process of encouraging social reforms and reconciliation is also known as peace building. This intervention aims to improve social fairness and lessen violence (Sodipo, 2013). It is a strategy for managing and preventing violent disputes via campaigns, awareness-raising, and lobbying. According to Onigu-Otite and Albert (1999), it entails developing people's ability to cope with and treat the local underlying causes of hostilities and conflicts. The idea that force cannot bring about or maintain peace is the foundation for peace building. Only comprehension will lead to its discovery (Ofuoku & Ewrierhurhoma, 2018). Rebuilding a society's political, security, social, and economic facets after a war is a part of peace building.

The term "peace building" also describes strategies or tactics intended to advance social change, defuse conflict, and improve harmony within society. It sometimes includes sensitization, education, advocacy, enlightenment campaigns, and awareness-raising. In the context of this study, "peace building" refers to conflict management, prevention, and resolution, especially those meant to guarantee lasting peace throughout the competition for political dominance inside any political party. According to Ezirim & Mbah (2014), democratic administration has all the required indices to avert all sorts of conflicts that usually raise their ugly heads in Nigeria and Africa. For instance, the Nigerian State has effectively practiced democratic government for almost 20 years, but not without sporadic setbacks. Nigeria's democratic adaptability, according to Ezirim (2009), has allowed the country to survive the fire that would have destroyed it. In Nigeria and, by extension, throughout West Africa, he proposes that the application of good governance, the rule of law, effective voter outreach, adequate employment, and a fair distribution of resources and values would all help to further defuse tensions and serve as conflict resolution techniques.

The assertion that Nigeria is "consolidating its democracy" is often at the core of mainstream media discourse and popular political debate in the country. However, this assertion is refuted by the available data (Momoh, 2013). Indeed, without strong political parties, democracy is impossible. Parties are supposed to help electorates become politically literate, aid in the development of political power, assist in the hiring of political leaders, and act as a uniting factor in a divided society (Omotola, 2010). The goals of party regulation, along with the unresolved issue of internal party democracy—that is, the tug-of-war between political parties to uphold their own bylaws and conduct their internal affairs in accordance with democratic principles—remain essential to the broader consolidation of Nigerian democracy (Ibeanu, 2013).

A prolonged and pervasive disagreement amongst members of the same political party is referred to as intra-party conflict. This kind of disagreement is often brought about by competing egos and interests that collide with the party's shared goals, ideologies, and platform. Because of the party's members' ongoing rivalry, democracy is doomed and the party's cohesive and intentional goal is divided. While conflict is inevitable, what may be

achieved from it depends on how it is managed and addressed. Irreconcilable disagreement therefore has a crisis-like quality that might impede rather than advance democratization. Since 1999, when the country reverted to multiparty rule, intraparty clashes have assumed new dimensions. As a consequence of not having a practical conflict management system, political parties have defected. These and other problems have created a great deal of discussion in the policy community and in academics about practical approaches to take when dealing with internal party crises when participants rely so heavily on zero sum game tactics. Some viable political candidates have been pushed out of the political system by this idea, while others have become lifetime defectors (Pogoso, 2014). In addition, political parties in Nigeria have been implicated in a wide range of anti-democratic actions, such as rigging party primaries and general elections, killing political rivals, engaging in hooliganism, thuggery, and vandalism during elections, having unclear nomination and flag-bearing procedures, and generally lacking internal democracy. These and other acts have become uncontrollable and have given rise to a never-ending list of political complaints (Dike, 2003). In other words, poor management of these crises has led to party alignment over time, defections, and the prostitution of party members—a practice known as "party cross-carpeting." However, if member decampment is predicated on the party's ideology with respect to the national objective, then the aim of democratic consolidation will be a fiction and an impossible goal. By contrast, democratic norms will be reinforced and solidified if party alignment or defection stems from egotism and self-aggrandizement. In conclusion, the aforementioned antidemocratic forces have caused the Nigerian people to no longer be a part of the political system. What determines the survival of the system is the degree to which the populace has been socialized to use appropriate patterns of handling political conflict when it arises, such as adhering to party norms, conventions, and the constitution during intraparty decisions that would steer the process leading to democratic stability. In addition, the extent to which political parties resolve disputes in a political system based on popular policy or the constitution serves as a functional regulatory mechanism that reinforces or solidifies democratic values (Jinadu, 2014; Clean Foundation, 2014). On the other hand, one may counter that this is a fundamental characteristic of advanced political systems, which typically support the growth of politics and the economy as well as the consolidation of democracy.

