JOURNAL OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE
ISSN Print: 2992-2763 – ISSN Online: 2992-4618 | Vol. 2, Issue 4, No. 1 / December 2024
https://www.jopd.com.ng

PARTY POLITICS AND INTRA-PARTY CONFLICT IN THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN NIGERIA, 1999-2022

Abraham Mark Omakoji
Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka
fourish401@gmail.com

Badamasi Saidu
Department of Political Science, Federal University Birnin-Kebbi

Timipa Igoli
Department of Political Science, University of Africa,
Toru-Iorua, Bayelsa State

Abstract
Undoubtedly, intra-party conflicts weaken democracy. This conflict within political parties in Nigeria especially the People's Democratic Party (PDP) points to the desperation by politicians to win elections at all costs and the winner-takes-all syndrome of Nigerian politics. It has become such a worrisome attribute of political life in Nigeria because the political and economic environment of Nigeria views politics to be largely grounded on winner-takes-it-all and the loser-it-all. This paper explained how the struggle for political positions among the contending groups within the PDP increases its intra-party conflicts leading to factionalization and cross-carpeting of members. The findings show that the struggle for political positions in the PDP leads to factionalization and conflicts. The study relied on documentary methods whereby books, journal articles, newspapers and policy documents were helpful, data were analyzed through content analysis. The study held that to prevent conflicts, zoning/equitable distribution of elective and appointive positions should be upheld in the PDP.

Keywords: *party, politics, conflict, faction,* Nigeria

Introduction

Nigeria is a creation of colonialism. It is also a diverse and multi-ethnic society plagued by numerous cleavages and centrifugal tendencies (Mbah, 2007: 187). It is usually difficult to achieve and maintain cordial relationships between groups in a homogeneous society and even more so in post-colonial, plural and emergent nation-state such as Nigeria. As a post-colonial State, the structures of its leadership and level of economic development have proved incapable of welding the multi-ethnic society into virile nation-state.

This is because political parties are no longer driven by ideology but by economics of State power (Mbah, 2017). The political and economic environment of Nigeria view political parties to be largely grounded on winners takes it all. Therefore, politics in Nigeria is the politics of winner takes all and loser loses all. The desperation by political gladiators to win elections at all costs and the winner-takes-all nature of Nigeria's democratic system triggers off the intra-party conflict within political parties in a multi-ethnic country such as Nigeria and consequently, weakens Nigerian democratic system. Contemporary world and modern democracy exist within the compass of political parties. Although parties may differ in organizational structure, ideologies, size, functions and goal, but they remain the major means of aggregating and mobilizing the various interests and resources for consolidation of

democracy and nation building. As political parties and candidates struggle for political positions and power, conflicts arise within and among them.

According to Abba & Babalola, (2017) defined party politics as the politics involving people through political parties and expressed through the channel or thoughtful ideal of political parties as against national interest. In the same vein, Azeez (2009), sees party politics as activities of political parties in a democratic setting to influence and control the machinery of government through democratic institutions. Hence political elites employ all means at their disposal including unconstitutional and undemocratic means to capture political power particularly through varied means of election misconduct and political manipulations (Chibuike & Ernest, 2015).

Intra-party conflict often arises when party members are embroiled in the pursuit of incompatible political goals especially in the selection of candidates for both elective and appointive positions. Intra-party conflict as a social phenomenon has both functional and impaired consequences depending on how the leadership of the party understands and react to the conflict. This is why Momodu & Matudi (2013) argued that functional conflicts spawn creativity, positive growth and development, common agreement and good relationship between groups and individuals. While on the other hand, they posited that dysfunctional conflicts breed disagreement, prevent progress and development, impact decision making process, engender hostility and hatred between groups or individuals.

Consequently, this study therefore, seeks to explain how intra-party conflicts in the People's Democratic Party fuel factionalization within the party from 1999 to 2022.

Literature Review on Struggle for Political positions and Factionalization

The lack of internal party democracy among political parties in the selection of candidates denies a level playing field for all party members, this has created a situation whereby political elites struggle for State power at all costs to accumulate wealth and to influence decision-making structures of the State to their gain. This led to Hobbesian character of struggle for State power among groups or party members, this undermines the basic tenets of democracy leading to intra-party conflict and the attendant factionalization and defection of members to other political parties or formation of new ones.

