

PARTY POLITICS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN NIGERIA: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF 2018 PRIMARY ELECTIONS OF THE ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC) AND THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)

BY

JULIUS BOLADE ANJORIN

Address: Nigerian Postal Service, Corporate Headquarters, Garki II, Abuja, Nigeria
Institutional Affiliation: Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) Director, Nigerian Postal Institute, Egor, Benin City; National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Abuja (Facilitator), Courier and Logistics Management Institute (CLMI) {Facilitator}

E-mail:juliusanjinorin@gmail.com

Phone: +2348023053448

&

DANLADI MOSES ADAYILO

Email: danladimosesadayilo@gmail.com

Institutional Affiliation: National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Abuja

Email: danladimosesadayilo@gmail.com

Phone: +2348035905594

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to underscoves how party politics and conflict resolution played out in the conduct of the 2018 Primary Elections of the All Progressive Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). The conduct of 2018 Party Primaries has been described as one of the most acrimonious in recent times. The study relied essentially on secondary sources to show how internal democracy played out during the primary elections. The findings of the research show that there was lack of internal party democracy as well as non-compliance with Electoral Laws by the political parties during the conduct of the 2018 primary elections. Instances of such disputes were recorded in some states like Rivers, Oyo, Delta, Ogun, Benue, Zamfara, and Lagos etc. Findings also show that series of conflict/disputes arising during the primary election were not properly managed through the internal party mechanism of the political parties. The conflicts/disputes were evident in Rivers and Zamfara States where the aggrieved parties sued in court and the matter eventually laid to rest by the Supreme Court of Nigeria. The Apex Court denied APC in Rivers State the opportunity to field candidates in the 2019 Elections. Also the Apex court nullified the outcome of 2019 General Elections in Zamfara State. The study recommends that conflict management resolution is best anchored through Alternative Dispute Resolution(ADR) and Internal Party Mechanisms. ADR will help to mitigate non-adherence to Party Constitution and Electoral Laws, Non-transparency of candidates' selections in primary elections as well as in Party Executive positions would go a long way reducing occasional decampment of many party stalwarts. Other recommendations include but not limited to: adherence of political parties to internal party democracy and compliance with the Electoral laws as well as the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution in conflict management rather than settlement through litigations.

Keywords: Party Politics, Conflict Management and Primary Elections.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is undisputable that political parties have remained energetic and indispensable tools in institutionalizing democracy in most democratic politics in the world today. Arising from the catalytic feature of political parties, they serve an intermediate role in democratic societies by acting as a connecting cord between the government and the people, thereby ensuring all tenets of democracy are upheld in the country. As political institutions, made up of individuals with conflicting thoughts, principles, interests, and also as platforms for recruiting workforces to occupy public offices, political parties cannot but be an arena of conflict arising from mutually exclusive views, thoughts and interests. Indeed, beyond being conveniently tagged, albeit theoretically, as the media for aggregating interests and opinions within a polity (Adekeye, 2017, & Omotola 2010), political parties' personalities in liberal democracy are constantly shaped and reshaped by ever-recurring conflicts among the different actors within their folds. Put differently, conflict, in different shapes and dimensions, is part and parcel of the operational architectures of political parties in a liberal democracy. Agudiegwu and Ezeani (2015) emphasized that "the strength and effectiveness of political parties is directly proportional to the degree of resilience democracy enjoy".

In the opinion of Rod and Martin (2013), party politics refers to political activities, decisions that relate to allegiance or support for a particular political party. It plays an important role in determining who would be chosen for an elected position in the electoral process. It is also a process of making decisions that apply to members of a group. It refers to achieving and exercising positions of governance and organized control over a human community, particularly a state. Party Politics therefore, provides a forum for the analysis of political parties, including their historical development, structure, policy, programmes, ideology, electoral and campaign strategies as well as their role within the various national and international political systems of which they are a part.

In modern nation states, people have formed political parties to represent their ideas and to take the same position on issues that relate to the support of an ideology, a leader, laws and some changes in the society. A political party is also a group of people who come together to contest elections and to form or constitute a government. Political parties are well organized groups that agree on policies and programmes for promoting their collective good or their supporters' interests.

Umar and Kura (2004) defined political parties as an organized formal avenue of interest aggregation that give candidates the political and ideological platform to canvas for the support of the electorates through setting of policy goals and agenda with the sole intent of capturing or maintaining legal power to control government within a particular period of time. The above understanding of political party thus shows the inextricable link between how citizens put their popular demand on the political system through political parties and how the government in return also respond to such demands as democratic outputs.

Shale and Maltosa (2008) viewed political party as "an organised group of people with at least roughly similar political aims and opinions that seek to influence public policy by getting its

candidates elected to public office". Closely related is the definition provided by Lemay, (2001) where he defined political party as "any group of politically active persons outside a government who organize to capture government by nominating and electing officials who thereby control the operations of government and determine its policies".

