

PARTY CRISIS AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIA: ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC) OGUN STATE IN FOCUS (2018-2019)

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Abstract

Party politics is an integral part of a democratic society. However, intra-party crisis has undermined the significance of political parties in Nigeria. This paper investigated intra-party crisis and democratic consolidation in Nigeria using the APC Ogun State between 2018 and 2019 as a focus. It made use of secondary sources of data and adopted the Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGCT) as its theoretical tool of analysis. The paper observed that intra-party crisis is an age-long affair in Nigeria's political landscape, which was evident in the pre-independence politics of the nation and has evolved through political development to date. It argued that intra-party crisis witnessed in Ogun state APC between 2018 and 2019 had terrifying effect on democratic consolidation in the state and the nation at large. It argued that the efforts made by the stakeholders to resolve the crisis in APC Ogun state proved abortive. Available records indicate that the APC intra-party crisis weakened party growth and mobilisation capacity in Ogun state. It initiated political instability through party defection, excessive monetised politics, electoral violence and other electoral irregularities. It concluded that intra-party crisis frustrated the move towards democratic consolidation in Ogun state. The paper recommended, among others, that APC Ogun state should display openness and transparency in the process of selecting party flag bearers and party executives while members should be given opportunity to participate in party activities. Also, the party should establish an unbiased conflict management and resolution mechanism for addressing intra-party crisis while the Ogun state APC should strictly uphold party internal democracy and comply with provisions of party constitution.

Keywords: All Progressive Congress, Democracy, Democratic consolidation, Intra-party crisis, Ogun State

Introduction

Political party plays a critical role in the democratisation process of any nation because parties are considered as the major lubricants of democracy (Okonkwo & Unaji, 2016). This is due to the fact that, parties are expected to participate in political socialisation, contribute to the acquisition of political power, facilitate recruitment of political leadership and serve as a unifying force in a culturally segmented political environment (Okonkwo, 2015; Omotola, 2010).

But taking a cursory look at Nigeria's political system since inception, it is observed that party crisis has been the order of the day. This makes political activities to be characterised by hatred, enmity, victimisation and suspicion, resulting in bitter struggles among party members in their quest to achieve their vested interests. The inordinate ambition of some of the party stalwarts, to determine

'who takes what, when and how' in party calculations and reward system has created political problems in the polity (Olorungbemi, 2014). Therefore, the contemporary incidences of intra and inter-party squabbles associated with party politics in the country is nothing but a throwback to the past, which was replete with schisms, bickering, backbiting, intrigues, violence, packing and sacking (Olaniyan, 2009).

Intra-party crisis was perceived as a schism of great distress, trouble and pain created within a political party due to the failure of the party leaders to peacefully resolve internal disagreements or conflict of interests (Eme & Anyadike, 2011). It has to do with individual or group violence against party leadership or officials and supporters (Olorungbemi, 2014). Intra-party crisis is characterised by the notion of contestation for political power, unnecessary competition and rivalry among political elite which are antagonistic to the democratic principles and values (Landman, 2005) though democracy presumes the legitimacy of some opposition, the right to challenge the incumbents, existence of free and fair elections, and a consolidated party system (Omotola, 2010).

Since the inception of democratic governance in 1999, Nigeria's political parties have witnessed frequent discords, unresolved political intrigues, recriminations, threat of impeachment of executives, treacheries, flagrant breach of party rules, carpet-crossings, inter-communal rivalries and resurgence of factional cleavages, which have continued to threaten the functioning of democracy (Anifowose, 2004). Essentially, the gamut of activities that take place in political parties make it inevitable for their members to articulate their common or divergent interests and this sometimes engenders intra or inter party conflicts, which consequently create factionalisation within parties or some sort of intra-party crisis (Momodu & Matudi, 2013).

The character, nature, behaviour and performance of political parties in the current Fourth Republic were not that different from the previous republics. Consequently, political parties are driven by the spirit of faction and factions are ubiquitous. Ultimately, factionalisation creates the incentive for the political elites to align and re-align their political interests and forces. Besides, the nature of party relations, within and among political parties has been strained to the extent that these have negatively affected their performance to engender good governance, development and democratic consolidation (Momodu & Matudi, 2013).

The emergence of All Progress Congress (APC) as an alliance of prominent political parties, such as Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) and a faction of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) in 2013 ushered in a new era in Nigeria's democracy. Since its emergence, the party has been experiencing internal crisis at both the federal and state levels. Shortly after its emergence, the Ogun State chapter was polarised into two factions as a result of rift between former governor, Chief Olusegun Osoba and the then governor, Senator Ibikunle Amosun. The crisis, which divided the party into two camps in the state generated a lot of tension and remained unresolved till after the 2015 general elections (Olatunji, 2014).