The political parties in Nigeria are not guided by their own party's constitution to allow resolutions be reached amicably. Their interaction with their members is not based on dialogue, mutuality and cooperation. The People's Democratic Party (PDP) has suffered intra-party conflicts leading to division, breakdown of party activities, factionalization within the party, defection of party members and overheating the polity as a result of not only power or leadership struggle among party members which negates democratic principles and party's constitution (Oladesu, 2017). This scenario, as Olaniyan (2009) argued, is borne out of the notion that party politics is about the struggle for State power between and among the political gladiators.

It was the struggle for positions within the PDP that resulted in a crisis that led to the formation of N-PDP in 2013 by Sen. Abubakar Bukola Saraki's group who insisted that power must not return to South in 2015. Again, the ongoing crisis in the PDP following the emergence of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as the party presidential standard bearer for the 2023 general elections which was orchestrated by the G-5 governors of the party led by Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers state who are insisting on equitable distribution of positions within the PDP, arguing that the party presidential candidate for the 2023 general elections and the national chairman must not come from the same region of the country in pursuance of the principle of equity, justice and fairness as enshrined in the PDP constitution (2017 as amended) and demanded for Ayu resignation as the party national chairman.

Consequently, the blunt refusal of Senator Iyorchia Ayu who is also from the north to resign and relinquish his position as the PDP national chairman to the south after the

emergence of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as the party presidential standard bearer for the 2023 general elections, does not only contravene the provision of the PDP constitution on power sharing, but also reflects the authoritarian character of the party national chairman leading to the current crisis in the party that has constituted a bottleneck for the PDP and continue to jeopardize the party chances of winning the 2023 presidential election.

Similarly, Article 13 section 1(h) of the PDP constitution (2009 as amended), also mandated the party national chairman to ensure strict compliance with the provisions of the party constitution and do all other things that shall promote the growth and welfare of the party (p. 50). Therefore, a bridge or non-adherence to the provisions of party constitution could engender party indiscipline leading to intra-party conflict as witnessed in the PDP. This is because, to be excluded in politics, means isolation from power and political prosperity, and to be included in politics means political prosperity and wealth. Therefore, it could be argued that the trigger of party politics and the intra-party conflict in the PDP is the struggle for political positions among the contendinggroups in the PDP which impinged on internal party democracy that increased its intra-party conflict leading to the division and defection of party members to other political parties or formation of new ones.

Attempt to explain the nexus between party politics and intra-party conflict based on the factors such as favoritism that is promoting one's kith and kin; unequal sharing of state resources (leaders getting a lion's share of resources), and centralize authority (power concentrated at the top) Nwafor & Unaji, 2016). Mbah (2011) argued that defection of party members from opposition political parties to the party in government is the explanatory variable to the importance of acquiring political power in Nigeria. Dudley, cited in Mbah (2011) stated that:

> *…the easiest way to wealth and power is through politics. Politics means wealth and wealth means politics. To get politics, there is always a price …. To be a member of the Governing Party means open avenue to government patronage, contract deals and the rest. But once, having known the profitability of having power, the party (and the individual members) naturally uses the same governmental machinery to stay in power. The leadership becomes a self-recruiting oligarchy- and no self-recruiting oligarchy has been known to tolerate opposition to itself (11-12).*

Scholars such as Shale & Matlosa (2008) enumerated factors responsible for intra-party conflicts to include favoritism (that is advancing a person's social group and relatives at the expense of others); uneven distribution of state resources (leader's constituency gets a lion's share); absence of orderly meetings and centralization of authority (that is concentration of power at the centre). Shale & Matlosa (2008) may be right in their arguments about causes of intra-party conflict because, when members or group within a party are favoured at the expense of other members, it breeds the feeling of alienation leading to intra-party conflict. However, they did not talk about how the absence of internal party democracy could trigger conflict within a party.

