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## Intra-Party Primaries in Nigeria's Democratization Process: a Historical Assessment

S. O. Soetana and Oluwaseun Samuel Osadola<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of History and International Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria; <sup>2</sup>Ph.D Student, Department of History and International Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

### ABSTRACT

The sprouting character of Nigerian politics from the last quarter of the colonial period to the present is reflected in the changing character of her party politics. Thus, from the ratification of regionalism by Author Richards in 1946 through the short period during the First Republic lasted, two foremost factors shaped the character of intra-party relations/politics: ethno-religious and, to a lesser extent, some feigning of ideological commitment. One of the main features of a political party is its ability not only to contest and win elections, but also to conduct internal elections among its various contestants with the aim of selecting the most suitable candidate that will serve the interest of the party. However, several issues have risen as a result of primary elections among the political parties in Nigeria which has not only affected the political party itself, but as well ruin the smooth running of democracy in the country. This paper historically assesses intra-party primaries in Nigeria's Democratic process. It questioned the nexus between democracy, party primaries, intra-party conflict and law based union in Nigeria. This paper made use of both primary and secondary data.

**Keywords:** Intra-party, Primary Elections, Democracy, Nigeria

#### \*Correspondence to Author:

Oluwaseun Samuel Osadola Ph.D Student, Department of History and International Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

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## **INTRODUCTION: Historical Background**

Man as articulated by Socrates is a social creature. This suggests the gregarious idea of man severely dislikes in all implications segregated life. Thusly, man needs to live in politically sorted out enclave that is guided by laws. This is basic in view of the unquenchability and apparently narrow minded nature of man. In any case, when we watch the life of men around us, we can't neglect to be struck by two realities: generally speaking, each man wants to have his own particular manner, to think and goes about as he prefers; and in the meantime, everybody can't have his own specific manner, since he lives in the public arena, where one man's wants conflict with those of another. The relations of the individuals from society with each other, in this manner, require direction by government (Appadorai, 2004:3). The Nigerian political circumstance and life isn't removing from the above. Drawing from the above composition identifying with the need and the substance of principles and directions managing political and open life, government is framed. This administration comprises of a collection of people that decide. In a perfect world, the choices should be in light of a legitimate concern for the general masses. Basically, what constitutes the body, the systems and procedures by which the laws are figured unsettled the psyches of the political rationalists, regardless of whether by the congregations of the older folks (gerontocracy), the board of trustees of the well off (plutocracy), the nobles (gentry), the specialists (technocracy), and the general people (democracy). This last type of political course of action gives off an impression of being the best type of government (Okonkwo, 2015). Etymologically, the word democracy is gotten from two Greek words "demos" which signifies "individuals" and "cracy" which signifies "run" or "government", truly "importance administer by the general population" in any case, every one

of the endeavors by surviving experts in characterizing the term stress the centrality of individuals (the greater part) in the administration of the state (Obi and Oddih, 2006:36). Radiator, (1964:134) recommended that democracy isn't just a type of government yet a lifestyle or a state of mind of the brain. Subsequently he went further to assert that democracy is „essentially a technique for sorting out society politically“. It is an arrangement of administration in which the rulers are considered responsible for their activities in general society domain by natives acting in a roundabout way through the opposition and participation of their chose agents.

Amidst twentieth century and by and by, the call for opportunity and democracy are echoes over the globe. The world has seen incredible move from tyrant style of administration to popularity based manage, even in Islamic states in which there convention and method for lifestyle favors monarchical and socialist arrangement of government. The reality still remain that state is never again keen on associating with other state where democracy isn't practiced. As Adetoye (2010) had appropriately contended, the underlying opponents of democracy are presently battle to supplant the socialist of yesteryears with another democracy. It at that point takes after that any nation burning of pertinence inside the world framework must be viewed as law based consistence (Omotola, 2008:184).