The crisis that rocked APC in Ogun State between 2018 and 2019 was associated with the mode of governorship primary election slated for October 2018 and the choice of flag-bearer. Amosun-led faction of the party adopted AbdulKadir Adegunle Akinlade as the consensus candidate ahead of the primary election, while the other faction rejected the choice. Consequently, two parallel party primary were held. The State party executives declared Adegunle Akinlade as the winner of the primary election against the declaration of Dapo Abiodun by the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party (Awoyinka, 2018).

However, it is a worrisome trend that political parties in the current democratic dispensation often engaged in intra-party crisis due to the personalisation of politics, prevalence of the godfather syndrome, excessive monetised politics, poor party internal democracy, lack of viable political ideology (Akubo & Yakubu, 2014), which has resulted in party polarisation, factionalisation,

party defection, electoral malpractices and violence, among others, which continually challenged the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. Against the foregoing backdrop, this study examined the intra-party crises that characterised APC between 2018 and 2019, with its profound effect on democratic consolidation in Ogun State.

Concept Clarifications

Political Party

There is still a major disagreement among political and social scientists on how best to define political party as different definitions abound in literature on the concept. One of the earliest popular definitions of political party was coined by Edmund Burke (1939, cited in Lamidi & Bello, 2013), which defined political party as a body of men united for promoting their joint endeavours of national interests upon some particular principles in which they all agreed. The existence of political parties according to this definition must be based on the principles of promoting national interest. This is because political parties are often expected to have their membership spread across the country. This explains, for instance, why the Nigerian Constitution requires parties to reflect federal character before they can be registered.

Furthermore, political parties are often regarded as associations formally organised with the explicit and declared purpose of acquiring and to some extent, maintaining legal control, either singly or in coalition or electoral competition with other associations over the personnel and the policy of the government of an actual or perspective sovereign state. Thus, political party is described in terms of a group of people acting together to achieve some political goals, which usually is control of government (Udeuhele, 2015).

Moreover, political parties are perceived as formal associations that are formed by men and women, united for promoting their joint endeavours towards the national interest upon some particular principles and values in which they all agreed, aim at contesting, winning and controlling governmental machineries (Awofeso, Obah-Akpowoghaha & Ogunmilade, 2017). From another perspective however, political party has been conceived as an organised group of people with mutual, who aspire to control the government in a state in order to put their ideology or programmes into practice (Chidi, 2015). In other words, a political party is a group that seeks to elect candidates to public office by supplying them with a label called party identification by which they are known to the electorate (**Oyadiran & Olorungbemi, 2016**).

To that extent, it was argued that political parties stay relevant as long as they mediate different interests and offer coherent visions, which they can advocate in elections and legislatures, and pursue them as a basis for compromise with other parties (Klaukka, Van der Staak & Valladares, 2017). Thus, political parties remain inherent organizations designed to gather and unify political interests towards promoting democratic tenets in any society.

Intra-Party Crisis

One basic characteristics common to all human organisations is the interaction and interdependence among their members (Aleyomi, 2013). However, the intense struggle for political power among the political elite in a political system within and among political parties is inevitable (Mododu & Matudi, 2013). This could however, be through individual or group against party leadership or officials, philosophy or ideology, decisions or programmes, supporters and possessions (Olorungbemi, 2014).

The term intra-party crisis is coined to include all battles and internal strife within a political party that are unfavorable to normal nomination or election of party flag bearers, as against inter-party politics, which is a political activity among many political parties (Okonkwo & Unaji, 2016). Alanamu (2005) averred that party crises have low-intensity of political violence, which is categorised into two namely, intra party and inter-party clashes. To Eme and Anyadike (2011), intra-party crisis is a time of great shock, difficulty and distress created in a political party due to

the inability of the party concerned to resolve and reconcile effectively its internal differences or disputes. For instance, it is a known fact that many parties are factionalised and it is the duty of the leadership of the party to resolve their differences within the ambit of the law but when these parties fail to reconcile their differences, it degenerate into intra-party crisis or conflict.

Intra-party crisis are conflict within a given political party. It is the usual natural conflict of human beings to struggle for that limited social value within the group in terms of prestige, wealth, positions even recognitions. Most of these struggles are on selfish ground, sometimes collective but are carried out through the processes of sycophancy, name-calling, sabotage, sell-outs and other negative behaviours in order to be noted, settled or destroy the collective gain of the party. Sometimes too, they are caused by some element of usurpation, high-handedness and unnecessary rigidity of party leadership and stalwarts over members, greed and some other personal idiosyncrasies of leaders (Nmon, 2013).