Eboh & Anichie (2015) argued that the problem of internal democracy has remained in Nigerian democracy because political parties in the country at all levels are hijacked by powerful elites and political godfathers who impose their political patriots as candidates for elections which often result to conflict within a party. Eboh & Anichie (2015) position is sacrosanct because the domination and control of party structures by powerful members of the party could promote intra-party conflict. Although, Eboh &Anichie (2015), in their study, were not elaborate enough to explain how paucity of party ideology can promote intra-party conflict. Momodu & Matudi (2013) to their view, identified causes of conflict within a political party to include, politics of god-fatherism, absence of internal party democracy,

imposition of candidates, partiality, oppression within a party, and battle for supremacy among party members. This is true because imposition of candidates creates a feeling of alienation and dissatisfaction among other candidates leading to conflict within political parties. But Momodu &Matudi (2013) did not see the poverty of political ideology as one of the causes of intra party conflict.

Basiru (2019) argues that in a democratizing society, a weak party system, prolonged military dictatorship and the neo-patrimonial character of the post-colonial states are the drivers of internal party crisis. Notwithstanding Basiru (2019) near excellence argument, he ignored how the conduct of party primaries engenders intra-party conflict. For Aniche & Egboh (2015), the imposition and substitution of a candidate by powerful members of a political party causes intra-party conflict. Adekeye & Abdulrauf (2017, cited in Abba & Babalola, 2017) looked at the causes of internal party crisis from the process of candidate selection and conduct of party primaries. Of course, the process of candidates' selection for elective positions especially conduct of invalid party primaries and not allowing level playing field for all candidates and members can cause intra-party conflict. Though Adekeye & Abdulrauf (2017) did not explain how personalization of political parties and politics of godfatherism lead to intra-party conflict. Kura (2011) on his part sees candidate selection, party campaign and funding as drivers of intra party conflict. This position is correct because funding of parties means domination and control of party's structures and machinery by the funders which contribute to intra-party conflict.

Other scholars such as Aleyomi (2013), Chukwumerije (2011), Ojukwu &Olaifa (2011), have also identified the reasons for intra-party conflict to include poverty of ideology, absence of internal party democracy, incumbency factor, goal incompatibility, god-fatherism, politics of self-interest, selection of candidate and conduct of primaries, party funding, executive arrogance etc. but the aforementioned scholars did not pay attention to how lack of party institutionalization which is supposed to promote peaceful contest necessary for democratic practice, a principle which assumes credibility, autonomy, party supremacy, and the right to question the incumbents, promote internal party democracy and encourage a united party system which allows party members to articulate their common interests and harmonize their different interests, is also responsible for intra-party conflict.

Abba & Babalola (2017) enumerated party conventions, the imposition of candidate, god-fatherism, party primaries, and absence of internal democracy as factors responsible for intra-party conflict. They further added that in Nigeria, the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended) which authorizes political parties to oversee names of candidates that should come out on the ballot without prejudice to INEC's explicit powers to reject candidates that emerged through invalid primaries also induces intra party conflict. However, Abba & Babalola (2017) did not see party congresses and zoning of political offices as reasons for an internal party crisis.

In the same vein, Labaran Maku APGA National Secretary and a former minister of information and communication, quoted in Abba & Babalola (2017) argued that imposition of candidate and gross abuse of procedures and law guiding selection of candidate for general elections are reasons for internal party crisis. The challenge of Internal democracy and Nigerian Political Parties include lack of political ideology, politics of god-fatherism, the imposition of candidates, absence of internal democracy, corruption, and selfishness. But Sule & Yahaya (2019) in their view, ignored the conduct of party primaries and conventions as reasons for intra party conflicts.

Nwafor & Unaji (2016) in their study attributed the reasons for intra-party conflicts to the Hobbesian nature of politics in which battle for the control of state power seems to be a 'do or die' affair, party organizational and operational defects, party indiscipline, lack of party supremacy, the incumbency factor, paucity of party ideology, monetization of politics, and cult of personality which leads to emergence of cabals and politics of god-fatherism.Similarly, Odigwe (2015) in her study of Nigerian political party and internal

democracy, found out that politics of favoritism, selfishness, lack of transparency in party primaries, exclusion of party members in decision making, the dearth of internal democracy, and politics of god-fatherism are causes of intra-party conflicts. But she did not make an effort to explain how the lack of party supremacy could breeds party impunity leading to an intra-party conflicts. In his view, factors such as intra-party conflict include personalization of political party, god-fatherism, monetization of primary elections, the influence and power of incumbency, and imposition of candidates.