Although, the most prominent feature of defining political party remains the capturing of political power and the control of policy decision process, the functions that political parties play in the political system are broader and sometimes more complex (Shale & Maltosa, 2008). Political parties in contemporary period are the lifelines of modern day democracy considering their significant roles in the present day political system (Maiyo, 2008).

The major roles of political parties therefore include: linking people with government through aggregation of diverse interest; recruitment and selection of political leaders to fill various selective appointive positions; articulating and implementing different policy alternatives' national policy agenda setting; participation in electoral competition and facilitating governance either as ruling or opposition members, etc. (Shale & Maltosa,, 2008; Maiyo, 2009; Jinadu, 2011).

In the view of Jinadu (2011), while, most political parties in western democracies like in USA and European nations are designed more functionally than structurally based on best electoral choices Jinadu; in Africa and other developing democracies the situation is not the same, as the nature, character, composition and functions of political parties evolved over the years as a result of challenging socio-economic and political realities.

Maiyo (2008), Omotola (2009) and Babatope (2012), show that elements of political struggle to take over power and control governments usually remain the central concern of most political parties in recent times in most developing democracies. Nigeria is not an exception in this case given the political reality and the nature of political parties which basically centers on struggle for power coupled with primordial sentiments, conflict becomes nothing but inevitable (Babatope, 2012; Tyoden, 2013).

While there are some international commonality in the way political parties are recognized, and in how they operate, there are often many differences, and some are significant. Some political parties have ideological core, some do not, and many subsequently represent ideologies very different from their philosophies at the time the party was founded. Countries such as Germany and India, have several significant political parties, and some nations have one-party systems, such as China and Cuba. The United States have two prominent political parties, but with many smaller parties participating in the political process and a high degree of autonomy for individual candidates.

Nigeria operates a Federal System composed of 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory comprising of three distinctive branches: the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary. The powers of these components parts are embedded in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of

Nigeria. As enshrined in the Constitution, politics in Nigeria takes place within the framework of a Federal Presidential, representative democratic republic, in which executive power is exercised by the President, legislative power by the National Assembly (two chambers) i.e. the Senate and the House of Representatives and the judiciary is the third arm of government that create, interprets and applies the law.

Sir Hugh Clifford was generally credited to have ushered in electoral principles into the country. However, elective representation was first introduced into Nigeria in 1919 by virtue of the Township Ordinance of May 29, 1919, which granted elective representation for the Lagos Town Council and into other Councils with little or no experiences of challenges within the colony (Jinadu, 2011). Consequent upon the 1919 Ordinance, three persons were elected on the basis of zero-party into Lagos Town Council in 1920. This led to the first of such election ever held in Nigeria in which three Nigerians emerged as the first elected Africans (Voters Education Handbook, n.d). Thus, four elected representatives, three lawyers and one medical doctor, representing the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) emerged from the Legislative Council election held in 1923 Voters Education Handbook, (n.d). However, the four elected representatives (three for Lagos and one for Calabar) were grossly outnumbered as official members (who were mainly British) and the unofficial members (who were appointed traditional rulers and other civilians) constituted 42 members of the 46-man Legislative Council. The very essence of Clifford Constitution in this discourse is that it provided maiden need and template for party formation in Nigeria.

As Sklar (2004) explained in his epic book titled “The Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation”, published in 2004, the formative bases of parties in Nigeria continue to bear the very rough edges of nationalistic, cultural, and parochial class intents of the independent periods till date. Nevertheless, the formation of political parties is an important element of democratic arrangements. Sklar (2004) demonstrated how ‘political parties...appears to be the dominant institution of [any] society’. According to him, the ‘social structures’ of a nation is greatly influenced by the structures of the parties. Sklar (2004) further argued that the history and formation of parties cannot be overemphasized as they determine other social structures like ‘traditional authority, government, the economy, and various, particularly ethnic and religious, interest[s]’. As Jinadu (2011) pointed out, scores of parties emerged in the aftermath of the introduction of electoral principle into Nigeria within the period of time spanning Clifford’s 1922 and independence in 1960. As Jinadu (2011) pointed out, a number of prominent parties emerged in the aftermath of introduction of multi-partism electoral framework between early 1920’s and the independent year. According to him, such parties include, but not limited to:

Nigerian National Democratic Party (1923), the People’s Union (1923), Union of Young Nigerians (1923), the Nigerian Youth Movement (1937), the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (1944), the Northern Elements Progressive Association (1945), the Northern Elements Progressive Union (1950), the Action Group (1951), the Northern Peoples’ Congress (1951), the United National Independence Party (1953), the United Middle Belt Congress (1955), formed through the merger between the Middle Belt League (1950) and the Middle Belt People’s Party (1953), Bornu

Youth Movement (1956), the Dynamic Party (1955), and the National Democratic Party of Nigeria and the Cameroons (1958)" Jinadu, (2011).