In the assertions of Momodu and Matudi (2013), intra-party conflict is a conflict which occurs when members of the same political party pursue incompatible political goals or try to influence the decision making process of the party to their advantage. It often plays out in the selection of members for elective positions both within and the outside the party. Also, Boucek (2009, cited in Momodu & Matudi, 2013) highlighted three types of intra-party crisis or factionalism to include cooperative, competitive and degenerative. Looking at the nature of these identified types of conflict, Momodu and Matudi (2013) maintained that cooperative factionalisation is most preferable because it creates the incentive for the constructive resolution of conflicts between party members.

Inter-party crisis, in the words of Nmon (2013), is an obviously expected conflict because of differences in formation, leadership, manifestoes and ideologies competing to control the state in a democratic set up. The differences serve as springboard for individual ambition, factionalism, ethnic and religious bigotry, crisis of confidence and finally the quest for power control. It is the inter-party conflict that make democracy possible and thick, because it is the variegated groups wearing different ideological colours that come together to form parties. Given the internal dynamics of the parties, and the inherent ideological contradictions, political observers do predict inevitable conflict in party formations.

In line with the preceding assertions, intra-party crisis could, therefore, be regarded as the crisis among members within political parties, which occur when an individual or a group within the party perceives that one or more goals or purposes or means of achieving a goal or preference is being threatened or hindered by the activities of one or more political members or groups.

Democratic Consolidation

Democracy as a concept has been variously conceptualised by different scholars, with varying degree of perspectives and connotations. Etymologically, democracy is rooted in the Greek word “*demokratia*” which connotes government by the people, the right of all to decide what matters of general concern are and what shall be done about them. But direct representation was only practicable in a small old Greek city-state (Oluro & Bamigbose, 2020). In the thoughts of Awofeso, Obah-Akpowoghaha and Ogunmilade (2017), democracy is the institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individual acquires the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote. It is the government of the people, by the people, and for the people that makes provision for every group in a state.

Democracy is an estimated system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in public realm by citizens acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives. Therefore, democracy is a system of government being propelled by the people towards ensuring the overall development of their state (Rosenje & Adeniyi, 2020). It was stressed by Akinyemi (2017) that democracy entails the participation of the people either

directly or indirectly in the policy making process of government, an important element which could lead to the realisation of development.

On the other hand, the basis for democratic consolidation is that the power which sustains democratic government and ensures its stability is voluntarily supported or derived from the consent of the citizens rather than reliance on force or coercion (Osaghae, 2015). Democratic consolidation implies that government is a product of the will of the people and derives its legitimacy from the people's consent. This therefore, ensures that the people willingly support the government given that the government is not arbitrarily foisted on them. In a reciprocal manner, the government carried out programmes that are in line with the interest and aspirations of the people (Alfa, 2011).

Democratic consolidation is the process of achieving broad and deep legitimation of democracy in such a way that all significant political actors believe that popular rule is better for their society than any other realistic alternative they can imagine. It also connotes the act of reducing the probability of the breakdown of the democratic system (Ukiwo, 2013). Ogundiya (2013) in his opinion explained that democratic consolidation ensures administration maintenance thereby regarding the key political institution as the only legitimate framework for political contestation and adherence to the democratic rules of the game.

Democratic consolidation according to Olorungbemi (2014) is perceived as an identifiable phase in the process of transition from authoritarian to democratic system that is critical to the establishment of a stable, institutionalised and lasting democracy. Thus, to be consolidated, democracy must become internalised in the society, manifesting itself at all levels and spheres of the social, economic and political systems with shared values (Olorungbemi, 2014). Democratic consolidation can be measured by the percentage of voters in a country who consider democracy as an indispensable way of life and are ready to go every length to protect it (Ukachikara & Elechi, 2019). Put differently, democratic consolidation thus entails widespread acceptance of democratic rules that generate political participation and competition.

Therefore, democratic consolidation implies the process by which democracy as a system of government that gives citizens equal opportunity and rights to participate in the government of their state is being generally accepted and well-practiced in the state. Hence, democratic consolidation is the transition, growth and development of government of the people, that is, government that puts citizens at the centre of affairs within a particular state. It is state of uninterrupted practice of democracy accordingly.

Theoretical Framework

A theory is a body of knowledge constructed in such a way that facts about reality are drawn together to bring about significance and conceptual meanings that are not otherwise apparent. Meaning which could not have been factually known becomes knowable through such theoretical construct (Akindele, 2011). Thus, this paper is anchored on Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGCT). The realistic group conflict theory was propounded by Donald Campbell in 1965 and it has been expanded by Jackson (1993), Sidanius and Pratto (1999), Brief, Umphress, Dietz, Butz, Burrows and Schoelten (2005) and Baumeister and Vohs (2007) since the middle of the 20th century.