Furthermore, Eboh &Aniche (2015) asserts that the imposition of candidates and party executives, the conduct of party primaries, incumbency factor, and authoritarian character of Nigerian political parties which reflect the authoritarian character of the post-colonial states, deepens the crisis of internal democracy leading to internal party crisis in Nigeria.Collaborating this line of argument, Aleyomi (2013) reiterated that the process of nomination and imposition of candidates intensify intra party conflict. Others factors responsible for intra-party conflicts as advanced by scholars such as Ojukwu &Olaifa (2011), Aleyomi (2013), is the conventions of political parties that permit zoning arrangement of their offices. Therefore, what this means is that party convention which permits zoning of political offices does not only deny eligible individuals their constitutional rights to contest for any elective position but also does not allow for wider participation which is a fundamental tenet of any democratic arrangement.

This partly explains why (Ojougboh (2015, cited in Aleyori, 2013) argued that the action which sabotaged the common trust that guided the PDP from its inception by some caucus PDP member and former President Geoduck Jonathan who rejected the zoning arrangement in the PDP's constitution and contested in the 2011 general elections, contributed to the intra-party conflicts in the party which eventually led to its defeat in the 2015 General Elections. Mbah &Nwangwu (2014) in their study of political party's dynamics and development in Nigeria, identified struggle for succession, dispute over issues of party leadership nd representation as factors responsible for intra-party conflict.

The article focuses mainly on party politics and intra-party conflict in the People's Democratic Party (PDP), it is obvious that scholars did not adequately explain how the struggle for political positions among the contending groups within political parties could increase intra-party conflict leading to factionalization and defection of party members or formation of new ones.

Methodology

The study adopted secondary sources for data collection through rapid review of available reports of development from national dailies, books and review of literature on published journals articles on struggles for political positions and intra-party conflicts in Nigeria. This enabled us to gather information necessary to carry out this research, this because most information required are what has already happened within the party. The participants in our interview were party members and PDP youth leaders/and party stakeholders. The KII were conducted in other to have an in-depth grasp of how the struggle for political position induce party conflicts in the PDP in Nigeria. The key informant interview conducted show that struggle for political position in the PDP induce conflicts and factionalization within the party.. Data were collected between January and June, 20222. The final manuscript was subjected to check by the co-authors in order to improve the reliability and validity of qualitative interpretations.

Theoretical Perspective

This study adopts the proposition from social conflict theory. The theory sees social life as a competition and focuses on the distribution of resources and power which are not evenly endowed by nature. Proponents of this theory view society as a gathering of people of diverse

needs and interests with limited resources to meet their needs. This creates inequality that generates social conflict and social change. Karl Marx is considered the father of social conflict theory.

Social conflict theory basically looks at struggles for power and control in society as a major causal factor of conflict. Conflict occurs when two or more actors oppose each other in social interaction, reciprocally exerting social powers in an effort to attain scarce or incompatible goals and prevent the opponent from attaining them. The quest for dominance and power becomes the currency rather than consensus. Based on this premise, governments at local, state and federal levels have not been able to address the contending issues between herdsmen and farmers or assist them in reaching some consensus.

The major proponents of this theory include: Max (1818-1883); Weber (1864-1920); among others (Nte, 2016). Hornby (1995); Odoh-Alan (2012); and Sears (2008) Conflict approach is one of the major theoretical approach in sociological thought. In general, the conflict perspective assumes that social life is shaped by groups and individuals who struggle or compete with one another over various resources and rewards. It draws attention to power differentials, such as class conflict and generally contrast historically dominant, ideologies, it is therefore a macro level analysis of society. Karl Marx is the father of the social conflict theory, which is a component of the four paradigms of sociology. Certain conflict theories set out to highlight the ideological aspects inherent on traditional thought (cited in Nte, 2016).