2.0 THE OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

The objective of this study is to highlight the role and effect of conflict resolution in party politics in Nigeria with a critical assessment of the 2018 primary elections of the All Progressive Congress and the People's Democratic Party in Nigeria. This is to elucidate the important role of internal democracy and the management of conflict in Nigeria's democratic process.

3.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The realistic group theory best explains the proposition of this study. The theory explains how intergroup conflicts stems out from incompatible goals arising from competition over scarce resources. The theory postulates that human beings are naturally selfish and would always want their own interests to prevail. Alexander, Chizhik and Chizhik (2009) disclosed that in-group discrepancies occur and portend serious effect on the group. While the disadvantaged group compete and strive to gain resources and status, the advantaged group repels such attempts. Markus, Fein and Kassin (2013) stated that competitions resulting to hostilities may not necessarily be as a result of feeling of threat, but may also relate to feeling of deprivation.

The realistic group theory provides a vivid explanation for intra-party wrangling in the APC and PDP indicating the lack of compliance with the law in some cases and the personal interests displayed in the conduct of the primary elections over and above party interests. The Theory also explains the power relations between the national leaders of the two parties vis-à-vis the political gladiators in the respective parties.

4.0 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Blake & Mouton (1964) defined conflict management as the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. Conflict management which is to enhance learning and group outcomes including effective performance of a group or an organisation has been a major issue confronting political parties in Nigeria. Conflict thus reflects a clash of interest among different parties, which may involve individuals, groups, ethnic groups, communities, political entities, or states. Conflicts may reflect a determined action or struggle over a goal, which may be overt or subtle; manifest or imaginary, Shale & Maltosa (2008).

According to Akpuru-Aja (1997), Parties in conflict perceive or treat each other as stumbling block which may result in frustrating others in attaining set goals, or furthering one's interest through their attitudes, behaviours or actions. Conflict therefore arises if one party perceives that one or more goals or means of achieving a goal is been threatened or there seems to be injustice and lack of freedom (Akpuru-Aja, 1997).

Nigeria being a plural society is mostly divided. These cleavages include linguistic, religious, cultural, regional, or sometimes ethnic in nature. These fragmentations are usually promoted or advanced in their crude forms to achieve certain goals (Abbas, 2013). While it may not be easy to classify conflicts in a categorical way, not all conflicts in Nigeria are of the same kind, form or

nature. However, political competition mostly remains significant aspect of Nigeria's political system over the years (Babatope, 2012).

Tyoden (2013) observes that, in the political system with multi-party systems, each of the political party treat other parties in the democratic space as rival and therefore, an enemy towards the struggle to assume and control governmental powers thereby leading to conflicts in the process. Banking much on the pluralist theory, Tyoden (2013) aptly provided a useful theoretical framework that underpins the nature and character of party relation and conflicts in contemporary period suitable to scenarios in a developing democracy like Nigeria. Tyoden (2013) postulates that there are three fundamental explanations to party relations and conflict which centers around; quest to capture power, nature of the society and the origin of the parties. The first assumption indicates that, the quest to assume and control power is majorly the main drive of most political parties in Nigeria.

Albert (2001), stated that Conflict management and those handling the process of reconciliations must be acceptable to those who are having a face-off in conflict. This is the only avenue if co-operation of the conflict parties is to be obtained. If parties are in doubt over the credibility of the process or those involved, the exercise may fail right from the outset. The intention of the people handling the process must be made clear to parties, and clear enough to avoid ambiguity. When parties trust the process, there is a likelihood that they get really involved and allow peace to reign. On the other hand, if the parties have doubts about the process, they can do all that they can to frustrate the resolution process. For parties to co-operate in a resolution process, they must have confidence in the people handling the process. This if achieved will further make the process itself credible to the parties. The argument of each party must be given consideration, and one party must not be given preference to the detriment of another. People handling resolution must respect the thoughts of each of the parties and be ready to work on their positions.

Most conflicts involve some elements and ingredients of feelings and emotions and this explains why people act or react to situations based on their experience, perceptions and calculations. Doing this without regard for the true intentions of the other party may escalate conflict or make resolution quite problematic. Peace practitioners need to be responsive to feeling of parties, so as to get the true picture of what the situation is rather than what it looks like. The feelings of conflict parties are sometimes determined by the expected or actual outcome of such conflict. While a party may feel unfulfilled with the expected or actual outcome, the other party may have realised or see itself realising certain self-placed goal. This may create ill feelings that may mar or jeopardise social relationships to the level where the society itself becomes fragmented by violence and war as was the case in Rwanda, Sudan, Libya, Egypt and Tunisia. If these feelings are not properly understood and dealt with appropriately, resolution may be faulty (Weeks, 1994).