Literature Review

The concept of Peace Building

In the world of politics today, is a place of contact and every place of contact is a place of conflict. Thus, politics of today is marred by conflicts, violence, and discord, the concept of peace building emerges as a beacon of hope. Peacebuilding aims to create sustainable peace by addressing the root causes of conflicts and fostering reconciliation and cooperation among political actors and spectators. It goes beyond simply ending violence; it focuses on building the foundations for long-term peace and stability. Muriithi (2007) claims that peace building is an all-encompassing procedure that deals with issues on many fronts. The endeavor is to surmount the systemic, interpersonal, and cultural inconsistencies that serve as the foundation for conflict in order to facilitate the establishment and maintenance of peace. The process of encouraging social reforms and reconciliation is also known as peace building. This intervention aims to decrease violence

and promote social justice (Sodipo, 2013). It employs advocacy, awareness-raising, and campaigns to avoid and manage violent confrontations. According to Onigu-Otite and Albert (1999), it entails developing people's ability to cope with and treat the local underlying causes of hostilities and conflicts. The idea that force cannot bring about or maintain peace is the foundation for peace building. Only comprehension will lead to its discovery (Ofuoku & Ewrierhurhoma, 2018).

The term "peace building" also describes strategies or tactics intended to advance social change, defuse conflict, and improve harmony within society. It sometimes includes sensitization, education, advocacy, enlightenment campaigns, and awareness-raising. In the context of this study, "peace building" refers to conflict management, prevention, and resolution, especially those meant to guarantee long-term peace during power struggles inside political parties. Deep polarization is a common feature of politics in conflict-affected situations, and how parties respond to this polarization is crucial in determining the likelihood of peace. This is especially true in situations where animosities and grievances based on identity have fueled conflict. In these situations, identity-based parties are very important. These often have strong support from their constituents and may be able to guarantee that minority groups' views are taken into account during peace negotiations. But rather than playing divisive identity politics, their capacity to articulate a national vision or speak for their communities' interests in national institutions will determine how much they can contribute to peace (Castillejo, 2016).

"Inadequate representation of people' interests is the greatest detrimental effect of weak political parties, claims. Assembling and representing the interests of various groups in bargaining processes between the state and society over the nature of the post-conflict political settlement, both during peace negotiations (where parties can access or influence negotiations) and in post-conflict political life, is arguably the most important role that parties can potentially play in peacebuilding" (Carothers, 2006:16). However, parties in such situations are most obviously failing in their duty as links between the state and society (Wild & Foresti, 2010). In fact, parties in many conflict-affected environments essentially serve as front organizations for armed groups or as means of gaining power and access, with little motivation to carry out broader interests-aggregation and representation tasks.

Internal Party Democracy

The term "internal party democracy" refers to a broad variety of practices that provide party members access to discussion and decision-making inside the organization (Scarrow, 2005). In accordance with democratic ideals, it was also intended to refer to the internal organization, structure, and coordination of political parties, which directly affects the processes of choosing candidates, establishing leaders, formulating policies, and allocating funds (Ojukwu et al., 2011). Okhaide (2012) defines internal democracy as a party's organizational structure characterized by engagement and inclusion, which act as catalysts for the development of democracy. There are two primary types of party governance that aim to fairly represent the interests of all parties involved. To fill party official positions and choose candidates for general elections, the first option entails conducting open, fair, credible, and frequent elections. The second is ensuring that all party cadres participate in party affairs on an equal and transparent basis.

According to Mimpen (2007), internal party democracy has two fundamental tools. The first is free, fair, and regular elections for party posts and representative offices inside the party. Second, to ensure that their interests are fairly represented, all people and organizations must engage in equitable and transparent participation (Scarrow, 2005, Salih, 2006). Inclusion is a further aspect of internal party democracy. This suggests that the party makes a variety of choices. According to Scarrow (2005), inclusion ensures that all party members have an equal voice in crucial decisions such as selecting the party's leadership and selecting candidates to serve as the group's representatives in general elections. Consequently, more inclusive parties would provide a forum for candid discussion prior to the actual decision-making processes (Hofmeister & Grabow, 2011).