The theory explains how intergroup hostility can arise as a result of conflicting goals and competition over limited resources. According to LeVine and Campbell (1972, cited in Momodu & Matudi, 2013), the group members are often driven by their desire to possess and maintain control over valued resources. Therefore, the disadvantaged group will compete to gain resources and status, whereas the advantaged group will act against any threat to their resources. However, far-ranging cross-cultural evidence demonstrates that such power disparities between subgroups are characteristic of human societies, regardless of their era, culture or form of government (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

The theory also offers an explanation for the feelings of prejudice and discrimination toward the out-group that accompany the intergroup hostility (Jackson, 1993, Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, Whitley & Kite, 2010). Insko and Schopler (cited in Momodu & Matudi, 2013) found that the group's decisions are highly competitive much so than individual's decisions under the same conditions. They however, offered two explanations for the observed competitiveness of groups. The schema based distrust hypothesis explains group competitiveness in terms of fear.

Furthermore, the theory postulates that group members compete because they expect the out-group to behave competitively and want to defend themselves against the possibility of being exploited. However, inability to channel competition within group to benefit all the group members may be counterproductive to the group interests. As Alexander, Chizhik, Chizhik and Goodman (2009) contended, groups run the risk of losing out on valuable inputs and perspectives when the contributions of lower-status members are devalued or ignored. When group members fail to offer or consider unique information, group performance and decision quality are prone to suffer. Research has, however, shown that all group members benefit if the group acts collectively in defense of its shared interests, but even moderately sensible members might hesitate before joining a possible fatal fray (Gould, 1999).

However, the theory has been criticised for only describing the results of competition between two groups of equal status. It does not explain how groups can overcome internal obstacles to achieve collective actions. It also fails to explain why members of distinct social groups see their interests as conflicting in the first place but the transition from group interest to group action is often treated either implicitly as unproblematic, or explicitly as a function of response to conflict (Gould, 1999).

Nevertheless, this theory is relevant to the current study because it explains a situation where members of a political party who feel disgruntled with party policies or programmes or are neglected by the party results in crisis with the party. For instance, members of APC in Ogun State between 2018 and 2019 who felt they may find it difficult to achieve their common goals in the party disagreed with the party leaders, which invariably led to crisis among them. The crisis eventually led to defection of Amosun's preferred and anointed candidates for the 2019 governorship election in Ogun State to APM in 2018. This has usually been the main trend behind the crisis in other political parties, such as PDP, SDP, among others, in Nigeria, some of which have been blamed on poor party discipline and ideology, and weak conflict resolution mechanisms. This situation ultimately could therefore, negatively affect democratic consolidation in the State and by extension, in Nigeria.

Historical Development of Intra-Party Crisis in Nigeria

Party politics in Nigeria has been characterised by both harmony and crisis situation with a gradual decline in the former and a kind of progression in the latter at different era of its political history (Muhammad, 2008). Among political parties of the pre-independence period, there was low salient of both intra and inter party crisis. This may partly be explained within the context of nationalist struggles for independence. But with the approach of independence, there was a total change in the operating environment of the political parties due to the need for new set of leaders to emerge among the nationalists. The change no doubt brought about serious changes in the nature and forms of inter and intra party relations (Muhammad, 2008).

With regards to inter-party conflict, it was a struggle for who controls the centre and in the case of intra-party conflict; it was a struggle for relevance, regional hegemony and overbearing control over party machineries among party members. As a result, intra-party relations thus began to assume crisis-prone leading at times to defection. Such defection is the case of several members of National Council for Nigerian and the Cameroon (NCNC) led by Nnamdi Azikiwe that decamped to the Action Group (AG) led by Obafemi Awolowo in 1951, purposely to deny Nnamdi Azikiwe and his party the majority in the Western Region House of Assembly (Adejumon, 2013; Okoosi-Simbine, 2005).

Another case of such intra-party crisis is the Action Group (AG) Crisis of 1962, which resulted from the personality clash between Obafemi Awolowo (Party leader) and Samuel Akintola (Deputy party leader and Premier of Western Region). This crisis led to expulsion of Akintola from AG as well as his removal as the Premier of Western region. Thus, the crisis degenerated into serious political conflict that claimed thousands of lives and properties worth millions of naira were destroyed. The crisis led to declaration of state of emergency by the federal government and eventually contributed to the emergence of military in politics through the January 15, 1966 coup, which brought an end to Nigeria's first republic (Oke, 2018).

During the second republic between 1979 and 1983, party politics was given constitutional recognition in the bid to ensure that only national parties rather than sectional ones would be able to function (Akingbade, 2011). Therefore, following the stipulated criteria in the electoral decree, Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) registered only five political parties – Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Nigeria People's Party (NPP), Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP), People's Redemption Party (PRP) and National Party of Nigeria (NPN) on the 22nd December, 1978 while Nigeria Advance Party (NAP) was eventually registered as the sixth party in 1982 (Akingbade, 2011). However, despite this precaution, the political parties that emerged were the reincarnations of the old political parties of the first republic except the GNPP. The UPN became a reincarnation of the AG, was for the West, NPP an offshoot of the NCNC, for the East and NPN a rebirth of the old NPC, for the North (Akingbade, 2011).