It is very important to understand the attitude of parties in conflict towards one another and also towards those who are working towards finding a sustainable resolution. As earlier mentioned, the behaviour of individual parties, which have been shaped by the actual or expected outcome

of a conflict, goes a long way in determining the ease or difficulty of a resolution processes. There is therefore a need to understand the attitude of parties to one another before, during and after a conflict is resolved so as to know how to consolidate on advances made or guard against future lapses or oversights that may jeopardise resolution. Resolution could fail if proper attention is not devoted to understanding certain salient facts about the conflict and its actual or projected outcome (Best, 2007).

According to Albert (1999), conflict management is a way of controlling conflict before or during and after it has occurred. It is more elaborate and wider in conception and application, when necessitated; it involves conflict resolution and transformation. It is more of a long-term arrangement involving institutionalised provisions and regulative procedures for dealing with conflicts wherever they occur.

4.1 Approaches to Conflict Management

Albert (1999) and Imobighe (2003), stated that there are three approaches to conflict management. These include: Judicial Approach, Power-politics Approach, Conciliatory Approach etc.

2.2.1 Judicial Approach to Conflict Management

Albert (1999) and Imobighe (2003), explained that judicial approach has to do with conflict management within a legal framework in which a third party is given a sort of "Power of attorney", based on the conflict parties' confidence in the third party, to assume the responsibility of evolving an effective agreement concerning the resolution is hardly arrived at through this approach. This is purely legalistic and is based on legal procedural steps as available within the confine of the laws of the land. Examples are various courts using municipal laws or the International Court of Justice (ICJ) using international arbitration norms. This approach gives a zero-sum and win-lose outcome. Conflict parties are always wary to take the judicial approach because of its unpredictable outcome. The judicial approach is essentially a settlement of dispute by litigation. In the case, the adversaries have no influence in choosing the third party. Only one party needed for an intervention to occur, and the decision-making authority is a judge.

4.2 The Power-Politics Approach to Conflict Management

This is a situation in which the third party takes the initiative to manage a conflict out of concern (personal) bordering on realizing its own broader strategic interests rather than the interest of the parties to the conflict. The third party throws into the conflict its leverage, weight but not confidence, process and impose outcome on the parties. The Cold War era witnessed the superpowers largely managing conflicts among states based on power-politics (Albert, 1999).

A number tactics used in this regard include "light" tactics as ingratiation, gamesmanship, persuasion, and promises, and "heavy" tactics such as threats and irrevocable commitments. Although increasingly severe contentious tactics are a feature of conflict escalation, contentious tactics are not necessarily destructive. Through ingratiation, one party seeks to make the other party favourable disposed toward them, and so lessen their resistance to yielding. Specific tactics include flattery, agreeing with the other party's opinions, and doing them small favours. Gamesmanship tactics involve "inducing a state of upset or unrest that has the

effect of lowering the other resistance to yielding." Ingratiation and gamesmanship both work best when the target is not aware that these tactics are being employed (Imobighe, 2003),

Persuasive arguments are overt attempts to induce the other party to lower their aspirations. A party usually argues either that they have a legitimate right to their desired outcome, or that it is in the other party's best interests to lower their aspirations. Promises and threats, seek to induce the other party to act in some particular way, by attaching further consequences (beneficial or harmful) to their actions. The advantages of promises are that they are generally effective, relatively "nice," and may create a sense of indebtedness in the recipient. The drawbacks are that promises cost the promising party whatever reward was offered, recipients may demand more extravagant rewards in the future, or they may be mistaken for bribes. Threats are even more effective than promises, and have lower costs. However, threats tend to evoke counter-threats, increasing hostility and escalating the conflict (Albert, 1999).

4.3 The Conciliatory Approach to Conflict Management

It involves a process in which the third party tries to bring the parties in conflict to agreement through improving communication between them, helping them interpret the issues that divide them, and exploring avenues toward a peaceful settlement. Deep-seated conflicts, especially those involving deep emotions, necessarily require the systematic replacement of negative feelings and perceptions with positive ones and thereby helping the parties in conflict discover some mutuality of interests, which could be capitalized on for the resolution of the conflict (Albert, 1999).

4.4 Elements of Conflict Management Process

Agyris (1970), identified five (5) element of conflict management process. They include: Third Party Intervention, Mediation, Negotiation, Arbitration, and African Traditional Method of Conflict Management.

4.4.1 Third Party Intervention

The terms "third party" and "intermediary" are both used to refer to a person or team of people who become involved in a conflict to help the disputing parties manage or resolve it. Third parties might act as consultants, helping one side or both sides analyze the conflict and plan an effective response. Alternatively, they might act as facilitators, arranging meetings, setting agendas, and guiding productive discussions. Facilitators will also usually record what was said, and may write up a short report summarizing the discussions and any agreements that were reached (Agyris, 1970).

4.4.2 Mediation

Due to polarity occasioned by issues in the conflict, conflict parties often find it difficult to negotiate hence, the coming in of a third person to facilitate negotiation disputants (Moore, (1996). Mediation, according to Moore (1996), is the intervention in a negotiation or conflict of an acceptable third party who has limited or no authoritative decision-making power but who

assists the involved parties in voluntarily reaching a mutually acceptable settlement of issues in dispute.

