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MURDERING DEMOCRACY AND THWARTING PEOPLES' WILL THROUGH INTRA-PARTY CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA: LESSONS FROM ZAMFARA APC CRISES (2018-2020)

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ABSTRACT

One of the cardinal principles of democracy is 'majority rule' which confers the right of governance on the majority of the people through an elected government on the platform of political parties. Since the return to democracy in 1999, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has never controlled the government structures in Zamfara State except when Shinkafi Mahmuda decamped to the party. The state is currently in the hand of PDP-a party that Zamfara people never gave their mandate. The papers traced and concluded that the depravation of Zamfara people of being governed by the All Progressives Congress (APC) the party they voted during the 2019 general election was due to the protracted crises within APC in the state. It relied on secondary data sources in arriving at these findings. The paper however concluded that intra-party conflict is harmful to the democratic development of Nigerian state. It recommended the adherence of party leaders and members to party rules as well as the strengthening of the country's institutional and political structures as a possible escape for future occurrences.

Keywords: APC, Democracy, PDP, Intra-party conflict, Nigeria, Zamfara

INRODUCTION

Democracy is the most globally acceptable form of government and has been largely used as a benchmark to determine the kind of interactions and relationships that exists between the developed nation and the developing nations. As a matter of fact, the United States of America which is prided as the most developed and the oldest democracy in the world has been open in her campaign for the democratization of the African continent, and has thus, taken some decisive measures to promote democracy in Africa especially starting from the 2nd wave of democratization in the 90s (Baher, 2019; Ugwafu, 2016; Richard, 2012). Therefore, democracy is becoming deeply rooted throughout the continent of Africa and indeed in Nigeria, and being the giant of Africa, she is proudly taking the lead of effectively consolidating democracy. Since her return to civil rule in 1999, she has successfully conducted 7 general elections and has been able to transit power from different leaders on two different occasions; viz Obasajo-Yarudua/Jonathan in 2007(PDP to PDP) and Jonathan to Buhari in 2015(PDP to APC). Democratic norms and values are fast becoming part of the Nigerian political culture as political parties are fast assuming their indispensable roles of political recruitment platforms, alternative government options and as an avenue for simplification of electoral choices for the citizens. This however, is not without a snag as her party politics has being fraught with unhealthy intra-party conflicts and irreconcilable differences due to divergent political views as well as economic pursuits within the party. This is because political gladiators have mastered the arts and tact of either imposing their wishes on the party without recourse to party rules and party internal democracy or they are in the habit of political maneuvering of opponents (within the party). This phenomenon has most often than not thrown up crises in the course of politicking which has dragged the country backward in her journey in democratic consolidation. This trend is common to all political parties in the Nigerian political arena.

The All Progressive Congress which (APC) came to shelter people of different political views all in their quest of providing a formidable platform to wrestle power from the People's Democratic Party (PDP)- that once prided itself as the largest party in Africa. Though, successful in its aim of dislodging PDP from the centre, the APC seems to have failed to effectively rally its members under a united and cooperated entity. The party from its formation seemed destined for centrifugal crises as Donnelly (2019) noted that the fragile, somewhat uneasy alliance is really starting to show obvious

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stress, which has brought some complications. Virtually all the state chapters of the party had shown some level of sickness even from the beginning. Coincidentally, appropriate doses of medications were not administered, so the ailment continued to manifest even after the 2015 general elections as political heavyweight continued to scheme possible ways to outsmart perceived political woes in their state chapters. The state and local government congresses of the party in 2018 provided ample opportunity for party to inflict more pains on itself as intrigues, maneuvering and scheming became the order of the day.

