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Effects of Internal Party Democracy of The All Progressives Congress (APC) on Nigeria's Democratic Consolidation

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Abstract

The internal politics of the All Progressives Congress (APC) has held democracy in Nigeria on the jugular. This study, effects of internal party democracy of the APC on Nigeria's democratic consolidation focused on how the ruling party since capturing of state power, has been able to consolidate democracy in Nigeria. Without doubt, democratic practice in Nigeria since the inception of the Fourth Republic (1999-date) has remained unstable, most often due to lack of internal party democracy, use of thugs during elections, disobedience to court rulings and method of candidate selection for elections by political parties. This study critically examined the activities of the APC and the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. It employed qualitative methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation of data from documentary evidence of secondary sources. The Marxian theory of post-colonial state was adopted; to argue, that the method of candidate selection in the APC to large extent, shows a lack of internal party democracy, and the APC- led government seems to be moving towards a fascist party owing to its constant disobedience to court rulings. The article concludes with some recommendations based on the analysis that the party should pay more attention to the selection of candidates for elections as well as go back to the drawing board to establish a leadership command structure as well as spell out disciplinary actions against erring members.

Keywords: Democratic Consolidation, Internal party democracy, Party democracy, All Progressives Congress, Good governance.

Introduction

The development of political parties in Nigeria dates back to era of elective principle which was introduced by the Clifford constitution of 1922. This gave rise to the formation of various political parties in Nigeria such as The Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) which was formed in 1923 with Herbert Macaulay as the head of the party (Anyaele, 2005, p.437). In the pre-independence and the early post-independence periods, political parties in Nigeria were not ideologically based. Rather, they were regional-based and woven around individual politicians who they saw as their mentors. According to Anyaele (2005), one peculiar feature of the development of political parties in Nigeria is that the pre-existing tribal and cultural associations, groups and trade unions metamorphosed into political parties. Historically, political parties in Nigeria have developed and still play a vital role towards the realization of the democratic objectives. Indeed, the last fifty years has seen an evolution of various political parties. From 1991-1993, Nigeria practiced a two-party system, with the government establishing the Social Democratic Party

(SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC). The military administrations later proscribed the parties after annulling a presidential election in 1993. But Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999. The restoration of democratic government in 1999 led to a new approach to party politics in Nigeria. The procedure for registering political parties was liberalized, thereby, opening up the political space for mass participation in political activities in the country (Ibodje, 2005). Today, there are more than seventy registered political parties in Nigeria.

In the preparation of Nigeria for the Fourth republic (1999- date) as it advances into the twenty first century, three political parties were registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The names of the registered parties are Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Peoples Party (APP), which in 2002 changed its name to All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). These political parties contested the 1998 and 1999 general elections.

In this work, our focus is on the All Progressives Congress (APC), a political party which came into being on 6th February, 2013 through a merger of the three main opposition parties in Nigeria- All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) and Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) as well as a faction of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA).

Nigeria is presently confronted with many problems such as the issue of democratic consolidation in her present Fourth Republic which could be as a result of lack of political ideology and political will amongst political parties in the country. Political parties in Nigeria have over the years resorted to a form of governance that is alien to the tenets of democracy. For instance, the ruling party- the APC is increasingly becoming undemocratic in her political activities to the extent that it is more about loyalty to some so-called elites of the party that determines who gets what, when and how in the party thus, making it difficult to remove 'or virtually impossible' for aspirants in the party to achieve their political objectives once they are tagged 'disloyal'. The assumption is that some APC executives at the national level feel that they have the latitude to turn things around as they wish in the party.

Also, the elite class in Nigeria according to Nwoye (2001) is synonymous with Browne Onuoha's depiction of the socio- political landscape of a post-military era in Nigeria, made up of three interconnected dominant social groups:

- (1) Ex-/retired military men, of the senior officer corps
- (2) A few rich ones, who made their money from civil war economy (1967-1970), corruption and military administrations patronage, in mineral oil exploration/allocation of mineral oil blocks, government contracts and related businesses.
- (3) A new rich ones, who made their money through outright fraud (known as 419 in Nigeria), drug trafficking and other illicit and at times criminal businesses. Onuoha (n.d.) argues that this coalition has been in control of Nigerian politics since the aborted Third Republic in 1993. The coalition took control of democratically elected government in Nigeria in 1999, and has been in charge ever since. Their boundaries

are not readily perceptible and they have since 1999 coalesced to become difficult to distinguish.