Mediation is an informal, voluntary and confidential process in which a trained professional dispute resolver (the mediator) facilitates understanding, communication and negotiation between disputing parties and assists those parties in reaching their own mutually acceptable resolution to their dispute. Where the dispute is already in litigation the parties are normally assisted in mediation by their legal counsel (Albert, 2001).

Mediation differs from negotiation, in that parties with apparently incompatible demands turn over the dispute resolution process, but not the dispute itself, to the mediator. Mediation differs from arbitration, in that a mediator makes no decisions as to how the case should be resolved; rather the mediator guides the parties in making this determination (Albert, 2001).

Mediation differs from case evaluation, in that the mediator makes no finding as to the value of the claims and there is no penalty if the mediation is unsuccessful. Mediation differs from litigations, in that it is quicker and less expensive and allows the parties to work-out their own solutions in private rather than having an unknown result imposed on them by a judge or jury in a lengthy, expensive and formal process (Albert, 2001).

Mediation is built upon all of the following concepts: Voluntariness, Privacy, Confidentiality, Economy, Promptness, Informality, Control of hearing dates, Lack of risk, Lack of fear of an appeal from a favourable result, Opportunity for parties to tell their entire story without rules of evidence, and High likelihood agreement is not violated (Albert, 2001).

4.4.3 Negotiation

According to Albert (2001), negotiation is the process whereby two or more parties, who are faced with a problem of conflict about some limited resources, attempt to agree on how best to solve the problem or resolve the conflict. In the same vein, negotiation can be viewed as any form of communication adopted with the aim of reaching a common ground and compromise.

It is also any form of verbal communication, direct or indirect, whereby parties to a conflict of interest discuss, without resort to arbitration or other judicial processes, take a joint action to manage the dispute between them. Negotiation is a back and forth communication designed to reach agreement between parties that have both shared and opposed interests. In the process of negotiation both parties modify their demands to achieve a mutually acceptable compromise... a process of adjusting both parties' views of their ideal outcome to an attainable outcome (Albert, 2001).

Negotiation may be facilitated by a third party. He the third party helps, the conflict parties to reach a mutually satisfying agreement. Facilitation involves the use of techniques to improve the flow of information in a meeting between parties in disputes (Saunders, 1985).

Another aspect of negotiation is conciliation. It is the act of taking peace messages to and from parties in conflict. It seeks the promotion of attitudinal and behavioural changes that will build a positive relationship between parties in dispute (Albert 2001).

4.4.4 Arbitration

Arbitration is defined as a procedure for the settlement of disputes, under which the parties agree to be bound by the decision of an arbitrator whose decision is, in general final, and legally binding on the parties (Ojielo, 2001).

The authors of the Hal Bury's Laws of England define arbitration as 'the reference of dispute or difference between not less than two parties for determination after hearing both sides in judicial manner, by a person or persons other than a court of competent jurisdiction.' Arbitration is a process by which parties to a dispute, voluntarily refer their disputes to an impartial third person. An arbitrator selected by them for a decision based on the evidence and arguments to be presented before the arbitration tribunal.

Binding arbitration involves the presentation of a dispute to an impartial or neutral individual (arbitrator) or panel (arbitration panel) for issuance of a binding decision. Unless arranged otherwise, the parties usually have the ability to decide who the individuals are, that serve as arbitrators. In some cases, the parties may retain a particular arbitrator (often from a list of arbitrators) to decide a number of cases or to serve the parties for a specified length of time (this is common when a panel is involved). Parties may select a new arbitrator for a each new dispute. A common understanding by the parties in all cases, however, is that they will be bound by the opinion of the decision maker rather than simply be obligated to 'consider' an opinion or recommendation. Under this method, the third party's decision generally has force of law but does not set a legal precedent. It is usually, not reviewable by the courts (Ojielo, 2001).

According to the United Nations (1992), sentiment throughout the powerful industrial nations seems to be unanimous against compulsory arbitration, which involves legal enforcement of decision. Labour unions, employers, and representatives of the public generally, in the United States, and in Europe as well, agree to oppose it. The sentiment against it, is particularly strong in the United States, as is shown by the amount of testimony collected by the Industrial Commission. Compulsory investigation and decision with publication of facts and of decision is frequently favoured where great interests are involved, as in interstate commerce, and not a few are found who favour enforcement of decision where both parties invoke arbitration. New Zealand alone has attempted full compulsory arbitration. The reasons alleged against compulsory arbitration are numerous. It appears to invade the property rights of the employer, or the personal liberty of the labourer, since the former might be compelled by law to pay wages against his will, and the latter might be forced to labour in spite of himself. It is difficult to make the action of compulsory arbitration reciprocal, since the employer is more easily held than the labour union, unless the latter be incorporated and be made financially responsible, a condition from which the unions usually recoil. As arbitrators would not be governed by a rule of law, it is feared that sympathy with the weaker party might sway them, and that they

would be inclined to "split the difference", thereby ensuring some gain to labour, a prospect which, it is said, might encourage strikes and prompt unreasonable demands. It is claimed that decisions unfavourable to labourers would tend to strengthen an already-growing suspicion of government and of courts.