However, there were elements of strained relations in these parties, though it was considerably limited. For instance, in the early years of the NPN, Alhaji Aminu Kano left the party to set up PRP because his presidential ambition was thwarted when he was offered the party's national secretary. Equally, M. K. O. Abiola was denied of presidential candidature of the NPN in the run up to the 1983 general elections (Muhammad, 2008). Thus, the intra-party crisis witnessed during this period led to split in the PRP between Aminu Kano and Imodu factions. It also resulted into series of defections that occurred in the NPN and UPN. For instance, Arthur Nzeribe defected from NPP to NPN while Sunday Afolabi and Akin Omoboriowo (both deputy governors of Oyo and Ondo states respectively) defected from the UPN to NPN shortly before the 1983 general elections (Okoosi-Simbine, 2005; Tyoden, 2002).

Therefore, the same reasons that saw the collapse of the first republic can also be advanced for the failure of the second republic as political parties were parochial, regional and ethnic-based in nature. Also, the reports of riots, looting, arson and violent demonstrations that accompanied the 1983 presidential elections brought the military into power once again on December 31st, 1983 (Osumah & Ikelegbe, 2009).

Sequel to the lifting of ban of political activities in May 1989 in preparation for Third Republic in Nigeria, plethora of political associations emerged, just in line with first and second republics trends. However, Decree No. 27 of 1988 was used to dissolved all these political association while Babangida's administration forced two party system to be registered by the National Electoral Commission (NEC). Therefore, Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC) were formed on October 7, 1989 by the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) (Akingbade, 2011) to cater for the political aspiratipons of the political class.

Suffice to say that despite the short life span of these two political parties, factional feud and infighting characterised them. For instance, the SDP was reported to be characterised by struggle for party control by the unregistered People's Solidarity Forum (PSF) and the People's Front (PF) while the NRC became divided into factions such as Republican Action Committee led by Tom Ikimi, NRC Consultative Forum led by Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu and Republican Solidarity jointly led by Adamu Ciroma, Umaru Shinkafi and Bamanga Tukur (former presidential aspirants) (Muhammad, 2008). Also, Lagos state chapter of SDP was plagued with crisis during the gubernatorial election because of the inability of the party to manage the feud between Femi Agbalajobi and Dapo

Sarumi (gubernatorial aspirants). This eventually led to the victory of Michael Otedola, the NRC candidate in the governorship election (Muhammad, 2008).

The lifting of ban on party politics by the military gave birth to the emergence of Fourth Republic political parties. About 26 political associations jostle for registration with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) but only nine (9) of them were given provisional registration subject to their performance in the then forthcoming local government elections in December, 1988 as these parties are expected to score at least 10% of total votes cast in not less than 24 states of the federation (Mohammad, 2008).

Consequently, after the election, only three (3) political parties – Alliance for Democracy (AD), People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All People's Party (APP) were able to secure INEC's registration and fielded candidates for the 1999 general elections (Osumah & Ikelegbe, 2009). However, due to series of factors after the 1999 general elections, twenty-seven (27) additional parties were formally registered to contest alongside the earlier three (3) parties in the 2003 general elections, while additional political parties were given the nod by INEC in the subsequent elections in 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 general elections in Nigeria.

Emergence of All Progressive Congress (APC) in Nigerian Politics

As a result of political dynamics controlling party politics and the conduct of elections in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, and the dominance of the PDP, there was the tactical need for realignment of political forces to effect change of leadership at the centre. The All Progressive Congress (APC) was therefore, formed on the 6th February, 2013 and received approval from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on the 31st July, 2013 as a political party towards the 2015 general elections in Nigeria (Maram, 2013; Opoola, 2013). APC was formed through the merger of the existing four opposition parties – the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), All Nigeria Peoples' Party (ANPP) and a faction of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) (Agomo, 2013; Akor, 2013). The resolution was signed by Tom Ikimi, who represented the ACN; Annie Okonkwo, on behalf of APGA; Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, who was the Chairman of ANPP's Merger Committee; and Garba Sadi, who served as the Chairman of CPC's Merger Committee (Agbakwuru, 2013).

Thus, APC was considered a centre-left political party that favours controlled market or regulated market economic policies, and a strong and active role for government regulation. As a result, a substantial number of its political leaders are people who subscribed to the social democratic political philosophy of Obafemi Awolowo as well as the socialist and anti-class perspectives of Aminu Kano. Moreover, the majority of the APC's base of political support was in Southwest Nigeria and the Northern Nigeria (Awofeso & Irabor, 2016).