According to Nte (2016) this theory claims that society is in a state of perpetual conflict due to competition for limited resources. It holds that social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than consensus and conformity. Conflict theory has been used to explain a wide range of social phenomenon, including wars and revolution, wealth and poverty, discrimination and domestic violence. It ascribes most of the fundamental developments in human history, such as democracy and the coin/rights to capitalistic attempts to control the masses rather than to a desire for social order. The theory revolves around concepts of social inequality on the discussion of resource and focuses on the conflict that exist between classes. The traditional definition of conflict is struggle over values and scarce resources in which the aim of the opponent is to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rival Coser (1995).

In interfacing the theory to our subject, it becomes imperative to appreciate that the persistence in the People's Democratic Party is consequent upon the struggles for power and control in the party and subsequently the State as a result, this becomes the major causal factor of conflict. Conflict usually occurs when two or more actors oppose each other in social interaction, reciprocally exerting social powers in an effort to attain scarce, limitedand most often incompatible goals trying to prevent the opponent from attaining them. The quest for dominance and power becomes the currency rather than consensus.

Findings and Discussion

This section of the study analysed how **t**he struggle for political positions among the contending groups within the PDP arising from the desperate quest for power and make certain political decisions intensified intra-party conflicts in the party.Therefore, the most important dimensions of the factors that intensified intra-party conflict in the PDP between the periods under review are the persistent and intense struggle for political positions within the party such as presidential position, the PDP national chairmanship positions,struggle for governorshippositions, and the struggle for NASS leadership positions among others.

For instance, it was the struggle for presidential position that resulted in the crisis which led to the factionalization and formation of New-PDP in August 31, 2013 when some disgruntled members of the PDP stormed out of the venue of the party special national convention and announced formation of splinter group known as the N-PDP. The disgruntled members of the PDP (N-PDP) led by former Vice president Alhaji Atiku Abubakar include

Mr. Rotimi Amechi, former governor of Rivers state, Alhaji Murtala Nyako, former governor of Adamawa state, Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, former governor of Kano state, Alhaji Abdulfatah Ahmed, former governor of Kwara state, Alhaji Sule Lamido, former governor of Jigawa state, Alhaji Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko, former governor of Sokoto State, Alhaji Banbagida Aliyu, former governor of Niger State and Alhaji Abubakar Kawu Baraje, former acting national chairman of the PDP among others (Ibrahim & Yahaya, 2015).

The group was against President Jonathan's second term ambition and argued that it was still the turn of the North to produce the next president of Nigeria in the 2015 general elections following the demise of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in May 2010, and insisted that power must not return to the South. But the PDP insisted on fielding former President Goodluck Jonathan as the party's presidential standard bearer for the 2015 general elections having completed Yar'Adua's tenure. This, coupled with the inability of the PDP national leadership under Alhaji Bamaga Tukur to resolve or manage the crisis arising from the party's special national convention on 31 August, 2013 led to the defection of the N-PDP members including five (5) out of the seven (7) aggrieved PDP governors, some Senators and members of the House of Representative to the then opposition All Progressive Congress (APC) in November 2013. The peak of the intra-party conflict in the PDP was the defection of the then Speaker of the House of Representative Alhaji Aminu Waziri Tambuwal to the APC in 2014 which eventually resulted in the defeat of the PDP in the 2015 general elections (Ibrahim & Yahaya, 2015).

Similarly, the struggle for the PDP national chairmanship position following the emergence of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as the party presidential standard bearer for the 2023 general elections led to division in the party and formation of the factional PDP known as 'the Integrity Group' led by the G-5 governors of the party headed by Nyesom Wike, former governor of Rivers state. Others of the 'Integrity Group' include Mr. Samuel Ortom, former governor of Benue state, Senator Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, former governor of Enugu state, Mr. Okeazie Ikpeazu, former governor of Abia state; Mr. Seyi Makinde, governor of Oyo state; Olusegun Mimiko, former governor of Ondo state; Ayodele Peter Fayose, former governor of Ekiti state, Jonah David Jang, former governor of plateau state, Donald Duke, former governor of Cross River state; and Chief Bode George, member of PDP Board of Trustees.