The third thing that distinguishes them is the extent of institutionalization of the party. This reveals the degree of internal decision-making and procedural codification as well as the amount to which the party's collaborative structures are ingrained in its target audience. Internally democratic parties are peculiarly institutionalized since participation rules are necessary to determine eligibility for participation and evaluate possible victors in the party's internal elections (Mimpen, 2007, Mersel, 2006, Matlosa, 2004).

In Nigeria, it might be difficult to identify the true members of a certain party. Because people in Nigeria enter politics to further their own interests, party loyalty is ephemeral (Liebowitz & Ibrahim, 2013). In a 2011 report by the International Republican Institute (IRI), just 37% of Nigerian respondents said they had a great deal of faith in parties, compared to 26% who said they had none at all and 35% who said they had none at all. There's no denying that Nigerian party partisanship and attachment are atrociously low. This is shown by the high incidence of party defection among elected officials and party representatives. The formal structure of the party is called the party-as-organization (PO), and it consists of party leaders, national headquarters, and subnational offices. It is the official party bureaucracy, with "committees" operating in almost every state and town in the nation.

It is inviolable and hence sacrosanct to apply the internal democracy concept to political party affairs, especially when it comes to primary elections. Due process, fair play, equality, and conscience in fulfilling obligations to organizations, groups, or society at large are the cornerstones of internal democracy. The notion of internal democracy seems to be increasingly violated inside the ranks of most political parties in Nigeria, as basic human desires—such as avarice, greed, nepotism, and plain ravenous ambition—continue to take precedence over the needs of the populace. Today, there are cases of questionable substitution, disqualification, and reversal of nomination of previously screened and accepted candidates due to a complex web of party intrigues, overt displays of power, cultures of impunity, and disregard for internal democracy and fair play.

Some scholars have proposed a list of traits that characterize internal party democracy, which includes the party's structure and institutions as well as the relationship between the party and its members. Some of these features include equal and proportional representation of minorities within the party, majority rule voting, substantial influence over the party's platform and agenda, and the power of party members to elect party leaders or dissolve the leadership as well as select candidates for public office. Other features include safeguarding the freedoms of party members, including the prohibition against expulsion without due process, the availability of independent counsel, the freedom of expression and association within the party, especially concerning the formation of

factions, and the right to access information and transparency about the party's management, particularly with regard to financial accountability. This is a bit of a broad definition of internal party democracy.

For example, a political party cannot be deemed internally democratic if it prohibits party splits or does not conduct free and fair elections for member leadership positions. In that sense, the organization of such a party is vertical because power moves from the top, or the leadership, to the bottom rather than from party members at the bottom to the leadership (Mersel, 2006).

To boost the impact and participation of the party's politically engaged people, internal party democracy is required. In a democratic state, political parties must be free of anti-democratic elements. Many nations have legislative measures requiring political parties to follow their own intraparty democratic procedures. But in reality, these are often broken (Hofmeister & Grabow, 2011). According to Hofmeister & Gabrow (2011), adhering to internal party democracy principles produced the following outcomes:

1. It encourages all members to take part in the party's internal issues.
2. It allows party members to voice their opinions inside the organization.
3. It increases the subgroups' level of active involvement, including women, adolescents, people with physical disabilities, minorities, etc.
4. Tolerance and acceptance of differing viewpoints as long as they fit within the framework of the party's core policies.
5. Compliance with the guidelines governing member involvement and intraparty decision-making.
6. When interacting with regular party members, the party leadership shows respect.

The Failure of Internal Democracy in Lagos State All Progressives Congress (APC)

Internal democracy is a fundamental principle of any political party, as it ensures fairness, inclusivity, and transparency within the political organization. It allows party members to participate in decision-making processes, choose their leaders, and shape the party's policies. However, the All-Progressive Congress (APC) in Lagos State has been marred by the failure of internal democracy. Some of the causes of the failure include:

Lack of Level Playing Field: One of the primary reasons for the failure of internal democracy in the Lagos State APC is the lack of a level playing field. The party leadership has often been accused of favoring certain candidates or factions, leading to a skewed electoral process. This bias undermines the trust and confidence of party members, discourages participation, and hampers the growth of a vibrant political culture.