4.4.5 African Traditional Methods of Conflict Management

There are various African traditional methods of methods of conflict management. These traditional approaches to conflict resolutions that are considered unique in African Culture. The major point about conflict management in Africa is the emphasis on resolving of conflicts amicably through elders, traditional leaders, healing and reconciliation rituals. Thus, in contemporary traditional African conflict management practices the following key players can be identified: religious leaders, the Police and the armed forces, policy makers, the government and those involved in making modern law, the youth, especially those involved in cattle rustling and the rest of the community.

5.0 Primary Election

A primary election is the process by which voters, either the general public or members of a political party, indicate their preference for a candidate in an upcoming general election or bye-election, thus narrowing the field of candidates. Primaries are used in various countries throughout the world. Its origins can be traced to the progressive movement in the United States, which aimed to take the power of candidate nomination from party leaders to the people. Political parties control the method of nomination of candidates for office in the name of the party (Kevin, 2011). Other methods of selecting candidates include caucuses, conventions, congresses, Direct, Indirect, and nomination meetings.

In this article, we would be looking at the direct and indirect because that is the system being practice in Nigeria.

A direct primary which is now used in some form in all U.S. states, functions as a preliminary election whereby voters decide their party's candidates. In an indirect primary, voters elect delegates who choose the party's candidates at a nominating convention (Ware, 2002).

Indirect primaries for the presidency of the United States are used in many states. Voters in these elections generally select delegates who attend a national political convention and are bound and pledged to cast their ballots on the basis of the preferences of the voters. Delegates may be bound for only one convention ballot or until they are released by the candidate. In some states, the presidential preference vote is advisory and does not bind the delegates. Rules for selecting delegates are determined by the political parties and vary by state. Delegates can be selected on a winner-take-all basis as in many Republican Party state primaries, in which the candidate who wins the most votes wins all the delegates at stake or by proportional representation as in the Democratic Party primaries, in which any candidate receiving a percentage of the votes above some threshold is entitled to at least one delegate. Allocating delegates by proportional representation makes it difficult for a candidate to build a delegate landslide out of a series of narrow primary victories, and Democratic presidential contests usually have taken longer to

select a clear front-runner. In an attempt to enhance the power of Democratic party leaders and elected officials and to minimize the influence of the primaries, during the 1980s the Democratic Party created so-called “superdelegates,” a group of unelected and unpledged delegates that included members of the Democratic National Committee, Democratic governors, and Democratic members of the U.S. House of Representative and Senate (Ware, 2002).

In Section 87 (3), of the Electoral ACT (2010) as amended stipulates that: *“a political party that adopts the direct primaries procedure shall ensure that all aspirants are given equal opportunity of being voted for by members of the party. While Section 87 (4) of the Act provides that: “a political party that adopts the system of indirect primaries for the choice of its candidates shall adopt the procedure as contained in the Act.*

Mahmood (October 2018), noted that: *“the 2018 primary elections conducted by various political parties ahead of the 2019 general elections are some of the most acrimonious in the nation’s history in recent times. He added that the Commission had already been joined in 396 pending cases in various courts across the country over the conduct of party primaries and nomination of candidates.”* INEC also received 302 requests for Certified True Copies (CTCs) of documents, mainly through monitoring reports of party primaries and copies of personal particulars of candidates. In addition, the Commission received 52 petitions and protests from aggrieved party aspirants over controversial primaries which has indicated that the conduct of the primaries elections was not free, fair and credible.

Egbosiuba (2018), stated that lack of internal party democracy was one of the major issues confronting political parties in Nigeria. Recent party primaries throughout the country clearly show that Nigeria political parties are not operating within the norms of democratic principles. Various political parties have failed to open up their parties to all party members who were eligible to run for elective offices. Some candidates were imposed on the parties without primary elections and due process. Some of the candidates allegedly won through so called consensus options.

6.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

Findings from the INEC Official Documents (INEC Monitoring Reports, 2018) revealed that the nature of dispute after the conduct of the 2018 primary elections in APC and PDP has to do with the self-imposition of candidates. Both parties – APC and PDP recorded quite a number of disputes over the primary election due to lack of internal party democracy as well as non-compliance with the laws in the process of the nomination of candidates. However, the All Progressive Congress (APC) recorded the highest number of disputes when compared with the People’s Democratic Party (PDP).

The following table shows the statistics of the number of conflict in APC and PDP as retrieved from INEC 2018 Monitoring Reports.