The 'Integrity Group', in pursuance to the policy of the rotation and zoning of Party and Public elective offices based on the principle of equity, justice and fairness enshrined in Article 7 section 3(c) of the PDP constitution (2017 as amended), insisted on Iyorcha Ayu's resignation as the PDP national chairman to give way for a party member of Southern extraction to take over the national chairmanship of the PDP following the emergence of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar who is also from the North as the party presidential standard bearer for the 2023 general elections. The group argued that the party presidential candidate for the 2023 general elections and the national chairman must not come from the same region of the country (North) in pursuance of the principle of equity, justice and fairness enshrined in the PDP constitution (2017 as amended).

The tenacity of intra-party conflict in the PDP and the consequent factionalization and defection of its members to other political parties is a height of the perpetual clandestine struggle for power and positions within the party, which stem from desperate desire to acquire State power for accumulation of wealth. In our KII with a stakeholder of PDP in Nasarawa State, what is your reason for defecting from the PDP to the APC? "His response was that he won the popular State assembly primary election in his constituency (Awe State constituency) but because I have no strong god-farter in Abuja my name was changed in 2011 elections therefore, I have lost interest in the party.

Table 1 showing Factional members of the New-PDP (N-PDP)

S/N	Name	Political Designation	Role/Position in the N- PDP
1	Atiku Abubakar	Former Vice President (1999-2007)	Party Leader, Interim
2	Abubakar Kawu Baraje	Former acting National Chairman of the PDP	Party Chairman, Interim
3	Olagunsoye Oyinlola	Former Governor of Osun State and National Secretary of the PDP	Party Secretary, Interim
4	Rotimi Amechi	Former Governor of Rivers State	Lead Member
5	Rabiu Kwankwaso	Former Governor of Kano State	Lead Member
6	Sule Lamido	Former Governor of Jigawa State	Lead Member
7	Murtala Nyako	Former Governor of Adamawa State	Lead Member
8	Aliyu Wamakko	Former Governor of Sokoto State	Lead Member
9	Babangida Aliyu	Former Governor of Niger State	Lead Member
10	Abdulfatah Ahmed	Former Governor of Kwara State	Lead Member
11	Sen. Bukola Saraki	Former Governor of Kwara State	Lead Member
12	Sen. Dino Melaye	Former Senator Kogi West	Lead Member

Source: Okoli & Ali, (2014, P.62)

The table above shows names of the disgruntled members of the PDP (N-PDP) who were dissatisfied with the outcome of the PDP special national convention organized on 31 August 2013 at Eagle Square Abuja that produced former president GoodLuck Jonathan as the Party's presidential standard bearer for the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. The group which was a product of the internal conflict in the PDP had insisted that power must not return to the South in 2015 following the death of Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in May 2010, whose tenure was completed by former president GoodLuck Jonathan.

The inability of the PDP national leadership under Alhaji Bamaga Tukur to harmonize divergence interests of members and resolve the crisis, resulted in the defection of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar to APC in 2013, but now back to the PDP; Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso to APC but now in NNPP, Rotimi Amechi, Murtala Nyako, Aliyu Wamakko, and Abdulfatah Ahmed to APC. Others disgruntled PDP members who defected to the APC but now back to the PDP include, Senator Bukola Saraki, former Senate President, Alhaji Waziri Aminu Tambuwal, former Speaker House of Representative, and now Senate member of 10th Assembly and Senator Dino Melaye, former Senator Kogi West.

Table 2 showing Members of the Factional PDP Integrity Group

S/N	Name	Political Designation	State	Geo-Political Zone
1	Nyeson Wike	Former Governor	Rivers	South-South
2	Samuel Ortom	Former Governor	Benue	North-Central
3	Seyi Makinde	Present Governor	Oyo	South-West
4	Okeazie Ikpeazu	Former Governor	Abia	South-East
5	Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi	Former Governor	Enugu	South-East
6	Olusegun Mimiko	Former Governor	Ondo	South-West
7	Ayo Fayose	Former Governor	Ekiti	South-West
8	Donald Duke	Former Governor	Cross River	South-South
9	Chief Bode George	Member PDP BoT	Lagos	South-West
10	David Jonah Jang	Former Governor	Plateau	North-Central