However, on the long run, the APC presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari won the 2015 presidential election in the Nigeria with total votes of 15,424,921 against the then incumbent president, Goodluck Jonathan with 12,853,162 votes (INEC site cited in Olowojolu & Ake, 2015). It thus became the first time in Nigeria's political history that an opposition party unseated the ruling party in a general election and one in which power was transferred peacefully. In addition, the APC won the majority of seats in the Senate and House of Representatives in the 2015 general elections (Olowojolu & Ake, 2015) thereby seemingly creating the opportunity for smooth and cordial executive-legislature relations.

APC had a smooth birth when the defunct major political parties agreed to dissolve and form the new mega opposition party at the time. Howbeit, no sooner had the new party applied for registration from INEC than it faced its first major battle when some politicians approached the electoral umpire to register another party – African People's Congress (APC) with a view to frustrate the All Progressive Congress (APC). The All Progressive Congress won the acronym war but started to face internal crisis of forming interim executives and party leadership. In spite of this

development, the party managed to weather that storm and came out stronger and more united (Tukur & Ugonna, 2015).

Overview of Intra-Party Crisis in APC in Ogun State (2018-2019)

The All Progressive Congress (APC) since it was officially inaugurated has been characterised by crisis emanating from disagreement among aggrieved members of the party. Without exception, Ogun State chapter of All Progressive Congress (APC) has been embroiled in crisis of different dimensions. Immediately the party was inaugurated, Ogun State APC faced crisis that bore the semblance of what affected PDP preparatory to the April 2011 general election Osoba and Amosun's quarrel concerning who controls the soul of the party in Ogun State. Thus, the party was polarised along Osoba-Amosun leadership factions (Olatunji, 2014).

The crisis that rocked the All Progressive Congress (APC) in Ogun state between 2018 and 2019 was all about who becomes the flag bearer of the state. Primary election was to be conducted and the party released guidelines for its conduct after months of controversy in September 2018, where direct primary was adopted. However, the APC Ogun State Executive Committee later adopted the indirect mode of primary election for all elective offices in the 2019 elections in its resolution passed at the State Executive meeting held in Abeokuta. At the meeting, the party resolved that the APC in Ogun State shall employ the consensus option in the first instance and where that fails, the indirect mode of primary will be used to choose candidates for all elective positions in the 2019 general election (Johnson & Olatunji, 2018).

The issue stirred a lot of controversies among the party leaders and particularly, between the Osoba and Amosun factions. The party leaders in the state fought over the mode of primary election. The former governor of Ogun State, Olusegun Osoba with some other party stalwarts kicked against the mode of primary approved for the state. Also, Osoba while addressing the party's governorship, National Assembly and State Assembly aspirants warned against the danger of going into an election with a divided house (Kayode-Adedeji, 2018).

The APC governorship primary election was held in October 2018 in Ogun State. Prince Dapo Abiodun was declared the winner of the direct primary election by the Muhammed Ndabawa-led electoral committee sent by the National Working Committee (NWC) of APC. But earlier before this, the State chapter of the party had declared the Amosun-backed party executives consensus governorship candidate Adekunle Akinlade, as the winner of a primary election conducted in the state. The then APC State Chairman, Chief Derin Adebisi, who announced the results at the APC State Secretariat in Abeokuta, claimed that Akinlade polled 190,987 votes out of 201,620 valid votes casted across the 236 wards in the State. However, the results were not signed by the Chairman of the electoral committee and none of the agents of the five other gubernatorial aspirants (Omilana, 2018).

Also, another election was conducted by the NWC the following day throughout the 236 wards across 20 Local Government Areas of Ogun State. The chairman of the committee, Ndabawa said Dapo Abiodun polled 102,305 votes to emerge winner, Akinlade polled 23,443 votes, Jimi Lawal polled 51,153 votes while Abimbola Ashiru polled 29,764 votes. Other contestants, Senator Gbenga Kaka polled 17,771 votes and Abayomi Hunye polled 9,110 votes. He however noted that the declaration of Abiodun winner of the primary and governorship candidate of APC in Ogun State for 2019 governorship election is subject to ratification by the National Working Committee of the party (Omilana, 2018).

The party had been polarised following the adoption of Akinlade as a consensus candidate by the Amosun-led faction of the party ahead of the primary election. Therefore, with the internal strife of the APC in Ogun State and the outcome of the party primary election announced by the National Working Committee, Honorable Abiodun Akinlade – the governorship candidate of Amosun led faction resigned his membership of APC and defected to the Allied Peoples'

Movement (APM) alongside all the members of Amosun's faction who contested in the APC primary election for National and State Assemblies (Odunsi, 2018).