The coalition was the only force that had the type of big money required for success in Nigerian politics. In such a context, money was used routinely not only to corrupt the political and electoral process through vote buying and vote rigging, but also to attempt to buy justice Amuwo (n.d.). Consequently, Nigerian elections are often programmed to achieve pre-determined results. Most other politicians, who succeeded in Nigerian politics ...but did not belong to any of the three social groups, would have been sponsored by a member from one or the other of the three groups; sponsors are popularly known as political “godfathers” (Nwoye, 2001).

The ‘god-fathers’ (the diabolical political elite) are immensely influential in the electoral process in Nigeria. They sponsor the formation of political parties and also determine who will be a candidate at the elections. They determine the result of an election in advance and their dubious determination stands. They manipulate the democratic process and virtually all Nigeria’s post-colonial administrations to date have been thrust with power without a concise national ideology, let alone a popular and liberal one. The APC is not an exception but a glaring example because between 1999 and 2015 nothing has really changed. Consequently, the Nigerian political system has not developed significantly since the colonial period. Amuwo (2009) posits that in theory, political parties are premised on the concept of political inclusivity and anchored in political participation. In practice, however, parties are born mainly due to political exclusivity, that is to say, for purposes of wresting power and controlling the masses. There are likely to be few parties where politics and elections are structured by ideologies about the use to which power is put. Consequently, where ideologies are lacking and political formations are bereft of identity, as in Nigeria, we are confronted with the efflorescence of several look-alike political parties, differentiated only by the fatness of the purse of their main sponsors and the unique mannerisms and idiosyncrasies of their leaders (Amuwo, 2009). Invariably, the electorate is left without options. Voting is done based on nothing.

Conceptual clarifications

Before we delve into the main issues in concern, it is important to conceptualize the basic terms in this study which are democracy, internal party democracy, democratic consolidation, good governance. A country’s democratic maturity can be assessed by the transparent manner in which elections are conducted in that country, in accordance with the rule of law and in obedience to acceptable international norms. According to Okhaide (2012), the need for political parties to adhere to the principles and practice of internal party democracy cannot be over-emphasized. In Nigeria, there is the quest for the enthronement of internal democracy among the registered political parties, particularly as it relates to the conduct of party primaries where candidates are chosen to stand for elections on the platform of their political parties. Most Nigerians believed that internal party democracy does not only

affect the credibility of the elections, but also the quality of leadership, governance and economic development.

Democracy

Democracy has its origin in the supreme will of the people; as a descriptive term is synonymous with majority rule, even though its direct form among the adult male Athenians has been replaced by representative pattern in consonance with modern complex and highly populated states. According to Appadorai (1974, p.137), democracy may be described as a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by themselves, although this most civilized method of governance known to man and popularised by Abraham Lincoln as the government of the people, by the people, for the people has no consensus definition and has in all era been determined by the extent to which the government is controlled by the members of the population rather than imposed on them (Onuoha & Utobo ,2013, p.115).

Internal party democracy

According to Salih (2006 in Okhaide, 2012) internal party democracy (IPD) “Implies support for the general interest of the party membership, the public and the state. It means that party structure and organization are participatory and essential vehicles for the exercise of nascent democratic leadership and values”. Scholars like Likoti (2005) believe that political parties can add more value to democratization if they embrace and institutionalize internal democracy. For Matlosa & Sello (2005), since political parties play a crucial role in the democratic process, “it is also incontrovertible that political parties are the key to the institutionalization and consolidation of democracy. . . Sustainable democracy is dependent upon well-functioning and effective political party (Matlosa & Sello, 2005).” Yet, some scholars do not subscribe to the view that parties should use IPD so as to be able to perform their principal roles in the larger society. For instance, Mimpfen (n.d) argues that “internal democratic procedures may raise possibilities for party splits and crises, possibly harming democratic stability.” Scarrow (2005, p.4) avers that it could “overly dilute the power of a party’s inner leadership and make it difficult for that party to keep its electoral promises.” For Pennings & Hazan (2001), it may in some instances actually increase power of small elites. On the other hand, Maltosa & Sello (2005) posits that the issue of internal democracy and the effective functioning of political parties are major challenges to political parties in all countries in West Africa. While Maltosa & Sello seem to emphasize the effect of lack of internal party democracy as a major threat to democratic consolidation in emerging democracies, Scarrow’s observation provides reasonable grounds to discourage IPD in emerging democracies where the rule of law is grossly abused and effective mechanisms of conflict resolution are lacking.