Imposition of Candidates: Another significant issue within the Lagos State APC is the imposition of candidates. This practice involves the party leadership handpicking candidates for various positions without considering the aspirations and preferences of party members. By doing so, the leadership disregards the principle of internal democracy and undermines the will of the majority. This imposition not only stifles the voices of party members but also limits their choices, leading to a lack of representation and accountability.

Influence of Money and Power: The influence of money and power also contributes to the failure of internal democracy within the Lagos State APC. Politics, unfortunately, attracts individuals who are willing to use their financial resources and connections to gain an advantage. Party positions and nominations become commodities that can be bought

and sold, rather than earned through merit and popular support. This undermines the integrity of the party and erodes the trust of party members in the leadership.

Lack of Intra-Party Dialogue: Effective internal democracy requires open and robust intra-party dialogue. However, within the Lagos State APC, there is a lack of constructive engagement and meaningful discussions. Decision-making processes are often opaque, with little or no consultation with party members. This lack of dialogue prevents the party from benefiting from the diverse perspectives and experiences of its members, leading to a stagnant and unresponsive leadership.

Theoretical Perspective

Democratic Peace Theory

In international affairs, the Democratic Peace Theory postulates that democracies are less likely to resort to military confrontation with one another. It claims that democratic countries are more likely to choose diplomacy and collaboration over violent ways of resolving disputes. The globe is moving more and more towards democracy, and over 120 nations have had general elections that have been deemed to be fair and free. A negotiated peace that includes an electoral process to create political structures that are acceptable to all parties and an agreement by the parties themselves to deliver on a sustainable peaceful settlement through a democratic transition is the outcome of many internal conflicts (Gerald Ekenedirichukwu Ezirim, 2009; Harris & Chapman, 2004).

Fundamental to the liberal paradigm of conflict resolution and management in Africa are democracy and elections (Abubakar & Gorondutse, 2013; Fayemi, 2009; Kaur, 2007). These notions are drawn from Western socio-historical and political experience. Theorists of liberal political science have made certain generalizations about how democracies relate to one another.

As a mechanism, democracy offers the structures, rules, channels, and procedures that allow different groups to peacefully pursue their goals and reduce the likelihood that they would turn to the more expensive and unlawful tactic of revolt, which might lead to violence. A democratic government offers a structure that is deemed acceptable for the selection of leaders via regular, nonviolent elections that are competitive (Abubakar & Gorondutse, 2013). As a result, the Democratic Peace Theory postulates that democracies are less likely to clash militarily with one another. It suggests that since democratic nations share many institutions, procedures, and principles, their interactions tend to be more harmonious. According to the notion, democratic governments have a greater stake in preserving peace since they are answerable to their constituents.

Additionally, democratic countries often have mechanisms in place for resolving disputes peacefully, such as mediation and diplomacy. The theory provides a useful framework for understanding the potential benefits of democratic governance.

Several explanations have been proposed to understand why democracies tend to be more peaceful. One argument is that democratic governments are accountable to their citizens, who bear the costs of war both in terms of human lives and economic resources. As a result, leaders in democracies are more cautious and are less likely to engage in unnecessary conflicts. Another explanation is based on the idea that democracies have institutions and processes in place that promote peaceful resolution of conflicts. For instance, democratic nations often have strong legal systems, independent judiciaries, and free press. These

institutions provide a platform for peaceful negotiation and dispute resolution, reducing the likelihood of resorting to violence.

While the Democratic Peace Theory has gained significant support, it is not without its critics. One criticism is that the theory only applies to liberal democracies, which have a specific set of values and principles. It does not account for non-liberal democracies or countries with different cultural or historical contexts. Another criticism is that the theory does not explain the instances when democratic nations have engaged in armed conflict. Critics argue that there have been numerous examples where democracies have gone to war, such as the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War or the invasion of Iraq. These examples challenge the notion that democracies are inherently peaceful.

