

INTRA-PARTY CONFLICTS AND DEMOCRACY: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: Hitherto, studies on democracy and party politics have directed more attention at inter-party wranglings across various levels of the Nigerian State. This study seeks to examine the nature, patterns and variables perceived to be responsible for conflicts within various political parties involved in the electioneering process. This study adopted the historical research design reflective of the qualitative nature of the study. The game theory and conflict theory were combined to examine the variables. Our findings show that, political parties determining the leadership pattern in Nigeria, internal conflict in political parties is an inevitability, intra-party conflicts occurs when the constitution of the party is not followed or there is a bias, when the interest of certain groups are not met, when the standard bearer is not sellable cum generally accepted, etcetera. We recommended that, zoning formula should be maintained, the runner-up in the primaries be given the leverage to choose who becomes the vice-president, and one of the major determinants to become a party's standard bearer, is a minimum of two years membership to align with party's ethos and etcetera. Our work would be the most recent that suggests a pragmatic approach to managing the internal politics in the party. Moreso, it is going to be a very rich and useful material for subsequent research of similar interests.

Keywords: Intra-party, conflict, democracy, presidential election, Nigeria

Introduction

The absence and/or operation of political parties make the whole idea of representative democracy somewhat unrealistic. Public opinion is well organized and represented by political parties, and it is still parties that organize as well as enhances interest. Whilst the aspect political leadership is a carried out by parties, of parties' articulation of public they support policy options and also serve as formidable options for the electorate to make informed decisions during election period. For some time now, it is becoming very obvious, that most of the political parties currently Nigeria prefer operating a rather secretive cum closed system with attendant denial or deprivation of members participation in making decisions, as well controlling and/or reducing the door of opportunity to pick nomination form and contest under the party during election (Aleyomi, 2013). It is as a result of this, Gambo (2022) asserted that the limitations party leaders introduced to socio-political activities is evil and outright wickedness, and has opened the door to acrimonious

action as well as cross-carpeting across most parties in the country. The importance of intra-party democracy and indivisibility is sine qua non to sustenance of its peaceful coexistence as far as a country is concerned.

To Scarrow (2000), for democracy to thrive there must be a very solid and consistent political parties having all it requires to act as voice for citizens cum strong values and principles that speaks to their readiness to control political power for the common good. The challenges faced by political parties during selection and election process of choosing credible candidates that have the character, competence and capacity is as a result of the ever-increasing reoccurring dissensions, leading to rising discombobulation in the internal workings of parties with attendant disconnect of the masses and leaders elected on the party platform, as well as complexities of autocratic elements. It is against this backdrop; this study seeks to understudy democracy and intra-party conflicts on elections in Nigeria. Democracy, alongside multiparty system with ideological differences cum manifestos are very important variables and determinant of good governance in many countries. Pwanagba (2015) argued that without clear-cut ideology, solid and independent political parties, good governance is likely a mirage. Representative democracy is centered on general participation of the electorates whilst representatives that are elected are expected to be accountable and transparency. Political party happens to be the bedrock for the activities of a democratic setting to thrive.

Though, we cannot control or end conflict within a parties as it is an inevitability amongst humans, it is detrimental to its existence cum relevance, as it can lead to betrayal, cross carpeting and selling out of parties by members with an attendant of annihilation of the common goal of the party. It is expected that the interest of the political party should override any selfish cum personal interest, therefore members are to be impersonal in their dealings. Dudley (1973) asserts, a fundamental quality, common to every human or social grouping is interdependence amongst members as they interact. Elections in Nigeria is been characterized with so much irregularities, violence and a whole lot of anomalies just because both those who contest during these elections and the so-called party leaders denigrate themselves to employing shenanigans and hoodlums simply because they want to control or perhaps maintain their hold of political power. According to Eline and Alexander (2014), elections play important role in democratization, no leader can claim de jure legitimacy, regardless of the means of attaining political power.

In Nigeria, it is the political parties that contest elections not individual. By this, no politician can hold political power without being involved and affiliated to a party. The political party is a key player in educating, organizing even mobilizing its members and influences them to get involved in the electioneering process. Sufficient to say, the political party has a major role to play in as regards the centripetal and/or centrifugal dispositions of members towards politics.