The confirmation of above demonstrates that countries in this day and age offered unmistakable quality to vote based framework. African states are not forgotten in this improvement. However, contention in some writing demonstrates that the purposes behind supporting democracy in Africa, particularly Nigeria, don't reflect Western observation. Along these lines, African takes a gander at democracy in economic terms than political philosophy (Saliu, 1999:199). The worldwide

acknowledgment of democracy in the end cleared path for the re-birth of majority rule government in Nigeria on May 29, 1999.

This paper is adapted towards questioning the nexus between democracy, party primaries, intra-party conflict and law based union in Nigeria. It is against this foundation that this paper is worried about the connection between democracy, party primaries and intra political party's emergency in Nigeria and the degree of party's commitment to the survival of democracy in Nigeria.

## CONCEPTUALIZATION

Basic terms related to this paper will be examined based on scholarly contributions and analyses. Terms like Intra-party Conflict, Democracy, and Political Party will be conceptualized in this section.

**Intra-Party Conflict:** Entails a situation of disagreement among members of a political party. This situation often arises "when members of the same political party pursue incompatible political goals or try to influence the decision making process of the party to their advantage". This shows that intra party conflict often occurs when members are entangled in the pursuit of divergent goals most especially in the fielding of members for both elective and appointive positions.

The phrase intra-party conflict is concept coined to embrace all the tussles and wrangling within a political party that are inimical to normal nomination and/or election of party flag bearers, as against inter-party politics which is political activity among different political parties. This ugly trend manifests in the form of opposition within a political party. As a corollary, (Okoli, 2001) avers that intra-party opposition is political opposition obtainable within a political party. It is an internally generated opposition whereby a dissident group of a ruling party constitutes itself into a splinter movement that stands opposed to the activities of the parent party. This is characterized by the emergence of parallel

party structures and leadership, as well as partisan alignments and re-alignments among the party faithful around the attendant parallel party platforms. To stress further, Okoli (2001:3) enumerated factors that are responsible for intra-party opposition as follows: Personality difference, clash of socio-economic interests, ideological incompatibility, etc, among politicians. Adding to the above is the contextual pathologies of (party) politics in Nigeria, among which are:

1. The Hobbesian character of politics where struggle for state power is seen as a „do or die“ affair; in this context, politics incidentally becomes a crude warfare.
2. Internal characteristics of political parties, which are exemplified in organizational and operational defects, poor sense of party discipline and loyalty, lax party supremacy, and gross ideological deficits.
3. Influence of money politics and personality cult, which gives rise to cabalism, godfatherism, and the likes.
4. The incumbency factor, whereby the ambitions of the incumbent political executives (party leaders) contradict with those of some party elements in such a manner that precipitates gang-up and intra-party wrangling. Still on the track of unveiling the propelling force behind the intra-party conflict in Nigeria, Mbah submitted thus:

The Petit-bourgeois found out that although they have acquired political power, they were not truly in control of the economy. However, they understood that political power offered opportunities for economic power and therefore the opportunities inherent in their political power where best and perhaps the only way they had to create economic base for themselves (Mbah 2011:9)

In another development, Shale & Matlosa (2008: 13) identifies the causes of intra-party conflict to be:

1. Favouritism – promoting ones kith and kin;
2. Unequal sharing of resources (leaders constituency gets a lions share);
3. Lack of regular meetings; and
4. Centralized authority – power concentrated at the top.

Similarly, Rubin (1994) reiterated that intra party conflict is triggered by factors such as:

- i. Favouritism – promoting ones kith and kin:
- ii. Unequal sharing of resources: (leaders constituency gets lions share)
- iii. Centralize authority: Power concentrated at the top.

Nonetheless, the clarification of the concept of intra-party conflict and its attendant harbinger are devised to sharpen the focus of the study which is more or less to unravel the link between the intra-party conflict and the prospects of democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

**Democracy:** Is seen as a political system that is characterized of periodic and free elections in which politicians arranged into political parties that engage themselves in a competitive polls to ensure a standing government, where the political right will enable all adult citizens (18 years and above as it applied in Nigeria) to vote and be voted for.