Table 4.1 Certified True Copy of INEC 2018 Monitoring Reports of Party Primaries of APC and PDP (Conflict after the Conduct of 2018 Primary Election)

S/N	POLITICAL PARTY	GOVERNORSHIP	SENATE	HOUSE OF REP	STATE HOUSE	TOTAL
1	APC	49	67	165	144	425
2	PDP	10	19	32	37	98

Source: Official INEC Monitoring Reports of 2018 Primary Elections By Political Parties/Candidates.

Table 4.1 above revealed that the aggrieved members of APC had a total of 425 requests of Certified True Copy of INEC Monitoring Reports representing 425 disputes after the conduct of the 2018 primary elections across the 36 states and the FCT comprising Governorship, Senate, House of Representatives and House of State Assembly respectively. On the other hand, the aggrieved members of the PDP had a total of 98 request of Certified True Copy of INEC Monitoring Reports representing 98 disputes after the conduct of the 2018 primary election.

The Table shows clearly that the APC had more precarious primary elections in 2018. The conflicts arose from the failure of the party to keep to election laws and the high level of political interest in the choice of candidates for political offices.

It should be noted that, the state by state analysis of the conflicts during the 2018 primary elections were not available. However, the researcher retrieved the information of Zamfara and Rivers States from (INEC Monitoring Report, 2018). The INEC Monitoring Report shows that the Zamfara State APC could not conduct 2018 primary elections as contained in the timetable of activities. The Independent National Electoral Commission barred the Zamafara State Chapter of the APC from fielding candidates to contest 2019 general elections after failing to conduct primary elections. In a letter signed by INEC's Acting Secretary, Okechukwu Ndeche, and addressed to APC's National Chairman, Adams Oshiomhole, the party can no longer conduct any primary elections outside of the originally stated window and would not be allowed to participate in the governorship, National Assembly and State Assembly elections in Zamfara State. The statement read *"You would note from the timetable that the conduct of party primaries is scheduled to take place between 18th August and 7th October 2018. Kindly also refer to the last schedule communicated by your party to the Commission on the dates of party primaries nationwide, including Zamfara, vide your letter Ref. APC/NHDQ/INEC/19/18/51 dated 3rd October 2018. However, report received from our office in Zamfara State shows that no primaries were conducted by your party bin the state, notwithstanding that our officials were fully mobilised and deployed. Consequently, based on the provision of section 87 and 31 of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended), the Commission does not expect that your party will submit names of any candidates from Zamfara State. For clarity, our position is that the APC, will not be fielding candidates for the governorship, National Assembly and State Assembly Elections in Zamfara State for the 2019 general elections"*.

The Zamfara State APC intra-party conflicts led to litigations which was finally laid to rest by the Supreme Court. On the 24th May, 2019, the Supreme Court nullified the APC 2019 General

elections of all candidates in Zamfara State and declared that the first runners-up in the elections as the winners of all the posts earlier declared to have been won by the APC and its candidates. The Supreme Court decision was based on the inability of the APC to conduct the 2018 primary elections in Zamfara State.

Similarly, primary elections held in APC Rivers State chapter resulted into series of conflict due to the state executive leadership crisis as well as non-compliance with the electoral laws in the State. The aggrieved members of the party approached the Federal High Court and the conflicts were finally settled by the Supreme Court. The Apex Court denied the Rivers State APC in fielding candidates into the governorship, National Assembly and State Assembly in the 2019 general elections.

Based on the critical assessment of 2018 primary elections provoked by party politics and conflict management in this study area, this work summarizes that conflict management of 2018 primary election is best anchored through Alternative Dispute Resolution and internal party mechanisms which reduce non-adherence to party politics and electoral laws. This will increase candidates' selection in primary elections as well as in party executive positions within the party and can go a long way in reducing occasional decampment of party stalwarts that had not only torn PDP and APC but also decreasing their chance of winning the 2019 General Election. Multivariate analysis of variance is used to test the significance relationships of independent variable (Conflict Management Strategy) and the response variable (2018 primaries) while incorporating the regression parameter estimates in the results. The two hypotheses formulated in this study are rejected and the Alternative hypotheses accepted.

7.0 Conclusion

Political Parties are driven into ADR practices to reduce occasional decampment of many party members. This study concluded that the most appropriate way of managing political party disputes during and after primary election is to develop ADR mechanisms that will identify and mitigate the altercations that results in negative energies at the intra party level; and in the event of conflicts, provide a system that accommodates these negative energies and redirect same into peace resources.

The study further concludes that internal peace mechanism was part of negotiation and mediation process of the ADR framework for resolving party disputes but the approach to deploying ADR options in PDP and APC would differ. However, there could be significant points of convergence because they operate under dissimilar party politics. In this wise, the operations of political parties are based on policies generated internally. It is at this strategic level that ADR options are codified and stakeholders made to get committed to them. Consent templates are raised at this level and relevant stakeholders are made to convey their consent to explore ADR options in the event of disputes.