Statement of the Problem

Intra-party conflict has taken a new look for some time now. As more elections are being conducted in the country, new approaches and methods are being crafted by party men in order to propagate their agenda. The issue of fractionalization has is no longer new in the political space of the country. There are different factions, each struggling and politicking to seize the structure of the party. According to Gambo (2022), since there would continue to be varied opinions, values and beliefs, the issue of factional politics, conflict and what

have you would remain. Christopher (2013) argued that factional politics is needed for a political to maintain its democracy as well as make it solid. It is the internal party conflict that makes democracy possible and thick, thus these variegated groups wearing different ideological colours that come together to form parties. Considering the dynamic nature of parties, as well as the contradictions in ideology that are inherent, one can easily anticipate conflict from the structure and formation of the party. Although, there has been plethora of studies on this topic, however there is still a lacuna. Most of the studies focus on the reasons and/or causes of intra-party conflict. Only few have tried to suggest possible and realistic steps and/or action that will reduce the conflict.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

To understand the concept and forms of conflicts in a political party.

To understand the nexus between intra-party conflicts and democracy.

To study the causes of intra-party conflicts, especially in the 2023 Presidential election in Nigeria

Scope of the Study

This study is an assessment of the 2023 Presidential election in Nigeria, the intra-party party conflict and how it directly affected democracy. It focused on the internal politics that were visible in the major political parties that contested in the last election, which are; All Progressives Congress (APC), People's Democratic Party (PDP), Labour Party (LP) and New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP).

Literature Review

Conflict

Conflict is part of life. In any social gathering there must be disagreement, varied opinions, and ideologies. In the words of Pruitt (1998); definitions abound on conflict, as authors are plethora in numbers. For specificity, some definitions would suffice here. Rubin, et. al (1994) sees conflict, as a divergent perception of interests or values that the conflicting groups 'present aspirations cannot be realistic side-by-side. It is visible in different ways, it may be violent cum inflicting pain and injury on the conflicting groups, even as it affects other not involved directly (Gambo, 2022). Conflict occurs when two or more persons or groups are incompatible in their goals, regardless of whether it is just. It starts from the perceived belief of a negative impact on values by a party over another (Robbins, 1998). The sole argument of individual group to a conflict is interest. In this wise, there would be moves and counter one's to seize control, so as to achieve their goals. Moreso, when persons or parties are cut in the web of incompatibility vis-a-vis goals. It can either be functional or dysfunctional, based actions of the actors (Gambo, 2022). When conflict is functional, its end is growth, development and what have you. Kenneth Boulding (1963: 5) defines conflict from a political view. To him, it is a competition from the point of knowledge of incompatibility by the groups involved, in relation to futuristic positions they seek to occupy. What then is intra-party conflict? Intra-party conflict is one that happens when party faithful compete for political offices that are not compatible or make moves to change the process making decisions in the party to suit their interest. It is very visible often during nomination, selection and screening of faithful for elective positions

both internally and externally. Political party are social groups, they and conflicts are like five and six. It so because, in every social set-up, there is bound to persons whose sole aim is to project self rather than the party. Dudley (1973:8) asserts, a fundamental feature associated to social groups is interaction and interdependence of members. However, is important is that the group members 'interests should be subordinated to the larger interest of the group. Political parties often aggregate the various interests to form a coherent and well-articulated party objectives. Boucek (2009) observed three forms of intra-party conflicts which are cooperative, competitive and degenerative (Gambo, 2022). The cooperative conflict is most accepted as it gives avenues for the resolution of the conflict, constructively between party faithful.