In Nigeria’s Fourth Republic (1999- date) generally, the ability of political parties to provide the electorates with clearly acceptable candidates through the process of internal party democracy has continued to be a hard nut to crack during

elections. There seem to have been more cases of imposition of candidates than their proper nomination through primaries. Often, candidates who contested and won primaries are replaced. Similarly, (Ikeanyibe,2014), stated that cases of inconclusive primaries leading to party factionalization and disagreements that usually drag in courts abound. Scarrow (2005) explains internal party democracy as a broad term describing a very wide range of methods for including party members in intra-party deliberation and decision making. On the other hand, Ojukwu & Olaifa (2011) sees IPD as democracy within the party and the extent to which a party subscribes to and abides by the basic and universal democratic tenets. A critical factor concerning internal party democracy borders lies in underscoring those values or elements of democracy that should ensure internal party democracy. A more fundamental disagreement concerning IPD is whether it is necessary for the effective performance of parties and what its benefits are generally to a polity. Mimpfen (n.d) shows that no consensus exists on the justification and benefits of intra-party democracy to both the political party itself and to the general polity at large.

Scarrow (2005) presents more clearly the positions of the opposing sides regarding the benefits of IPD generally. She reveals that some advocates of internal party democracy that parties using internally democratic procedures are likely to select more capable and appealing leaders, to have more responsive policies, and as a result to enjoy greater electoral success. Scarrow argues that some converge on the premise that parties that “practice what they preach,” in the sense of using internally democratic procedures for their deliberation and decisions as well as strengthen democratic culture generally. Scarrow maintains that realistic practitioners nevertheless recognize that intra-party democracy is not a panacea: some procedures are better suited to some circumstances than to others. Moreover, some procedures seem even to entail distinct costs, and there are stable democracies with parties that lack guarantees or regular processes of internal party democracy.

Section 223 (1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria particularly provides for complying with the principles of IPD by political parties. It avers that “the constitution and rules of a political party shall provide for the periodical election on a democratic basis of the principal officers and members of the executive committee or other government body of the political party.” In some cases, parallel primaries end up in the nomination of more than one candidate who laid claim to the party’s ticket. Jumping from major parties to virtually unknown ones to contest election by aspirants who felt unjustly treated at party nomination processes has become a grand norm amongst political parties in Nigeria with the APC as no exception. These occurrences, which have grave consequences for effective party institutionalization and the democratic stability, continue despite the huge legal provisions for regulation of party organization and operations, including the mandatory use of IPD for nomination of candidates for election (Ikeanyibe, 2014).

The debate on the importance of IDP as a basis to ensure democratic consolidation in any polity as we can see from contributions of scholars on the issue shows that scholars such as Mimpfen (n.d), and Scarrow (2005) were opposed to IPD as essential in consolidation of democracy especially in developing states. On the

other hand, scholars such as (Maltosa & Sello 2005, Likoti 2005 in Ikeanyibe 2014), Ojukwu & Olaifa (2011) have emphasized on the relevance of IPD as essential to democratic consolidation.

Even though some scholars have argued against the importance of IPD as essential to consolidation of democracy in new states, their arguments to this effect are empirically deficient. It is worthy to note that democratic consolidation will not be feasible in any polity when there is lack of internal party democracy amongst the political parties.

Democratic Consolidation

Towards the end of the last century, Africa like the rest of the world witnessed the third wave of democratization when authoritarian regime and one-party governments were replaced by elected civilian governments and/or administrations (Ahmed, 2014). Nigeria described by Ette (2013), is one of the strongholds of dictatorship in the continent was caught in the snowballing effect of the wave after twenty-nine years of military dictatorship.

Democracy formally gained root in the country on 29th May, 1999 after several years of attempt by the past military regimes of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida and Sani Abacha. Nigerians were full of hope and expectations that this hard earned democracy will usher in improvement in standard of living, good governance, security and what Mohammed (2013) described as freeing of natural resources from the iron fist and jaw of greedy officials to that of enterprising and efficient social services delivery in health, education, sports and as well as rehabilitation of infrastructural facilities, poverty alleviation and reduction in unemployment, inequality and improvement in general socio-economic development.

Democratic consolidation implies the internalization of democratic culture and the institutionalization of democratic “best practices” by a polity that has successfully embarked on a democratic transition. Put simply, democratic process must be seen as the only alternative to attain democracy. In other words, for consolidation of democracy to be achieved by a polity, that polity must make sure that democratic tenets such as: adherence to the rule of law, free and fair elections, individual freedom and equality, respect for the verdict of the electorate and independence of the judiciary must be upheld.