8.0 Recommendations

To reduce conflicts and check the undemocratic attitudes in Nigeria political parties the following are considered important:

- i. There is need to infuse ADR mechanism for social harmony and peace building. Any organization that lacks this mechanism may find it difficult to function effectively.
- ii. There should be regular meetings of parties' National Executives. The regular meeting of the party members will help in checkmating the activities of each party in accordance with the party's Constitution.
- iii. The imposition of candidates into any elective position should be obliterated. The right of every member must be respected and preserved. Consensus candidature and selection of candidates must be played down at all level.
- iv. Candidate(s) emergence at the primary level must be given constitutional backing instead of substituting such person for a candidate of selective approval.
- v. Parties should embrace the concept of reforms and review the zoning arrangement. This is because Nigeria's Constitution of 1999 (as amended) is silent about any zoning formula. Therefore, the Parties should embark on genuine reform agenda majorly on the issue of zoning to allow improvement into the party and the entire country.
- vi. PDP and APC should have highly institutionalized party structures. The notion of party institutionalization may be invoked to cover a wide range of features, including a party's autonomy from other actors or a self-acclaimed anointed leader. In a more narrowly organizational sense, two key features defining the level of party institutionalization are the degree to which internal decision procedures are formalized, and the extent to which the party has coordinated structures throughout its party constitution.

References

- Abbas, A. (2016). Political Parties and Inter-Party Conflicts In Nigeria: Implications for Democratic Consolidation. *International Journal of Political Science and Development*. 4. 216-230. 10.14662/IJPSD2016.044.
- Abbas, A.I. (2013). Post-military era and the challenges of democratic governance in Nigeria
- Adekeye, M.A. (2017). Party Primaries, Candidate Selection and Intra-Party Conflict in Nigeria: PDP in Perspective. *Covenant University Journal of Politics & International Affairs*, 5 (1), 22-39
- Agudiegwu, M.O.& Ezeani, E. (2015) Party Defections and Survival of Democracy in Nigeria in *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (IJHSS)*, 4(6), 103-112.
- Akpuru-Aja, A. (1997). Basic Concepts, Issues and Strategies of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, Abuja: Centre for International and Strategic Studies.
- Albert, I.O. (2001). *Building Peace, Advancing Democracy: Third Party Intervention in Nigeria's Conflicts*(ed.). Ibadan: PETRAF/John Archers Books
- Blake, R.R. and Mouton, J.S. (1964). *The Managerial Grid*, Gulf, Houston, TX.
- Chizhik, A. W., Shelly, R. K., & Troyer, L. (2009). Intragroup conflict and cooperation: An introduction. *Journal of Social Issues*, 65(2), 251-259
- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) as amended Electoral Act (2010) as amended

- Hoffmann, M, (1992). "Third Party Mediation and Conflict Resolution in the Post-Cold War World", in J. Baylis and J. Rengger [eds], *Dilemmas of World Politics*, Oxford University Press, New York
- Imobighe, T. A. (2003). *The OAU (AU) and OAS in Regional Conflict Management: A Comparative Assessment*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) (2018): Certified True Copy of INEC Monitoring Reports of Primary Election By Political Parties/Candidates
- Jinadu A. (2011). *Inter-Party Dialogue in Nigeria: Examining the Past, Present and Future*. Vanguard Newspaper Publication of October 12, 2011.
- Mahmood (2018). *The Punch Newspapers: Party Primaries among the Worst in Nigeria*, December 1, 2018
- Markus, H.R, Fein, S. & Kassin, S. (2013). *Social Psychology*. Cengage Books.
- Ojielo, Ozonnia (2001). *Alternative Dispute Resolution*, Lagos: Centre for Peace in Africa.
- Omotola, J. S. (2009). *Garrison Democracy in Nigeria: The 2007 General Elections and the Prospects of Democratic Consolidation*. *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 47 (2):194-220
- Omotola, J.S. (2010). *Political Parties and the Quest for Political Stability in Nigeria*. *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, 6 (2), 125-145.
- Robert, H M.; et al. (2011). *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11th ed.)*. pp. 438– 446. Da Capo Press. Philadelphia, PA.
- Rod H. & Martin, H. (2013). *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*. pp. 1. Macmillan International Higher Education. ISBN 978-1-137-31786-5
- Shale, V. & Maltosa, K. (2008). *Managing Intra-party and Interparty Conflicts in Lesotho*. A Training Manual Prepared by EISA for a Training Programme for Political Parties in Lesotho, Organised by the Independent Electoral Commission of Lesotho with the Support of UNDP, Lesotho. Electoral Handbook No. 19, October
- Toyden (2013). *Political Parties and Inter-Party Conflicts in Nigeria*.
- Umar, M. Z. & Kura, S. Y (2004), "Political Parties, Electoral Rules and Democratic Governance" in Saliu, H. A. et al (Eds.), *Nigeria under Democratic Rule (1999-2003)*, Ibadan: University Press Voters Education Handbook (n.d).