Political Party

The term political party speaks to - a group of individuals who are politically conscious other than a government whose sole aim is to control the state by selecting and electing party men/women who are in charge of government's operation as well as dictates how policies would be (Lemay, 2001). These parties allow a good way for aggregating choices into offices by election in systems that are democratized. The role parties perform in making sure the growth of democratization process continues, cannot be overemphasized. The Friedrich Ebert Foundation Centre for Governance and Development (2010) did research on making political parties to be institutionalized in Kenya, as they are the drivers of representative democracy. The functions of political parties in a democracy include:

- Representing interests of a group in the state (by being in Parliament);
- Educating leaders on the importance of democracy and participative democracy;
- They educate and communicate to the electorates about politics.
- They mobilize as well as encourage the public politically, on how to vote during elections;
- Recruiting political leaders;
- Aggregation and articulation of interests;
- They promote debates that are pluralistic by presenting bringing various policies options;
- and
- To integrate the various interests in a polity to make it cohesive.

The Evolution cum Metamorphosis of Intra-party Politics in Nigeria

The fundamental democratic role of parties is bridging the gap between the citizenry and the government (Sartori 2005). For clarity, political parties are to give room for opportunities for active party members, activists as well as stakeholder that are part of the decision-making process within the party. Scholars as well as theorists are arguing on the desirability and Debate continues among scholars and theorists of comparative politics and democracy depending on how durable and feasible is the internal democracy. The internal mechanism on how to integrate members to the process of making decision should be expanded as yardstick for enhancing and managing membership integration, political party unity internally, as well as cohesion, required to enhance a formidable push in the polity of the state, mostly a multi-party democracy.

Michels (1968) argues that, internal democracy is a threat to party stability. He improved on his "iron law of oligarchy", arguing that parties are generally undemocratic and tilts towards oligarchy, with the elite class and leaders seize party's structure at the expense of party faithful. This school of thought argues that, there is a high level of disparity vis-a-vis

intra-party democracy, and the elite preference for organization, structure as well as party system. Political parties are not democratic internally. In this regard, whether or not state democracy is present, system is not a function of intra-party democracy. Some other scholars, are of the view that intra-party democracy weakens political parties and is therefore undesirable. Proponents of this view argue that "in order to serve democratic ends, political parties themselves must be ruled by oligarchic principles" (Teorell 1999). The two named positions speak to the deep-rooted contention that characterizes the two approaches on intra-party democracy prescriptive and normative, with much emphasis on parties and democracies within the African continent. The argument in favor of intra-party democracy as a way to expand democracy in the larger society, is gaining momentum vis-a-vis the variables of feasibility cum desirability. Considering the nature of party politics in Africa, the role of intra-party activities in the consolidation and entrenchment of democracy in Africa, cannot be overemphasized. Notwithstanding, the term is less popular globally, arguments have been forward to counter it, assuming that decisions making process that are democratic, mostly are inefficient. When the internal wranglings within a political party is overwhelming, it further cripples its strength to face opponents during an election. The principles of democracy assert that, leadership must be derived through election, and it must be periodically, as well as collective in nature and must be organized. Morris Duverger (1954) expresses concern that necessary armaments needed for a political struggle is lacking in a party.

Intra-Party Politics and Democracy in Nigeria

Parties in Nigeria are bye-products of the environment they found themselves, most a times their formation, structures, functions, as well as operations. Regardless, the expectations, to serve as catalyst for ensuring as well as enhancing sustainable democratic patterns. However, seems to be an increasing public anxiety as to the future of the existence of democracy in the country (Anifowoshe, 2004). This increased in worry, is as a result of the style and degree of intra-party competition, which invariably had given room to great bickering, political pandemonium, as well as unrest in most part of Nigeria. By and large, the nature of intra-party activities has remained sacrosanct, as there has not been a real transformation, capable of solidifying democracy.

Variables like competition, politicking bargaining and compromise are inseparable to democratic ethos. The vehicle to make it a reality is the political party. Internal politicking and/or intra-party democracy has deteriorated to a very embarrassing state. The conventional way of operation is somewhat a challenge, e.g intra-party activities is becoming more confrontational, with the attendant of violent conflicts, destruction of lives and properties. The problem of intra-party activities as well as divisions within it in the country has consistently led to poor performance in general elections in Nigeria. During the build up to the general election in 2015, the party in government, Peoples' Democratic Party, (PDP) with opposition parties have established a dynasty of consistent intra-party violence and hostilities, where there is no discipline cum respect for party's values within the party.