The world, Nigeria inclusive, is yet to see the type of democracy that is devoid of party politics. In many democratic nations of the world today, political parties have been used to achieve and maintain democratic consolidation. They are known to perform certain functions within a political system. Hence, we can categorically state that political parties must ensure that the tenets of democracy are followed for good governance and its attendant democratic consolidation. Thus, the survival of democracy in modern society rests partly on the ability of political parties to recruit people into party and elective offices, aggregate and articulate interests, politically educate, socialize and integrate the people.

There is growing evidence of declined public confidence in parties the world over; political parties have deteriorated in membership, organization, and popular

involvement and commitment to democratic ideal. The Nigeria situation is not an exception. Since the Nigerian State returned to democratic governance, party activities especially in the areas of selection, election, accountability, discipline, among others appear to be far below democratic requirements such that Nigeria democratic project has been the subject of intense debate in many quarters (Obah-Akpowoghaha, 2013). Besides, political parties were neck-dipped into all manners of anti-democratic activities including: electoral manipulations during primary and secondary elections, thuggery, hooliganism and vandalism during elections, political assassination of political opponents, arising from unfair methods of selecting party's flag bearers and generally lack of party's internal democracy (Dike,2003).

Good Governance

Governance is a multifaceted concept with wide ramifications. This is so because of the fast-changing and interdependent global environment. No country can afford to continue with a governance system that is outdated, slow, ineffective, expensive, and corrupt in this age of globalization (Khan in Rahman, 2016). Governance though is increasingly widely used; it is not a new term. The word *governance* derives from the Greek word *Kubernao* which means *to steer*. The World Bank (nd.) defined *governance* as the exercise of political authority and the use of institutional resources to manage societal problems and affairs. This explains the emphasis on good governance as the prerequisite of leadership.

The World Bank first used the concept of good governance in its 1989 report, *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*, in which it characterized the crisis confronting the region as a "crisis of governance" and linked ineffectiveness of aid with governance issues (Singh, in Rahman, 2016). Since then, good governance has become a widely used term both in advanced and third world polities. Politicians both in power and in opposition talk of their quest to achieve good governance. Good governance is characterized by an accountable government at the centre, an independent judiciary, freedom of thought and expression, and above all, freedom of choice for its citizens. It also, implies a democratic structure, human rights, and freedom of media. Governance can be viewed as the sum of three major components: process, content, and deliverables. The process of governance includes factors such as transparency and accountability. Content includes values such as justice and equity. It must ensure that the citizens, especially the poorest, have the basic needs and have a life with dignity. A dictatorial regime that delivers basic needs to the citizens is no doubt better than a dictatorship that does not, but it is not good governance. Similarly, regular elections alone do not translate into 'good governance'. Rule of law that is transparent, but unjust- such as apartheid- is certainly not 'good governance'. It is only when all these three conditions are fulfilled that governance becomes 'good governance'.

All Progressives Congress: An Overview

The All Progressives Congress (APC) is a political party in Nigeria, formed on 6th February 2013 in anticipation of the 2015 elections. APC candidate

Muhammadu Buhari won the 2015 presidential election by almost 2.6 million votes. Incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan conceded defeat on 31st March. This was the first time in Nigeria's political history that an opposition political party unseated a governing party in a general election and one in which power transferred peacefully from one political party to another. In addition, the APC won the majority of seats in the Senate and the House of Representatives in the 2015 elections.

Formed in February 2013, the party is the result of an alliance of Nigeria's three biggest opposition parties – the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) – and a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) – merged to take on the People's Democratic Party. The resolution was signed by Tom Ikimi, who represented the ACN; Senator Annie Okonkwo on behalf of the APGA; former governor of Kano State, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, the Chairman of ANPP's Merger Committee; and Garba Shehu, the Chairman of CPC's Merger Committee. Ironically, less than two years before the party's historic victory in the 2015 elections, Annie Okonkwo, Tom Ikimi and Ibrahim Shekarau resigned from the party and joined the PDP. The party received approval from the nation's electoral umpire Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on 31st July, 2013 to become a political party and subsequently withdrew the operating licenses of the three predecessor parties (the ACN, CPC and ANPP).