Democracy is a concept that does not have any universally accepted definition. In spite of the differences in conceptualization and practices, all version of democracy in the view of Osaghae (1992:40), share one fundamental objective of “how to govern the society in such a way that power actually belongs to all people”. Chafe (1994) argued that democracy is the involvement of the people in the running the political, socio-economic and cultural affairs of their society. The degree of involvement of the people in the total control of their polity,

within the standard of natural justices, determines the degree of democratic substance of a political system (Sadeeq, 2008:250). This shows that the peculiar virtue of democracy is thought to lie in the fact that it is only government that can advance the interests of all the members of a politically organized community (Barry, 1992).

Schumpeter (1990) defined democracy as an institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide, by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote. Competitive struggle, according to this definition, is that individual can take advantage of whatever loopholes they perceived in their opponents’ political strategy and thereby rise to power. Held (1982) conceptualized democracy as a cluster of rules and institutions permitting the broader participation of the majority of citizens in the selection of representatives who govern them. In the course of summation of varied definitions of democracy, it is deduces that democracy provides opportunities for the people to freely exercise their franchise in the selection of their representatives and leader. This type of exercise, excluded the use of force and coercion through the state apparatus.

**Political Party:** Is an organized group of people with at least roughly similar political aims and opinions that seek to influence the public, policy by getting its candidate elected to public office (Likoti, 2005). Edmund Burke defined political party as a body of men united for promoting their joint endeavours that national interest upon some particular principles in which they all agreed (Ojo, 2009). 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 explain, for instance, why Nigerian constitution required parties to reflect federal character

before they can be registered (Tordoff, 1999). Similarly, Osumah (2009) conceives political party as a voluntary association organized by persons bind by common interests or aims, which seeks to acquire or retain power through the election of its candidates into public office. Here political party was perceived as an instrument of acquiring political power in order to implement government policies.

Political Parties are integral part of the process of institutionalizing democracy. Thus, political parties according to IDEA (2000) produce the candidates, set the parameters of issues and agenda within which elections are to be held and they are expected to perform these duties periodically. The, functions of a political party were summarized by Carr (Egbewole and Muhtar, 2010) as:

- (i) Stimulating the citizenry to take a greater interest in election and activities of government.
- (ii) Defining political issues of the day and sharpen the choice between alternative paths.
- (iii) Presenting candidates who are committed to announce position with respect to issues.
- (iv) Majority party provides basis upon which government can be operated.
- (v) Accepting responsibility to govern upon winning election.

In addition, Political Parties, according to Huntington (1968), perform the functions of ordering the political system; they serve to structure political process and ensure that citizen participation in that process is orderly; they seek to provide a distinctive collective identify for their followers, one that is premised upon acceptance of basic rules of the national political arena. As a result of these functions, Diamond (1997) asserted that:

Political parties remain important if not essential instruments for representing political constituencies and interests, aggregating demands and preferences, recruiting and socializing new candidate for office; organizing the electoral competition for power, crafting

policy alternatives, setting the policy-making agenda, forming effective governments, and integrating groups and individuals into the democratic process.

In order to perform these functions positively, political party should be guided by distinctive ideology which will sell them to a core set of electorates and distinguish them clearly from other political parties.

At this juncture, ideology becomes important feature of political parties. Party ideology, according to Seruton is moral systems that enshrine the sanctity of contact and promise between them (parties) and electorate; it constitute the political doctrine from which a programme of political actions emanates and on which basis citizens choose how they will like to be ruled (Sambine, 2004). In his opinion, Nnoli (2003) posited that ideology is very important aspect of politics, not only by serving as a cognitive structure for looking at society generally and providing a guide to individual action and judgment, but as a powerful instrument of conflict management, self-identification, popular mobilization and legitimization. The party's policies plus strategies for achieving them and code of conduct for party members are encapsulated in ideology. On this basis, Simbine (2005) posited that parties and their manifestoes need to espouse the ideology on which they plan to run the government in order to give the electorates a clear picture of where the country is heading to and to decide whether or not to work in that direction. Absence of ideology in parties will therefore make it difficult for political parties to harmonize members view on political issues.