The breakup due to lack of democracy within parties from ab initio of the 4th Republic in 1999 in Nigeria is a tragedy in project Nigeria. These conflict manifest in different forms viz the harsh feud between so called "godfathers" with their "godsons", brutal killings of candidates e.g Mr. Fatai Williams of Lagos PDP, violent clash, switching from one place

to another, snatching of ballot box, kidnapping, assault as well as never ending judicial cases with attendant of catastrophic cancellation and annulment of hitherto electoral triumph.

We have had incidences of internal party crisis, leading to violence, as a result of the imposition of candidates, as well as the overbearing disposition of party Leaders. A good example is the Ngige saga. The alignment ended brutally his boss, Chris Uba. Whilst Ngige was still in office as the Governor, was kidnapped 10 July 2003, by gun men supposedly connected to his godfather. Other incidences of soiled election by imposing candidates on the party by godfathers that turned out abysmally was the case of Governor Chimaroke Nnamani, who stayed in office from 1999 - 2007, and his estranged leader, Jim Nwobodo, all under the People's Democratic Party (PDP) women ended in violent and disastrous outcomes since the inception of this Republic were those involving former Enugu State Governor, Chimaroke Nnamani (1999 - 2007) and his estranged godfather, Jim Nwobodo both of the People's Democratic Party (PDP); there is also the case of late Mohammed Lawal (1999 - 2003) and his godfather, late Olusola Saraki of Kwara State Kwara State, members of the defunct All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), the Oyo state case between Raheed Ladoja, Governor from 2003- 2007 versus Governor Adebayo Alao-Akala from 2007 - 2011. Another very important example was between President Goodluck Jonathan from 1999 most serious manifestations in the recent time, is that of the estranged relationship between the incumbent President, Goodluck Jonathan and his former boss, former President Olusegun Obasanjo from 1999 - 2007. The later superimposed Goodluck Jonathan on the party, People's Democratic Party (PDP) The Congress was held on 10 December 2010, in preparation for the 2011 presidential election. President Goodluck Jonathan won in a controversial manner. The northerners never saw his victory, an Ijaw man from a minority region, winning a federal election. However, in the next electioneering year (2011) the music changed, as a result of stiff opposition within the party. Five members left the party, indicating disapproval of the superimposed candidate. The five members were serving governors under the umbrella of the PDP. Their names are: Rotimi Amaechi, Rivers State; Rabiu Musa Kwankwanso, governor of Kano State; Abdulfatai Ahmed, Kwara State; Murtala Nyako of Adamwa State and Aliyu Wamakko of Sokoto State), they all left the party for the All-Progressives Congress (APC), including about one hundred and fifty of members of PDP in the Federal House of representatives, joined the APC, in the build up to the 2015 nationwide election in the country.

The regime of hijacking and controlling parties structures gained momentum, disregarding the internal ethos cum value of the political party of the leadership and structures of political parties vis-a-vis inclusion, honor for party's constitution and discipline. A new form of gladiators emerged at all levels, disregarding the rules, and ethos of the party, sparkling provocative cum violence during party meetings, rallies, campaigns, and what have you. All sorts of atrocities viz killings, maiming, assaults, kidnapping, libel, slander, etc were perpetuated by the so-called gladiators of the political parties, threatening the stay of democracy, and further denigrating Nigeria backwards, as a country lacking values and respect for the rule of law, in the commonwealth of nations.

The threat to intra-party democracy is not peculiar to Nigeria alone, with the pace at which things are going, there is a threat to its survival in Nigeria, it is even getting worse in the hands of the All-Progressives Congress (APC), under the president Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration. The exodus movement of hitherto members of PDP to APC, increased rate

of propaganda, usage of state power to intimidate, and suffocate opponents, and the outright threat by the government on opposition parties, makes democracy to be standing on one leg in the country. Power is fast becoming a scam, enriching its holders, no longer held in trust in Nigeria, hence all and sundry wishes to have a bite from it (Mbah, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