Research Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between peacebuilding strategies in terms of conflict transformation and internal democracy of All Progressives Congress in Lagos State.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between peacebuilding strategies in terms of conflict-sensitive policies and internal democracy of All Progressives Congress in Lagos State.

Method

This presents the methodology that was used in carrying out the research work. It therefore discusses the research design, area of study, sample size and sampling technique, data collection technique/source of data, and data processing and analysis.

In the choice of a design for this study, descriptive and correlational research designs are considered suitable. This is because the study will make an attempt to describe: peace building, internal democracy, All Progressives Congress as a political party, and their relationship. The study also describes the interplay between the variables. The study covers the Lagos State, a state in South-Western Nigeria. The study population comprises all the political party stakeholders in all the twenty local government councils in Lagos State. The stratified random sampling technique will be used to select thirty percent (30%) of total number of political party stakeholders in Lagos State. That is, for all the political party stakeholders, 30 percent of them was chosen after stratifying into local government councils. That is, two local government councils was selected from the three senatorial districts of the state, making six (6) local government councils.

Again, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select those that really involve in the political party activities. It is purposive in that, persons that have stayed or have been participating in their various political activities for four years are selected as participants in the study. Therefore, a total of 300 political party stakeholders are used for the study. That is, 50 participants per each local government council. However, the selection of respondents from each local government council was based on an equal basis.

Qualitative archival and library research was consulted to provide data for; analyses of the background of peace building strategies and internal democracy in particular reference to All Progressive Congress in Lagos State, Nigeria. The research instrument used for the study was responded to by the political party stakeholders such as ward chairmen, youth leaders, women leaders, canvassers during election, executive members of political parties and party members. The questionnaires were tagged Peacebuilding Strategies

Questionnaire (PBSQ) and Internal Democracy Questionnaire (IDQ). This instrument was used to elicit information from respondents regarding peacebuilding strategies and internal democracy. The (PBSQ) and (IDQ) which were responded to by the political party stakeholders such as ward chairmen, youth leaders, women leader, canvassers during election, executive members of political parties and party members, and the instrument is divided into two parts. Section A requests for information on personal data of respondents. Section B contains structured items that were patterned along the Likert-type four-point scale with the options, Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) for IDQ, and PBSQ.

The information gathered was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Tables, charts, figures, and percentages were among the descriptive statistics used. Inferential statistics used were correlation analysis for testing hypotheses 1 and 2 at 0.05 level of significance through the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0. In terms of scoring both questionnaires (PBSQ) and (IDQ), all positively worded items for the Likert-type of instruments were scored in this order:

- Strongly Agree (SA), = 4
- Agree (A), = 3
- Disagree (D) = 2
- Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

However, the reverse was the case for the negative worded items.

Results and Discussion

Test of Hypotheses

Table 1: Correlation Showing Relationship Between Peacebuilding Strategies in terms of Conflict Transformation and Internal Democracy of All Progressives Congress in Lagos State, Nigeria

		Conflict Transformation	Internal Democracy
Conflict transformation	Pearson Correlation	1	.004
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.944
	N	289	289
Internal democracy	Pearson Correlation	.004	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.944	
	N	289	289

The result of the test performed indicates that there is a very weak, positive and non-significant relationship between peacebuilding strategies in terms of conflict transformation and internal democracy of All Progressives Congress in Lagos State, Nigeria ($r = .004$, $N = 289$, $\rho > 0.05$). The implication of this is that peacebuilding strategies in terms of conflict transformation positively influence internal democracy of All Progressives Congress in Lagos State to a very low extent. But the result shows that the peacebuilding strategies in terms of conflict transformation do not statistically significantly determine internal democracy of All Progressives Congress in Lagos State. The null hypothesis is not rejected; hence, there is no significant relationship between peacebuilding strategies in terms of conflict transformation and internal democracy of All Progressives Congress in Lagos State.