In March 2013, it was reported that two other associations – African Peoples' Congress and All Patriotic Citizens – also applied for INEC registration, adopting APC as an acronym as well, reportedly "a development interpreted to be a move to thwart the successful coalition of the opposition parties, ahead of the 2015 general elections." It was reported in April 2013 that the party was considering changing their name to the All Progressive Congress of Nigeria (APCN) to avoid further complications. In November 2013, five serving Governors from the governing PDP-Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers State, Abdul Fatah Ahmed of Kwara State, Rabiu Kwankwaso of Kano State, Murtala Nyako of Adamawa State and Aliyu Wamakko of Sokoto State defected to the APC.

The APC is generally considered to be a center-left political party that favors controlled market or regulated market economic policies, and a strong and active role for government regulation. A substantial number of its political leaders are followers of or politicians who subscribe to the social democratic political philosophy of Obafemi Awolowo and the socialist and anti-class views of Aminu Kano. Moreover, the majority of the APC's base of political support is in southwestern Nigeria and the Northern Nigeria, which are dominated by the country's largest ethnic groups, the Yoruba and the Hausa-Fulani, respectively.

In spite of the party's domination by pro-devolution politician like Atiku Abubakar, Bola Tinubu, the party's presidential bearer and the CPC wing is less inclined to federalism and this basic tension is somewhat of ideological strange bed fellows accommodated in the context of desire to capture state power in the 2015 general election (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/apc/>).

Theoretical Framework

According to Leege & Francis (1974 in Onunkwo, 2014) political theory means a collection of interrelated law-like statements or hypotheses which are intended to explain some political phenomena or event. Each law-like statement specifies relationship between or among fairly abstract concepts.

The Marxian theory of post-colonial state is adopted to guide this study. The theory was developed by Alavi (1979) and popularized by Claude Ake (1985); Ekekwe (1986); and Ibeanu (1998). For Marxian scholars, however, the state is the product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonism (Lenin, 1984). To this end, the state which arose as a product of conflict between classes is as a rule, the state of the most powerful and economically dominant class, which by this means also becomes the politically dominant class and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed (Jakutowski, 1973).

Hence, Marx (1971) aptly remarked “the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie”.

The most distinguishing feature of the Marxian theory of post-colonial state is its assumption that the post-colonial state is a creation of imperialism. As such, it has followed a development strategy dictated by the interests of imperialism and its local allies, not by those of the majority of the indigenous population. The post-colonial state has created a deep crisis from which it can hardly extricate itself without fundamentally changing its present nature. According to Ekekwe (1986), the post-colonial state rests on the foundation of the colonial state, which in turn, had incorporated some important elements of the pre-colonial rudimentary state structures.

Also Alavi as cited in (Okolie et al, 2014) noted that the essential about the state in the post-colonial societies stems from that it is not established by an ascendant native bourgeoisie but instead by a foreign capitalist bourgeoisie... the class basis of the post-colonial state is therefore, complex... the state in post-colonial society is not the instrument of a single class. It is relatively autonomous and it mediates between the competing interest of the three propertied classes, namely: the metropolitan bourgeoisie, the indigenous bourgeoisie and the landed classes while at the same time, acting on behalf of them all to preserve the social order in which their interest are imbedded.

The authoritarian character of the post-colonial state was more often than not reinforced by the willingness of the colonizers to hand over government to their chosen African successors who could be trusted to share their values and be subservient to their interest. As Ake (1996) aptly captured this when he posited that political independence in “Africa was rarely the heroic achievement it was made out to be; it was often a convenience of de-radicalization by accommodating a mere racial integration of the political elite”. Hence instead of political independence being the watershed of Nigeria’s independence, it became a grim struggle for power by the dominant class in Nigeria and excluded the masses from political process.

The main goal of the colonial state was to create conditions under which accumulation of capital by the foreign bourgeoisie would take place through the

exploitation of local human and other natural resources. It was on the basis of this that the post-colonial state emerged. As Ibeanu (cited in Obasi, 2010) has observed, in spite of anti-colonial struggles, the post-colonial state altered very little in the arbitrariness of its predecessor. This is especially the case in countries like Nigeria where independence was negotiated with the colonialists. Negotiated independence, according to him, implied that the structures of the colonial state were not changed in any fundamental sense; it was just a change of personnel.