## **EVIDENCE OF INTRA-PARTY CRISES IN NIGERIA**

Hypothetically, this fragment of the investigation should convey to the fore an examination of some intra-party conflicts in Nigeria. In the first place, amid the first term in the administration of the PDP which lasted for just four years, the Party had in excess of three National Chairmen

– Chief Solomon Lar, the pioneer Chairman, Chief Bernabas Gemade and Chief Audu Ogbe. The states and local governments had their own due share of high turnover. This pattern was repeated in other two noteworthy parties – the AD and APP.

During that second tenure – 2003-2007, there was considerably higher rate of turnover, as the souls of the considerable number of parties were practically situated in the pockets of the political CEOs relying upon the level of government in the Federal structure at which a party holds political influence – for the PDP it was at the Federal, State and local levels. For the AD, it was the six conditions of the South West – Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti and this exclusive for one term of office 1999-2003; in light of the fact that from May 2003 the President who is additionally of South West extraction, had deceived every one of the Governors of the AD into a tricky agreement that ended up being amazing political suicide. Thus the AD nearly failed out of the nation's political scene as the PDP cleared five states leaving just Lagos, where the Governor, Bola Tinubu had shown luscious brilliance and never yielded his political voting demographic to President Obasanjo's political trap (Onyishi, 2012). The emergencies in the initiative of such a large number of sections of the considerable number of groups hosted gave instant reason to get-together individuals who are fascinated of party tease looking for greener political field. Henceforth, the political dictionary of Nigeria soon ended up immersed with "abandonment", "deserting", "cross-covering" and so forth. Such cases have turned out to be army and they apply to all the political parties. In addition, in the vicinity of 2007 and 2011 general election, not less than sixty political parties registered and around twenty-five showed up in the poll papers of the 2001 General Elections.

Appropriate from the initiation of the present Republic, Politicians have demonstrated no apprehensions about moving all through

political groups, contingent upon their impression of political preferred standpoint; the First Senate President in this allotment, Senator Evans Enwerem, was initially the governorship candidate of the All People's Party (PPP) in Imo State (Mbah 2011:6). Be that as it may, he lost his offer to hold up under the banner of his party for the ensuing general race. He deserted to the PDP before the general; endless supply of senatorial ticked by the Party administration. He didn't just win decision to the senate but at the same time was rail-roaded by Chief Obasanjo's Presidency and the national authority of PDP to the Senate Presidency. In Plateau State, Alhaji Alhassan Sbaibu, for a moderately unimportant reason, deserted from the All Peoples" Party (APP) and joined the PDP in 1999. As remuneration, the President named him a member of the Northern Nigeria Development Company (NNDC).

In Cross River State, several conspicuous APP and AD individuals cross-covered to the PDP. Another striking evacuating amid the Obasanjo administration was that of his Vice– President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. He was an establishment individual from the party, having assumed dynamic part in late Musa Yar'Aduah's PDM. He deserted to the Action Congress which turned into the new name of Alliance for Democracy (AD) after an open pitched fight with his manager, the President: challenged as the presidential competitor of the Action Congress in 2007 general races, came back to the PDP in 2011 (Mbah 2011) Besides, as though it was insufficient for him, he ridiculously evacuated again from the PDP; turned into a main power in the arrangement of the New PDP and in this manner joined the new authoritative mammoth now known as the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Without mincing words, intra-party conflict, genuine and created, brought about a spate of surrenders additionally including governors of various party affiliations: the Governor of Bauchi state up till 29th May 2015, Alhaji Isa

Yuguda was a PDP part, neglected to pick the party gubernatorial ticket in 2007, evacuated to now All Nigerian People Party (ANPP), won the decision under last's stage and in this manner deserted back to his unique party, the PDP. The previous Governor of Imo state as initially an individual from PDP, deserted to Progressive People's Alliance (PPA), won race under its stage and very quickly returned to PDP; Governor Theodore Orji of Abia State took after a similar example by changing party character from PPA to PDP. The previous Governor of Ondo State, Dr. Olusegun Mimiko won his governorship decision on the stage of the Labor Party (LP) yet later evacuated to the PDP. In the North, Aliyu Shinkafi of Zamfara State (ANPP) and Saminu Turaki of Jigawa State (ANPP) surrendered to the PDP ( Mbah, 2011:7).