Source: compiled by the researcher with data from field work (2022)

From the table above, all factional members of the 'PDP Integrity Group', with the exception of former governor Samuel Ortom of Benue state and David Jonah Jang of Plateau state who are from the North-central, are from the South. Therefore, of the above Ten (10) members of the factional PDP known as the 'Integrity Group' led by the G-5 PDP governors spearheaded by former governor Nyisom Wike of Rivers state, eight (8) are from the South. This explains why the 'integrity group' insisted on Iyorcha Ayu's resignation as the PDP national chairman for equitable distribution of power in the party following the emergence of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as the PDP presidential standard-bearer for the 2023 general elections.

However, the blunt refusal of Senator Iyorchia Ayu to resign and relinquish his position as the PDP national chairman to the South and the failure of the party national leadership to manage the crisis arising from the 2022 convention of the PDP especially after the emergence of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as the party presidential standard bearer for the 2023 general elections, intensified intra-party conflict in the PDP that led to anti-party activities by some members of the 'integrity group' which threatened the PDP chances of winning the 2023 presidential election.

Conclusion

The historic years of politicians who participate in politics based on internal party democracy and ideological coherence of political parties no longer survive in the current democratic dispensation of Nigeria's Fourth Republic which started on 29th May, 1999. Presently, those who survive are class of politicians with desperate quest to capture state power to make certain decisions for their personal gains. This has led to unhealthy struggle for political positions within political parties including the PDP leading to intra-party conflict. Intra-party conflict is a backdrop to the sustainability of democratic growth and development. A party that sees no harm or overlooks intra-party conflict within it is often besieged with lawlessness and instability which can cripple the survival of the party. Intra-party conflict always yields disastrous results because it is a serious impediment to sustainable democratic development particularly in the developing countries like Nigeria. The more political parties in a country or nation continue to wallow in intra-party conflict, the more it constitutes a threat to its democratic development.

From the foregoing conclusion and on the strength of the findings, this paper recommended among other things, equitable distribution of both elective and appointive political positions within political parties especially the PDP to prevent intense or unhealthy struggle for positions leading to factionalization and defection of party members.

REFERENCES

Abba, S.A., & Babalola., (2017). Contending issues in political parties in Nigeria: The candidate selection process. Journal of PA=an African Studies. 11(1).

Abubakar, Y., & Ibrahim, B.S (2015) Political parties and intra-Party conflict in Nigeria's fourth republic: The experiences of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in *patterns and dynamic of party politics in Nigeria's fourth republic,* pp.113-130.

Ake, C., & Onoge, O. (1995). The theories and conception of leadership, in Fafowora, et al (eds.), *Nigeria: In search of leadership*, Ibadan: Spectrum Book.

Ake, C., (1981). *Political economy of Africa*. Ibadan: Longman Nigeria Ltd.

Alavi, H.A (1972). *The state in post-colonial societies* Pakistan and Bangladesh. New Left Review, 1 (74), pp.59-81.

Aleyomi, M., (2013). Intra-Party Conflicts in Nigeria: The case of PDP in Nigeria.*Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa, 15(4), pp.281-296.*

Azeez, A. (2009). Ethnicity, party politics and democracy in Nigeria: People's Democratic Party (PDP) as agent of consolidation. Studies of tribes ad *tribal*, 7, 1-9 https://doi.org//10.1080109726375.2009.118865.

Chibuike, V.O., Ernest, U., (2015). Party politics and electioneering campaign of PDP/APC in the Nigeria's 2015presidential election. *African Journal of Politics and Society*, 2(2), 30-60.

Chukwuma, O.A & Ali A.H (2014). Dialectics of intra-party opposition in Nigerian's fourth republic: Insight from the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), *European Scientific Journal. 10 (7) pp.249-259*

Eboh, E., & Anichie E (2013). The State, political parties and crisis of internal democracy in Nigeria: A study on People's Democratic Party.*Journal of Sustainable Development*.