Therefore, the state that now emerged, though ostensibly independent and sovereign, was no less a creation of imperialism than the colonial state (Ekwekwe, 1986, p. 57). The post-colonial state is a creation of imperialism too, but that it also sought to dovetail its interests with those of the foreign bourgeois. One basic character of the post-colonial state is that it has very limited autonomy (Ake, 1985, p. 3). This means that the state is institutionally constituted in such a way that it enjoys limited independence from the social classes, particularly the hegemonic social class, and so, is immersed in the class struggles that go on in the society. This lack of relative autonomy is one reason why a post-colonial state like Nigeria is incapable of mediating political conflicts (Ake, 1985, p.28). The post-colonial state is also committed in such a way that it reflects and caters for a narrow range of interests (Ake, 1985, pp. 28-31). As for the post-colonial state in Nigeria, it caters mainly for the interest of the Nigerian bourgeoisie and that of the metropolitan capital. This explains why the Nigerian state has consistently been unable to consolidate democracy as Ibeanu (in Obasi, 2010) aptly remarked that the continuous assault on democracy in Nigeria should be located in the character of the Nigerian state as instructions that have continued to undermine democracy are genealogically inscribed in it. In fact, the seemingly neutrality of the state in moderating political struggle in post-colonial states is an illusion. Milliband (1977 in Onunkwo, 2014) contends that a state, however independent it may have been politically from any given class, remains and cannot in a classless society but remain the protector of an economically and politically dominant class.

Application of the theory

In Nigeria, democratic process of selection of candidates among political parties especially the APC, is bedeviled with poor party politics as a result of tribalism, poor political leadership, party indiscipline, lack of clear cut party ideologies, lack of internal party democracy among others. The aforementioned factors have persistently threatened the survival of the nascent Nigerian democracy. Selection of party candidates should be devoid of prejudices. This caused a serious problem in the Ondo APC gubernatorial primary election of 2015 between the party's chairman John Oyegun and the party's national leader senator Bola Tinubu in which the latter accused the former of imposing his choice candidate –Rotimi Akeredolu on the party.

Also, in the Bayelsa state APC primary gubernatorial election the former governor of Edo state Adams Oshiomhole who was the electoral chairman accused one of the candidates Timipraye Sylva of using thugs to disrupt the party's primary

election and manipulation of the result thereby falsely declaring himself the winner. Also lack of party discipline and the lack of internal party democracy in the APC which resulted in Dr. Bukola Saraki and Hon. Yakubu Dogara to go against the party's wish by going ahead to become the President of the senate and Speaker of the House respectively. These examples clearly show the character of the Nigerian state which is reflected in the decisions of the petty bourgeoisie, elites, the guardian class and not that of the people or electorates. In Nigeria, being in government is seen as being at the fountain head of wealth.

Recently, the mere fact of being elected as an APC candidate or flag -bearer for an election is now one if not the most viable and rapid means or avenue for acquisition of state power and primitive accumulation of state wealth for personal consumption. The imposition of candidates instead of a candidate by popular vote, the clash of interest among party members and lack of party discipline have contributed and led to the interplay of conflicts which usually lead to lack of internal party democracy, party defection and formation of new political parties.

Colonial Nigerian- state was oppressive and authoritarian in its conduct and was not in a position to bridge its alien and distant nature from the Nigerian people. Unfortunately, local elites that inherited the post-colonial Nigeria state continued with the authoritarian and alienating nature of the colonial Nigeria state. This resulted in the fragile nature of the Nigeria state which encapsulated in weak institutions that lack the capacity to discharge state functions. This shows why any political party in Nigeria that is in power try to monopolize state institutions and apparatuses to the detriment of democratic practice and sustenance.

Lack of internal party democracy in APC

The National Assembly leadership crises: The internal disagreement within the All Progressives Congress, (APC) on who emerges Senate President and Speaker of the House of Representatives is a new dimension to the end of impunity the party promised in its election campaign, this issue, has resulted in a dagger's drawn relationship between the executive and the legislature in Nigeria.

Senator Lawali Shuaibu, the Deputy National Chairman of the APC smiled wryly not too long ago when Vanguard sought his opinion on what it was like to be transformed from 16 years of playing opposition politics to inclusion in the camp of the ruling party- "I have also asked myself and I remember telling my colleagues in the National Working Committee (NWC) that we have to be a little careful this time because we are now the hunted and no more the hunters," the former Senate Minority leader said in an interview (26 May; 2015, pp. 45-49). The APC National Working Committee (NWC) had zoned many of the offices about to be shared among the zones. That zoning had projected the office of Senate President towards the North Central, but no sooner had the decision on the Speaker of the House of Representatives been made it was immediately engulfed in controversy over the real intentions of the NWC. Some reports had it that it was zoned to the Southwest while some others had it that it was zoned to the Northeast, but whatever, the decision on the speakership tore the party hierarchy into two, leading to the crisis that has just