Table 2: Correlation Showing Relationship Between Peacebuilding Strategies in terms of Conflict-Sensitive Policies and Internal Democracy of All Progressives Congress in Lagos State, Nigeria

		Conflict-sensitive policies	Internal democracy
Conflict-sensitive policies	Pearson Correlation	1	.537**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	289	289
Internal democracy	Pearson Correlation	.537**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	289	289

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows that that there is a positive, moderate and significant relationship between peacebuilding strategies in terms of conflict-sensitive policies and internal democracy of All Progressives Congress in Lagos State ($r = .537$, $N = 289$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that peacebuilding strategies in terms of conflict-sensitive policies do significantly influence internal democracy of All Progressives Congress in Lagos State. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between peacebuilding strategies in terms of conflict-sensitive policies and internal democracy of All Progressives Congress in Lagos State, Nigeria is rejected. Peacebuilding strategies and conflict transformation play a pivotal role in promoting and enhancing internal democracy. These approaches not only address the root causes of conflict but also lay the foundation for sustainable peace and the establishment of democratic institutions. By fostering dialogue, reconciliation, and participation, peacebuilding and conflict transformation contribute to the development of robust democratic systems. One key way in which peacebuilding strategies and conflict transformation influence internal democracy is by promoting inclusive and participatory decision-making processes. During periods of conflict, power imbalances often prevail, and marginalized groups are excluded from decision-making structures. Peacebuilding efforts aim to rectify this by creating spaces for dialogue and negotiation, where diverse voices can be heard and taken into account (Jega, 2018). By involving all stakeholders in decision-making, peacebuilding fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment, leading to more democratic outcomes.

Furthermore, peacebuilding strategies and conflict transformation contribute to the strengthening of democratic institutions and the rule of law. In conflict-affected political arena, institutions are often weakened or corrupted, undermining the democratic process. By promoting accountability, transparency, and good governance, peacebuilding initiatives help rebuild and strengthen institutions necessary for democratic functioning. This includes establishing independent judiciaries, promoting free and fair elections, and ensuring the protection of human rights (Smoljan, 2010).

Conflict-sensitive policies are designed to address conflicts in a way that minimizes their negative impact and maximizes their potential for positive change. When implemented effectively, these policies can transform conflicts into opportunities for growth, improve the overall functioning of political parties, and contribute to the broader democratic landscape.

Conflict-sensitive policies prioritize inclusivity and ensure that all party members have a fair chance to participate in decision-making processes. By creating mechanisms for dialogue, consultation, and consensus-building, these policies encourage the involvement

of diverse perspectives and prevent the dominance of a few influential individuals or factions. This fosters a culture of democratic decision-making within parties and enhances internal democracy.

Conflict-sensitive policies address these issues by promoting open communication channels, clear rules and regulations, and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. By enhancing transparency and ensuring accountability, these policies create a conducive environment for internal democracy to thrive. Party members feel empowered and confident that their voices will be heard and their concerns will be addressed.

Conflict-sensitive policies emphasize the importance of conflict resolution and mediation mechanisms within political parties. By providing training and resources for party members to effectively manage conflicts, these policies prevent the escalation of disputes and promote a culture of constructive engagement. This, in turn, strengthens internal democracy by fostering a respectful and collaborative atmosphere within parties.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In Lagos State, political parties that embrace internal democracy are more likely to resolve conflicts in a peaceful and inclusive manner. Lagos State has witnessed the positive outcomes of embracing internal democracy in political parties. Unarguably, conflict transformation and conflict-sensitive policies play significant roles in shaping internal democracy within the APC in Lagos State. These approaches can facilitate dialogue, inclusion, and fairness, allowing all party members to actively participate in decision-making processes. By adopting these practices, the party can strengthen its internal structures, promote unity, and improve its overall effectiveness. These have helped to build trust among party members and reduce the incidence of intra-party conflicts. As a result, the party has been able to focus more on delivering good governance and addressing the needs of the electorate.

The recommendations that followed were based on the findings:

1. To enable a long-term, sustainable democratic process, party politics must have a strong, fair, and decentralized method for settling conflicts. Although conflict cannot be avoided, its impacts may be mitigated by managing, controlling, and reducing it.
2. Deeply embedded internal democratic procedures inside political parties are necessary for All Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos State to democratize successfully. Internal democracy encourages due process, fair play, equality, and moral rectitude when it comes to party management. Furthermore, internal democracy will allow for inclusiveness and decentralization in party institutions, preventing powerful members from taking control of the party.
3. The party must keep a careful eye on the selection of candidates for elections. Rather of being based on loyalty to some influential party members, it should be grounded on consensus.

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