The game and conflict theory were used respectively as theoretical guide for this study. Game theory, is a subset of applied mathematics introduced for analytical purpose. It analyzes peculiar cases, especially the interplay that exists amongst parties of similarity, antagonistic, or hybrid interests. This theory was propounded by the economists John von Neumann and Oscar Morgenstern in 1944 in the book: *The Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*. Ideally, in a normal game, where there are fixed rules, "players" come up with every trick in order to outwit themselves. They try to envisage the actions cum decisions of another. An antidote to a competition suggests the maximal strategy or strategies for individual as well as stating expected average or outcome. Not until 1967 when a very good alternative was recommended, the thought was, for every competition there is at least a solution.

This theory has been used to interpret quite a number of situations ranging from sciences to management cum social sciences, where players choices have to be engaged to disrupt outcomes. With emphasis on the crucial aspects of making decision, or the players-controlled aspects as against pure chance, the game theory can be supplied either as supplement or fully. Pragmatically, this theory has been used to predict political coalitions or the conglomerates of a business, price optimization in a competitive environment, voters' power, and who gets what, when and how in a political party. Games are categorized on certain characteristic features, chief amongst is the player's number. To this end, a game could either be by one-individual, two-individual, or n-individual (where n means more than two) game, each of these forms have its unique characteristics. Moreso, the player could be a party, nation, a player need not be an individual; it may be a nation, a company, or a group with of persons having similar interests.

Winning the structures of a political party is like a game of thrones, with requires one or a faction to be very strategic in planning and all that. Every gambler cum player knows that, the secret to survival is knowing what to throw in as well as, what to keep.

On the other hand, conflict theory sees conflict as an inevitability. To the proponent of this theory, as long as there are social gatherings, conflict is bound to occur. This theory was put forward by Karl Marx, a German sociopolitical philosopher. Conflict theorists argues that, the major cause of conflict in a society is the scramble for scarce resources (Hayes and Kelly, 2023). This theory holds that domination cum power, as against conformity and/or consensus are the guiding factors of societal order. Those who controls the structure of a political party, would rather die than to allow, anyone, especially those they consider inferior or godsons, to take it from them. This theory is premised on the believe that, the elite would work very hard to ensure that their influence, keep increasing and not decrease. The basic assumptions of this theory are;

Competition: Competition is one major reason for conflict in a society. As long as there are various interest groups within a political party, competition would always be visible and this will give rise to conflict cum politicking.

Revolution: As long as there is a clash of interest, those who control the structure of the parties, deciding who gets what, when and how, and those who follow, a time will come when the ruled would want to have a say in decision making process. Just like in the just concluded presidential election in Nigeria, we saw a new wave of politics, hitherto godfathers losing their grip on power to their godsons e.g Delta State, former Governor James Ibori was politically overthrown by Governor Ifeanyi Arthur Okowa, Edo State, Godwin Obaseki has long called it a day with his godfather, Senator Adams Oshiomole.

Structural Inequality: As long as certain persons would keep asserting their interest on the party, eliminating oppositions and what have you, there would continue to be inequality. And this is one major reason that would lead to conflict in the party. Power is transient, as such the inequality graph can change at any time. During the last presidential election in Nigeria, we saw the rise of a third force, who threatened the influence of the so-called heavyweights. The emergence of Mr. Peter Gregory Obi, brought a new wave cum sensation in the political process.

War: When conflict is not well managed, it will bring about a breakdown of law and order in the society. Going by projections, prophecies etc. about the last presidential election in Nigeria, this country would have been divided. It took the intervention of some very few nationalists, religious leaders and international bodies, to avert what would have been a national disaster.

Method/Methodology

This study adopted the historical design that reflects the qualitative nature. Data was collected from secondary means which includes, books, journals, articles (published and unpublished), internet, and etcetera. Our focused was on the internal politics that are visible in a political party, especially in the last nationwide election in Nigeria.