emerged. Remarkably, an internal party retreat for senators-elect on the platform of the party ended in a fiasco after contenders for the office of Senate President broke the meeting into two. The senators-elect were divided into two camps, the Bukola Saraki bloc and the Ahmad Lawan/George Akume bloc. Another meeting with members-elect of the House of Representatives also ended up similarly in controversy. Ahead of the meeting supporters of one of the popular candidates for speaker, Yakubu Dogara issued a statement announcing that 213 members-elect had endorsed their man for the post of speaker. That was followed almost by the revelation by supporters of his main rival, Femi Gbajabiamila, who claimed to have garnered 179 members-elect in support of his aspiration. Their claim was also buttressed by the assertion that Gbajabiamila should ease into the position on the premise that as the outgoing minority leader, that he has paid the price.

Their point was, however, not much of a soothing comfort to supporters of Dogara, who are pointing at what they describe as his outstanding qualities in their support for him. Remarkably, members of the APC are concerned about the development but reassure themselves that the unfolding development is all part of the internal democracy that many of them criticized was absent in the PDP.

The APC leadership decided on senator Lawan as the consensus candidate for the post of senate president. This decision did not augur well with senator Bukola Saraki and his supporters who vowed to contest for the position on the floor of the house. To quell the looming internal crises in the party, a meeting was called by the vice president, professor Yemi Osinbajo according to a report by the Premium Times (8th June, 2015) as the meeting was going on another meeting by PDP senators elect in Abuja, 28 agreed to back Saraki/Ekweremadu ticket while 17 agreed to back Lawan/Akume ticket. This was after Senator Saraki and his loyalist decided to align with the opposition party PDP after a desperate move to win the race. Thus Bukola Saraki was elected the senate president alongside senator Ike Ekweremadu of PDP as his deputy (Retrieved from www.premiumtimesng.com).

For president Buhari, the emergence of a PDP member as deputy senate president is nothing short of a setback for his administration. He lamented that some members of his own party, APC, conceded the position of deputy senate president to Ekweremadu when the PDP never gave that much all through its sixteen years in power between 1999-2015. However, majority of the APC governors and state chairmen of the party are insisting that the senate president Bukola Saraki and the speaker of the House of Representatives Yakubu Dogara to relinquish their positions as the senate president and speaker of the House respectively and comply with the party's decision on the consensus candidates of Ahmad Lawan and Oluwafemi Gbajamila as the senate president and Speaker of the House respectively.

CCT Trial of Bukola Saraki

Thursday March 25, 2016 was the date the battle line was eventually drawn between the Senate President, Dr. Bukola Saraki, and the Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT). On that day, the Tribunal chairman, Danladi Umar, eventually had his day to commit the lawmaker to admit he eventually has a case to answer before the tribunal.

Saraki, a former Kwara State governor, has in the last few months moved round the courts including the Supreme Court to get an injunction to prevent the tribunal from trying him on a 13-count charge based on sundry issues including an alleged false asset declaration while in office as governor between 2003 and 2011. It was the last opportunity for Saraki's lawyer, Kanu Agabi, to prove to the tribunal why his client should not be tried but the argument of the Federal Government lawyer, Rotimi Jacob, prevailed and the tribunal chairman, Danladi Umar, ruled that the leader of the Saraki political dynasty in Kwara State has a case to answer before the tribunal.

Following the ruling, Saraki, reiterated that his trial at the Tribunal is an act of persecution rather than a fight against corruption.. During his appearance before the tribunal last September, Saraki noted that his trial before the tribunal was political, stressing "I strongly believe that I am here because I am the Senate President". Keen political observers would recall that Saraki assumed the office of the senate president against the wish of his party, the APC, Ahmed Lawan being the preferred candidate of the party, lost to Saraki in an election by the members on the floor of the House on June 9, 2015. It was in midst of the turmoil that Saraki was dragged before the tribunal, hence, Saraki's declaration. Saraki, according to a statement by his Special Assistant on new Media, Mr. Bankole Omishore, said his trial was the handiwork of powerful people who were not happy with his emergence as Senate President. He said, "We are public servants and you must fill your asset declaration form when you get in office and I did mine 13 years ago (Retrieved from leadership.ng/.../cct-trial-saraki-apc). According to Sen. Saraki, the charges have nothing to do with corruption or money being stolen anywhere. He also stated that he does not understand how the same organisation that cleared his asset declaration to be proper in 2004, 2009 and 2011 can now say that his record is faulted. Since Saraki's travail got to the level of the tribunal, there had been calls for political solution to the issue.