Meanwhile, a former Minister of State for Education, Senator Iyabo Anisulowo blamed the Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo and the then national chairman of APC, Adams Oshiomole for the crisis that rocked the Ogun State chapter of the party. Likewise, she accused Chief Olusegun Osoba of being complicit in the alleged plot to disrupt the governorship agenda of the people of Ogun West Senatorial District in the state, which has not produced governor since the creation of Ogun State about 40 years ago (Omilana, 2018).

The national executive of the party battled to resolve the crises thrown up by its governorship and legislative primary elections and realised that the party faced a herculean task of resolving the party primary crisis in Ogun State. Efforts to resolve the crisis and reconcile the warring factions in Ogun State proved abortive till the 2019 general elections. Two days after the Presidential election, the APC announced the suspension of Governor Ibikunle Amosun and his Imo State counterpart, Rochas Okorocha after the NWC meeting for anti-party activities and also recommended the expulsion of the suspended individuals from the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the party (Busari, 2019).

Stakeholders' Efforts at Resolving Intra-Party Crisis in APC in Ogun State

One of the efforts made by stakeholders in resolving intra-party crisis in Ogun state APC this period (2018-2019) was the meeting President Muhammadu Buhari held with the then Ogun State governor, Senator Ibikunle Amosun inside the President's office in Abuja in October 2018. At the end of the meeting, Governor Amosun simply told the journalists that he would be returning with some unnamed persons for another meeting with the president (Ojoye, 2018). Prior, to the meeting with the president, he had earlier met with the vice-president – Prof. Yemi Osibajo on the rancorous primaries. At the end of the meeting, the governor did not disclose the bone of contention of the meeting (Ojoye, 2018), but it was clear that these meetings could not resolve the crisis.

Another effort aimed at resolving the intra-party crisis rocking the APC then was that of the National Peace and Reconciliation Committee (NPRC) set up to address concerns and grievances of those who lost out in the party primaries. The committee was headed by Alhaji Kashim Shettima, the then Governor of Borno state with Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode, Prof. Modupe Adelabu, Dr. Dakuku Peterside and Senator Seida Bugaje as members. It was however reported that Governor Amosun was absent during the meeting but the Chairman of Ogun state APC – Chief Derin Adebisi, Chief Bode Mustapha and Mr. Patrick Ogunde, among others, featured prominently at the peace meeting. Thus, Amosun's absence confirmed his threat to work against APC governorship candidate in Ogun State (Sobiya & Akinsanmi, 2018). However, it was glaring that the committee was unable to persuade the aggrieved members to sheathe their swords.

Also, President Muhammadu Buhari sent a Reconciliation Committee to Ogun state to meet with the 26 APC State Assembly candidates towards resolving the crisis that emanated after the party primaries in the State in November 2018. The committee was led by Princess Sandra Oladele, who in her address at the APC secretariat in Abeokuta spoke about how the president was concerned about the crisis and bent on ensuring reconciliation (The News Matrix, 2018). Furthermore, it was reported that Dr. Femi Majekodunmi appealed to Governor Ibikunle Amosun to play the role of a statesman in resolving the controversy that trailed the party's governorship primary in the state. He advised that the governor should reconcile with Dapo Abiodun and not work against the interest of the party in the 2019 governorship election (Coffie-Gymfi, 2018). However, the failure of stakeholders to resolve intra-party crisis rocking APC in Ogun state led to the decisions taken by the 26 candidates for Ogun APC assembly who lost at the primaries and Honourable Abdulkadir Adekunle Akinladeto dumped APC for Allied People's Movement (APM) in November, 2018.

Intra-Party Crisis and Democratic Consolidation in Ogun State

Following the appraisal of intra-party crisis within the APC in Ogun State, it is pertinent to point out that the situation did not only constitute serious threat to democratic consolidation but as well affected the growth and fortunes of the party. Undoubtedly, party growth depends largely on elements, such as its degree of institutionalisation, coherence and discipline among party members. In other words, a party grows when it is able to reduce the extent of factionalism and splits through development of an effective internal regulatory mechanism strong enough to command obedience and support from members. However, where party is divided against itself, this reduces its mobilisation capacity and such party is at the risk of fading away within time (Mustapha & Isah, 2018).

Intra-party crisis accentuates absolute political instability because it instigates unhealthy party proliferation, excessive monetised politics, electoral violence and other electoral irregularities like highly inflammatory campaigns, propaganda, and hate speeches. Other accompanying consequences brought about by party crisis include political thuggery, vote buying, stealing of electoral materials, snatching of ballot boxes, harassment of voters and election observer. It invariably leads to disruption of electoral process, political killings kidnapping, and inflation of election results, among others (Awofeso & Irabor, 2016). Likewise, the increasing, indiscriminate and wanton frequency of party crisis, rather than promoting genuine competition, would reduce the political landscape to a mere field for all-comers with no focus or objective beyond self interest and it is making a mockery of the ideal political structure, which by implication reduces the chances of quality representation in the democratic practice of the nation (Oluro & Bamigbose, 2020).