Empirical Analysis

Intra Party Conflicts and Democracy in the Just Concluded Presidential election in Nigeria Political activities took a new wave in the history of Nigeria's democracy in the just concluded Presidential election in the country. The narrative changed, as it was no longer business as usual. One major reason for this development, is the factor of intra-party conflicts. Whilst we admit that there over 30 political parties in the country, only 18 of them contested in the last presidential election in the country (stears, 2023). They are: Accord (A): Christopher Imumolen, Action Alliance (AA): Hamza al-Mustapha, Action Democratic Party (ADP): Yabagi Sani, Action Peoples Party (APP): Osite Nnadi, African Action Congress (AAC): Dumebi Kachikwu, All Progressives Congress: Bola Tinubu, All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA): Peter Umeadi, Allied Peoples Movement (APM): Princess Ojei, Boot Party (BP): Sunday Adenuga, Labour Party (LP): Peter Gregory Obi, National Rescue Movement (NRM): Felix Osakwe, New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP): Rabiw Kwankwaso, Peoples Redemption Party (PRP): Kola Abiola, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP): Atiku Abubakar, Social Democratic Party (SDP): Adewole Adebayo, Young Progressive Party (YPP): Malik Ado- Ibrahim (Stears, 2023). In the build up to the 2023 Presidential election, there were series of activities, politicking and internal wranglings within the various political parties. One major reason for it, is interest. Everyone and/or group has certain interest, as such would not mind scattering the system, provided their

ambition saw the light of the day. For this study we would address certain noticeable incidents in the four major political parties, PDP, APC, LP and NNPP.

Intra-Party Politics in PDP

The People's Democratic Party (PDP), was one of the major parties that contested in the 2023 Presidential election. The process of choosing her choice candidate was characterized with a lot of wranglings. Starting from the party's primary election, over ten aspirants bought the party's form. During the early days of awareness, the likes of Bukola Saraki, (former senate president), Nyesom Ezenwo Wike (former governor of Rivers State), Aminu Tambuwal (former governor of Sokoto State), Udom Emmanuel (former governor of Akwa-Ibom State), Bala Mohammed, Pius Anyim, Sam Ohabunwa and Olivia Tariela. The party's primary election was held on the 28th of May, 2022 at Eagle Square, Abuja. There was a dramatic twist of fate the moment one of leading aspirants, Aminu Tambuwal backed down for Atiku Abubakar, the newest entrant to the. And, the latter won the party's primary election. Immediately after, a new faction emerged, spearheaded by Nyesom Wike, who came second in the party's primary election. This new group called themselves, 'The Integrity Group'. It comprised of five state governors (then) viz Nyesom Wike (Rivers State), Samuel Ortom (Benue State), Seyi Makinde (Oyo state), Okezie Ikpeazu (Abia State) and Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi (Enugu State).

Event that followed the post PDP primaries to the general election, showed that the party was heading to a national disaster, as the internal mechanism of the party could not address the problem created. Whilst the integrity group are holding on the party's constitution which allows for zoning of key positions to the North and South, if the presidential tickets go to the South, National chairman would come from the North, and vice versa. The pro-Atiku group were of the opinion that, individuals are allowed to contest the election. Save to say that, it was the intra-party politics within the PDP that necessitated their failure in the general election.

Intra-party Politics in APC

The All-Progressives Congress (APC), in the build up to the 2023 general elections, was the ruling party, having won the previous election. As such, it was amongst the parties to watch out for in the forthcoming election. It fielded over 10 presidential candidates. Intra-party politics started from the removal of Adams Oshiomole as national chairman of the party, in the believe that, it would cause a major setback to ambition of Bola Tinubu, who was said to have been the major backbone of the former. A national Congress was held on 26th of March 2022 and Abdullahi Adamu (former governor of Nasarawa State) emerged as National chairman. This brought a new wave to the presidential race, as alot of persons who were hitherto afraid of the person of Bola Tinubu, bought presidential tickets. The events leading to the party's primary election was highly intriguing, following a committee led by John Oyegun (first national chairman of the party), a rival of Tinubu, asking aspirants to state what they would do, should the party decide to have an anointed (consensus) candidate. Whilst others confirmed their loyalty to the party's decision, Bola Tinubu had an objection, he was confident that in case t happens, the candidate must be him. Though it was not clear, the party's executives were dancing towards Ahmed Lawan (then senate president), or as alternate plan, Yemi Osinbajo (then Vice President). After a series of delay cum postponement, the presidential primaries of the party were held on June

6-7th 2024. The various aspirants were allowed to first greet the public; delegates, national executive, stakeholders, etc.