More so, with the way all the ministerial nominees were cleared by the National Assembly under Saraki's leadership, even as some of the nominees were perceived to be candidates of those not pleased with Saraki, many thought a political solution may have been worked out. Another area which made many think the party might have made the issue a family affair was the way and manner he handled the issues of the 2016 budget both the 'missing' and the 'padding'. But it was perhaps when the budget was missing that many observed that Saraki may not have been forgiven by the powers that he offended with his emergence.

Tinubu-Oyegun Feud in the Ondo Gubernatorial Primary Election

The national leader of the party, Bola Ahmed Tinubu has called for the resignation of the national chairman of the party, John Oyegun. Tinubu's call was in connection with the Ondo State governorship primaries. Tinubu alleged that Oyegun fraudulently spearheaded the emergence of Rotimi Akeredolu as the party's gubernatorial candidate.

There was crisis in the Ondo state's chapter of the APC in the run up to the primaries as some members alleged that Tinubu was planning to impose his candidate

on them. Unknown persons at one time, sealed off the party's secretariat in Akure with 'juju'. In an interview with bellanaija.com an online news media on 25th September 2016 Tinubu, complained that the party's national chairman: "Oyegun's transgressions are a warning. He is but the mercenary of forces that seek to return the nation to the old ways. If they get away with this infraction, no telling what or whom they will undermine tomorrow. Much is at stake." According to *Premium Times*, Tinubu's spokesperson, Sunday Dare, confirmed that the former Lagos State Governor authored the message above.

After the result of the primary election was announced, several candidates filed petitions contesting the result. The party established an investigative board to review the evidence. In a two –to- one decision, the panel found the delegate roster had suffered tampering. The panel recommended that a new primary should be held using the valid delegate list. This recommendation was tabled before the NWC. After many hours of deliberations spanning several days, a final vote was held by the NWC. Beforehand, NWC members agreed that the decision of the majority would become the stance of the party. Such is the way of democracy. The NWC voted six against five to cancel the fraudulent results and hold an honest primary. For a moment, it seemed the party would restore its integrity by giving democracy a chance. However, those who sought to scam an entire state would not let the vote of 11 people truncate their enterprise.

After the NWC vote, a noticeably agitated Oyegun proposed the NWC engage in prayer before concluding the meeting. Adhering to the chairman's request, NWC members began to pray. Seeing that the others had taken his bait, Oyegun used the prayerful interlude to secretly excuse himself from the meeting. Contravening the NWC decision and in violation of all rules of fundamental decency, Oyegun decided to safeguard the fraud done in Ondo by perpetrating a greater fraud. Oyegun arrogated to himself the right to submit the name of Rotimi Akeredolu to INEC as the candidate of the party (Retrieved from www.premiumtimesng.co/news/).

Conclusion

From all indications with reference to the cases reviewed in this work, it is obvious that political parties in Nigeria, including the APC have failed to uphold democratic principles in their mode of operation ranging from lack of internal party democracy which is one of the major factors in consolidation of democracy, refusal to court rulings and non- adherence, to the rule of law. These practices by the ruling party-APC are not healthy for our nascent democracy. And if not nipped in the bud, Nigeria's democracy may soon become a reference point for anti-democratic practice.

From our investigations we can deduce that the current ruling party is by no way different from its opposition the PDP whom it took over power from.

Also, from the events reviewed in this work, it is pertinent to remark that the most politicians that formed the APC were estranged members of the PDP who in one way or the other felt that the party treated them badly and, therefore, left to form a new political party in order to get back on their former party and usurp political power from them. It is also pertinent to state that wrestling political power from the

PDP was the major objective of the APC which may likely be the reason while the APC-led administration since assuming the realms of power in 2015 is yet to consolidate democracy and make Nigerians witness the much talked about 'change' which they promised.

Recommendations

- The APC led government should consider the federal republic of Nigeria's constitution as supreme in order not to undermine the rule of law.
- The party should pay much attention on the process of candidate selection for elections. It should not be based on loyalty to some high -ranking party officials rather it should be based on consensus.
- The party should also go back to the drawing board and establish a leadership command structure as well as spell out disciplinary actions against erring members.

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