The Nigeria National Assembly is in no way, shape or form saved of this hurricane of surrenders and cross covering, because of intra-party conflicts, as no less than thirteen Senators and thirty-five individuals from the House of Representatives hosted exchanged get-together in the vicinity of 1999 and 2013, when „psunamic“ joy Balkanized the supposed Africa's biggest party, the PDP. At the Mini-Convention that the PDP led in 2013, seven state governors – Kano, Kwara, Rivers, Sokoto, Adamawa, Niger and Jigawa– with their joining supporters left the setting, the Eagle Square in Abuja moved to the Yar'Adua Center where they tended to a public interview and reported their expectation to frame another party to be known as the new PDP. After starting running fight with the parent body, and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the new– PDP choose to strike an arrangement for a merger with the now super party – the All Progressives Congress (APC).

The party in the long run won the presidential race in March 2015 and a sensible lion's share of state governorship seats. As far back as its initiation at the middle the example of surrender

has turned around to support its. Early August, 2015 a previous state administrator of the PDP and driving individuals from the party in Bayelsa state evacuated to the APC at the state party rally that was hugely gone to by both national local and state authorities of APC in addition to their abounding supporters/devotees. The deserted individuals reeled out a plenty of purposes behind their activity (Onyishi, 2012).

Today in Nigeria, for all intents and purposes all the political gatherings have one issue or the other. The decision party APC is liable of this improvement. There is waiting initiative party inside the party. The party is isolated into numerous factional pioneers, the Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu gathering and the National Chairman of the Party gathering. The authority emergency inside the PDP kept on rearing monstrous advancement once a day. There are two principle factional pioneers in the party, the Senator Alimodu Sheriff gathering and Markaffi gathering. The uncertain initiative and entomb party emergency in the PDP has been credited to the loss of two representative races of Edo and Ondo States because of the way that two groups of the party neglected to talk with one voice on whom will be signal carrier of the party.

### **INTRA-PARTY CONFLICT AND PARTY PRIMARIES**

Norris (2004) had expressed that one of the key issues in intra-party democracy is the nomination procedure; it fills in as a crystal through which control circulation among organs and groups in the political party is comprehended. Generally there is no repudiating party essential and hopeful choice is significant to the way toward guaranteeing democracy both inside and outside the political party.

Be that as it may, in spite of such commendable legalistic builds and recognized significance of choosing hopefuls through primaries, the party isn't without inside emergency; it has in actuality been loaded with

a torrential slide and stories of conflicts and suits gathering from the hole amongst hypothesis and practice. In 2003, inside conflict in the PDP rotated significantly around Obasanjo's second term offer and his hegemonic control over the party structures. The rundown of applicant burden was given by Elischer (2008) thus:

In order to get the PDP aligned state governors to support his renewed candidacy in 2003, Obasanjo and his then-ally Atiku promised all PDP governors to free them of intra-party opposition to their renewed bid for power irrespective of the various legal suits leveled against them. Eventually Obasanjo secured his second nomination and all governors were returned as PDP candidates.

Kura (2011) additionally stated that the 2006 primaries which went before the 2007 races were likewise damaged by resultant disorder and inside emergency. Occasions in the 2007 decisions rotated around Obasanjo's third term presidential aspiration, Atiku's presidential desire, Yar'Adua's resulting determination and different instances of intra-party cracks. Inside these unfurling occasions, hopeful burden and political harm were unmistakably apparent. Obasanjo, who was at the time president and towards the finish of his presidential residency pronounced the decision a do-or-kick the bucket undertaking, which was in connection to his third term desire.