Some of the aspirants who participated in the primaries are: Bola Tinubu, Yemi Osinbajo, Ahmed Lawan, Rochas Okorocha, Chika Onu, Rotimi Amaechi, Godswill Akpabio, Dimeji Bankole, Kayode Fayemi, Uju Ohanenye, Ibikunle Amosun, etc. Some minutes into the primaries final greetings, there was a dramatic twist of fate, when one of the aspirants, Godswill Akpabio (former governor of Akwa-Ibom State) openly stepped down for Bola Tinubu and urged his supporters to give him block votes. Other aspirants kept coming to give their final speech, and four others openly stepped down for Bola Tinubu. The other aspirants that stepped down are: Dimeji Bankole, Kayode Fayemi, Uju Ohanenye and Ibikunle Amosun.

Right there, it was becoming clear as to who would have the day. When the result was announced, Bola Tinubu had a landslide victory and was declared the party's standard bearer. Rotimi Amaechi came a distant second, followed by Yemi Osinbajo and Ahmed Lawan, in this order. The emergence of Bola Tinubu as standard bearer, was able to manage the post primary conflict that characterizes such election, being the party's national leader. Although, there were some visible incidents of intra-party politics, as the Abdullahi Adamu wanted to choose the vice-president, but Tinubu stepped in and Kashim Shettima was selected.

The internal politics in the party was very well managed, and the party won the presidential election in 2023.

Intra-party Politics in Labour Party (LP)

Intra-party politics in labour party prior to and during the general election in 2023 was minimal. There was no open show of power display as we saw in the People's Democratic Party (PDP), between pro-Atiku and pro-Wike, such that the former was politically denied access to campaign in Rivers State. All three aspirants who indicated interest in contesting for president under the Labour Party's umbrella stepped down for Peter Obi, immediately he moved from PDP. These persons are Prof. Pat. Utomi, Eragbe Anselm and Olubusola Olufolake. Infact, the acceptance of Peter Obi's candidature brought alot of sympathy votes from other parties. He came out third in the general election. It was after the election, during the post-election events that, we saw some level of intra-party politics at play. One Lamidi Apapa claimed to be the new National chairman of the party, citing the suspension of Barr. Julius Abure. However, the court has reinstated the latter back to office.

Intra-party politics in NNPP

The New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) declared Rabiun Musa Kwankwanso as her standard bearer for the last presidential election in 2023. There were minimal cases of intra-party politics. The emergence of Kwankwanso managed the various interests within the party. And he led the party to winning Kano state, and some legislative seats at the Federal level. However, the post-election period saw some manifestation of internal politicking. Rabiun Kwankwanso was accused of inter-party politics, and was suspended. A new faction emerged led by Major Agbo. These factions lay claim to being the original owners of the party, and that Rabiun Kwankwanso should not be gallivanting around as the leader.

Conclusion

Intra-party politics is something that cannot be separated from the party. The party as a body is made up of various interest groups, who would do everything possible to ensure they remain relevant in the scheme of things. Therefore, an attempt to remove or stop it, is dead on arrival.

Recommendation This study would be futile without making some recommendations. Below are some recommendations:

First, in order to ensure for fairness, equity and inclusion, political parties in Nigeria should adopt and follow the principle of zoning.

Second, the runner-up (except stated otherwise), should be giving the opportunity to become the vice-presidential candidate of the party.

Thirdly, for anyone to emerge standard bearer of a political party, he or she must have stayed in the party for at least two years, to understand the ideology of the party.

Contribution to knowledge This study no doubt is not the first to be written with similar topics. However, our contribution to knowledge is in these two areas:

It is the most recent work that suggest a pragmatic approach to managing the internal conflict within political parties.

It is a useful resource for further research of similar interests, knowing that knowledge can only be improved upon.

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