Intra-party crisis constitutes a worrisome threat to democratic consolidation as it bestows hardship on the people. It is often said that where two elephants fight, the grasses suffer. In a similar vein, when there are party crisis, the people are at the receiving end. It has negative effects on the generality of the people. Apart from the fact that people would not be able to go about their normal routine, they will also live in fear of being killed. Whenever there is crisis, it is not only the party involved that suffers, but those around also share from the evils of such crisis. For instance, during the political turmoil that engulfed Ogun State as a result of the feud between APC and APM supporters, it is not the politicians alone that suffered it but the electorate who were worst hit, hence the crisis brought unlimited hardship on the people (**Akpambang & Oniyinde, 2020**).

Intra-party crisis is not only a threat to the party concerned, but also a major source of unending political adventure. Functionally, political parties performing their traditional responsibilities of internal conflict management could be purveyors of political stability in the society. However, when political parties are unable to manage disagreements within the frameworks of extant rules, they will not likely be able to perform functions that could enhance the stability of the polity (Omotola, 2010). Intra-party squabbles as characteristic of the Nigerian politics have not only institutionalised indiscipline and political vagrancy but have, as the narrative of the APC's crisis has shown in Ogun State, created an environment for political instability both within and outside the parties (Basiru, 2019; Basiru 2015; Omoruyi, 2002).

Suffice to say that intra-party crisis also played out at the horizontal level of intra-governmental relations. Specifically, such crisis creates unhealthy executive-legislature relations, especially in the spheres of public budgets and appointment ratifications (Aiyede & Isumonah, 2002; Aiyede, 2005). Theoretically, the executive and the legislative arms of government are meant to be autonomous of each other, but the realities and complexities of modern societies have made their co-operation imperative (Basiru, 2014). Although crisis between the two organs are sometimes inevitable, but these incidences could be better managed where there is a culture of party discipline and cohesion. Where such is lacking and intra-party crisis becomes so pervasive, when executive-legislative gridlocks do occur, they are often equated to brinkmanship, if not warfare and can as such hinder speedy decision-making process (Basiru, 2019).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper examined intra-party crisis and democratic consolidation in Nigeria using the case of APC in Ogun State between 2018 and 2019 as a focus. It examined the synergy between political parties, intra-party crisis and democratic consolidation and also adopted the Realistic Group Conflict Theory as a tool of analysis. The paper argued that intra-party crisis has become an inhere part of Nigerian politics, which has pervaded Nigeria's political history since the pre independence era to the present day political processes. Therefore, the emergence of All Progressive Congress (APC) in Nigeria towards the 2015 general elections followed the trends of the same nature and character of intra-party conflict of old to date. The case of APC is EVEN more worrisome because the emergence of the party was as a result of marriage of incompatibility of strange bedfellows from the onset. Thus, the intra-party crisis that wrecked the Ogun State chapter of the party and still wrecking the party nationally is an expected evil.

However, intra-party crisis of such nature witnessed between 2018 and 2019 in Ogun state APC had perilous effect on democratic consolidation in the state as well as the nation at large. The paper observed that the APC Ogun state intra-party crisis weakened party growth and mobilisation capacity and it steered absolute political instability because it initiated unhealthy party proliferation, excessive monitised politics, electoral violence and other electoral irregularities. All these challenged the path to democratic consolidation in the state and by extension in the nation. The paper thus concluded that intra-party crisis within APC Ogun state is unhealthy and anti-democratic, which can frustrate the quest for democratic consolidation if not well addressed in time.

Therefore, in order to curtail the frightening and escalating rate of intra-party crisis and promote democratic consolidation in Ogun state and by extension in Nigeria, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The APC as a party should put in place measures to ensure that their activities are strictly guided by the party constitution. The leadership and stakeholders of the party should therefore, act in accordance with the party constitution while members should respect and obey party decisions;
- ii. The Ogun state APC and other political parties should strictly uphold party internal democracy;
- iii. The Ogun state APC and other political parties should display openness and transparency in the process of selecting party flag bearers while at the same time ensure the participation of all-party members in the selection process;
- iv. There should be strict principles and regulations guiding political party formation, so as to ensure effective institutionalisation of political parties with a view to ensuring that ideological foundation transcends ethnic, religious, sectional and other motives;
- v. The issue of godfatherism should be addressed in order to create a level playing ground for all members, promote unity and cooperation among the party members;
- vi. The party should establish an unbiased conflict management and resolution mechanism for addressing intra-party crisis.

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