Alumona and Obianyo (2014) expressed that Atiku Abubakar utilized the People's Democratic Movement (PDM) as his imposing political machine to guarantee the triumph and annihilation of specific hopefuls inside the party and furthermore to plot the invalidation of Obasanjo's third term presidential desire. In striking back, Obasanjo attacked Atiku and his supporter's enrollment, constraining Atiku's deserting to the Action Congress (AC), later Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), to seek after his presidential applicant. Following his absconding, different individuals from the party

saw provocations and commanding withdrawal from the presidential race, which prompted the rise of Umaru Musa Yar'Adua as the presidential hopeful, which additionally bloomed into emergency; According to Irem (2006), the procedure prompting the development of Yar'Adua was not really vote based in light of the fact that there appeared to be an undemocratic agreement by pioneers of the party before the tradition to support him.

Other prominent arrangement of illegal candidature was additionally apparent in 2011 prompting burdens and substitution of hopefuls. In Imo gubernatorial race, Mr. Ifeanyi Ararume was supplanted with Engineer Ugwu. In Lagos, Hilda Williams who rose as the champ in the primaries was likewise supplanted with Senator Musiliu Obanikoro. Thus, in River State, Mr. Rotimi Ameachi was supplanted with Mr. Celestine Omehia.

The final product was underscored by Kura (2011); neglect for constitutionalism finished into the nonappearance of party hopefuls in Rivers and Imo States. In the vicinity of 2011 and 2015, different instances of heightening intra-party emergency were likewise recorded; spiraling conflict between the then party executive; Alhaji Bamanga Tukur and the state governors prompted the factionization and later absconding of five state governors. Encompassing contentions prompted the acquiescence of Tukur, who was supplanted with Adamu Muazu. Inside a similar period, the then President Goodluck Jonathan's presidential desire set off another type of conflict amongst him and the Northern individuals from the party. He in this manner developed as the party's sole presidential hopeful which enraged other intrigued individuals like Sule Lamido. In this way, maintaining regulated procedures of hopeful choice and party primaries in the PDP have been subjected to negligible reflection. The pitiable condition of inner democracy thusly coming about to conflicts have been caught by



Obi (in Adejumobi, 2011 p.81) when he contended on how the elitist individuals from the party have grabbed the instruments of energy.

From the prior, it could be seen that the PDP had seen a substantial spate of intra party emergency in its sixteen years in control. We now swing to an examination of the resultant ramifications of such extended emergencies for the party as well as for the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria.

## CONCLUSION

The focal proposition of this paper is that intra-party conflicts have been having its toll on Nigeria's vacillating democratization. This is occasioned by the way that legislative issues in Nigeria is imagined in pseudo terms to the degree that it is diminished to a simple speculation making machine by the political class. For democracy to extend in Nigeria, this negative misinterpretation of governmental issues as a methods for securing riches must be changed to a positive origination of legislative issues as a craftsmanship and study of conveying open great which tends towards enhancing the personal satisfaction for the citizenry and not tied in with fulfilling the ravenousness of a couple of advantaged class of people. This political re-designing procedure can be accomplished through the association of consider and forceful esteem reorientation programs for individuals from political gatherings, different partners in the political framework and in addition the electorates. Significantly, the range of exercises that occur in political gatherings makes it workable for their individuals to verbalize their normal or different interests and this occasionally induces intra or between party conflicts, which subsequently makes factionalisation inside gatherings or some kind of intra-party conflict. This examination along these lines set up that intra-party conflicts have significant negative ramifications on the procedure of

democratization as it is presently playing out in Nigeria.

Regardless of the difficulties of inward quarrels confronting political gatherings in Nigeria at present, they remain a basic column for maintaining the procedure of democratization in the nation. It is basic along these lines that political gatherings ought to guarantee that they dig in inside democracy inside their inner flow with the end goal that would make the empowering condition for party individuals to realize their political desires utilizing the party as a stage. Political gatherings should likewise comprehend that they are crucial foundation in the just framework since they shape the fundamental connection amongst voters and government by giving the stage to reestablishment and combination of majority rule government through occasional races. In the final analyses, the sustenance and coherence of Nigeria's Fourth Republic owes much to the capacity of the political gatherings in the nation to have the capacity to total openly, express their interests, resolve the a few times incongruent interests of their individuals through tranquil exchange and instilling the all inclusive beliefs and estimations of democracy in their individuals and the whole Nigerian subjects.

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