Eme, O.I & Anyadike, N. (2011). Intra and Inter-Party crisis in Nigeria's fourth republic: Implications for the sustainability and consolidation of democracy in post third term Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences and Public Policy, 3(2), pp. 38-52.*

Eze, I. (1988). A Study of Leadership in Nigerian Organizations. *ASCON Journal of Management 7 (1 & 2)*

Idode, J. B. (1989). Rural Development & Bureaucracy in Nigeria. Ikeji: Longman Nigeria Ltd.

Lamidi, K.O & Bello, M.L. (2012). Party politics and the future of Nigerian democracy: An examination of fourth republic.*European Scientific Journal, 8(29), pp. 168-178*

Mbah, P.O. (2007). Executive-legislative relations in Nigeria: The presidency and the national assembly, 1999-2006. *NigerianJournal of Social Sciences, 4(1), p.187*

Mbah P.O (2011). Party defection and democratic consolidation in Nigeria, 1999-2009. *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences, 2*(2), pp. 1-21.

Mbah, P.O (2017). The president can rule from anywhere: The politics of President Yar'Adua's health and executive instability in Nigeria. Social *Scientia Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2(2), pp. 42-56.

Mbah, P.O & Nwangwu, C. (2014). Political parties in Nigeria: dynamics and development. In Nnabugwu, M.B. and Nwanenegbo, C.J. (Eds.). *Political parties, pressure groups and public opinion in democratic politics*. Enugu: Rhyce Kerex Publishers

Momodu, A.J. & Matudi, G.I. (2013). The implications of Intra-party conflicts on Nigeria democratization. *Global Journal of Human Science, 13(6) pp.1-13*

Momoh, A., (2010). Democracy and elections: Myths, illusion and realities, being 3rd annual law and social development lecture delivered at Airport Hotel Ikeja

Nnoli, O. (1986) *Introduction to politics*.Lagos: Longman.

Nte T. U. (2016). Fulani Herdsmen and Communal Conflicts: Climate change as precipitator: *International Journal of Political and Administrative studies,* 2(1), 26-32.

Nwafor, O.N., & Unaji, F.N. (2016). Intra party conflict and prospects of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. iosrJournals.org

Odigwe, D.A., (2015). Nigerian political parties and internal democracy. African Journal of Governnce and Development. 4(2).

Odoh, S.I. &Chilaka F.C. (2012). Climate change and conflict in Nigeria: A theoretical and
An empirical examination of the worsening incidence of conflict between Fulani Herdsmen and farmers in Northern Nigeria*. African Journal of Business and Management Review*, p. 113.

Ojukwu, C., & Olaifa, T. (2011). Challenges of internal democracy in Nigeria's political parties: The bane of intra-party conflicts in the People Democratic Party of Nigeria. Global Journal of Human Science, 11(3). Pp.25-34.

Okoli, &Ali, M. (2014). Dialectics of intra-party opposition in Nigeria's fourth republic: insights from the ruling PDP.*European Scientific Journal.*

Okoosi-Simbine, A.T. (2004). The impact of more parties on the democratic project in Salin, H.A et al (eds.) *Nigeria under democratic rule (1999-2003*) Ibadan: University Press.

Olaniyan, A.O. (2009). Inter and intra party squabbles in Nigeria; in Ogundiya, I.s et al (eds.), *A decade of re-democratization in Nigeria (1999-2009).* Ibadan: Ayayayuyu Publishers.

Sambine AT (2004). Impact of More Parties on Democratic Projects, in Saliu, H.A. (ed). Nigeria under Democratic Rule 1999-2003. Ibadan: University Press Ltd

Scarrow, S. (2000). Parties without members? Party organization in a changing electoral environment; in Russel, D., & Martin, W. (eds*.), parties without partisan: political change in advanced industrial democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Scarrow, S. (2005). Political parties and democracy in theoretical and practical perspective: implementing Intra-Party democracy. Washington: NDI.

Shale, C., & Matolsa, K. (2008). Political parties Handbook. Eisa: Johannesburg (in production) NUL/UMD partners in conflict in Lesotho Project. 2003. Points for mediating disputes. Maseru (Unpublished)