Zamfara State is one of the states with such crises and it continued unresolved that it was carried into the 2019 electioneering. The result of the unresolved intra-party conflict within the ranks of Zamfara APC resulted into the thwarting of the electoral wish of Zamafra people, and as well undermined the concept of 'majority rule' as a democratic principle (Quigley,n.d). It is in the light of the forgoing that this paper seeks to examine the conflict within the Zamfara APC viz-viz its impacts on the choice of Zamfara people in the 2019 general elections; the implication(s) it has on Nigerian democracy; and to provide suggestions of some corrective measures to forestall future occurrence of such trend.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Democracy

Democracy as a concept appears to be the most used term in the power discussion across the globe. It connotes different things to different people. But, largely, it is used to denote a system of rule that grants the majority the right to lead (allocation of scarce resources) through accredited representatives that are selected or elected through a periodically organized ritual called election. Adakai and Olorunsuwa (2019a) taking a clue from Harold Laswell's definition of politics as who gets what, how and when (Laswell, 1936), submitted that "the political and economic tendency of man propels him to aspire for ownership, control and retention of political power which to him is a harbinger of economic success. Conflicts are borne to erupt in the struggle for political power; such conflicts are best resolved through democratic means". This means that there is bound to be conflicting interests in the quest for power for the control of the resources in the society, which are resolved through democratic means.

Democracy to Lively (1975) is a mechanism by which the society maintains its equilibrium. Johari (2002) sees democracy in the form of governmental institution;

which to him is constituted in line with the coded laws (constitution) of the land, and such government is bound to act in accordance to the will of the people and, it's in everything accountable to them. Democracy goes however beyond periodically organized elections and the popular concept of 'one man one vote', democracy includes among other things, acting in accordance with the set rules of government, accommodating minority views, periodic elections that is free, fair and credible, freedom of speech and to a great extent the observation of the rule of law (Harvey and Harvey, 1974). Democracy in the view of Adakai and Olorunsuwa (2019a) is a system of government (that is constitutionally based) which promotes and encourages citizens' participation in governance through periodic free and fair elections with maximum guarantee and regards for citizen's rights, liberty, and rule of law. Axtmann (2013) relying on the work of Robert Dahl (1998), provided a historical trajectory of democracy where he asserted that there have been some form of democracy for tribal governments long in the pre-history era. He started further that that democracy can be unconventionally invented and reinvented whenever there are appropriate conditions. Tilly (2007 cited in Axtmann, 2013) concurred with Dahl as he asserted that a central theme to the concept of democracy is a "negotiated consent to collective decisions and as such democracy extends back into the mists of history".

Political Party

Political party, a group of politically inclined and active individuals with shared political ideology and, whose main aspiration of coming together is borne out of their strong desire of taking control of government machinery through election. Political parties remain an essential component of democracy and democratic practices are near impossible without the instrumentality of parties, this is due to linkage function it performs between the electorate and the government. Parties provide voters the opportunity of choice in the process of leadership recruitment of the country; parties provide order, stability and coherence in the formation of government; parties serve as yardstick for measuring the extent of fragility or otherwise of a democratic system while still offering the opportunity of comparison of good governance among states (Omodia, 2010 cited in Adebayo, 2016, Ojukwu and Olaifa, Adakai and Olorunsuwa, 2019a). Political parties as a vehicle for the propagation of democracy which according to Norris (2005), serve various purposes which include but not limited to aggregation of interests, simplifying electoral choices, selection of candidates for elections, coordination of formation and activities of government and organization of legislature.

Political parties are essential actors in representative democracies across the globe. Parties are in the acts of providing assistance in articulating groups' ambitions and aims, political leadership training, development and promotion of policy alternatives and choices; parties also present to voters' coherent electoral choice and alternatives. Parties further still provides togetherness and cohesiveness of party men in the parliament which promotes and contributes to efficient government (Scarrow, 2005).

A political party is an organisation of people who have similar opinion, views and beliefs about certain political end for the state or country and the methods through which such end could be accomplished (Onobonije, 1975). In the view of Heywood (2013) Political party is a group of organized individuals who are organized purposely for winning government power, through elections. Parties to Johari (2002) are a well-organized and active political agents of the society, whose primary objective is the control of government powers; this they achieve by competing with other groups holding different views for popular support. Further still, Johari (2002), in re-echoing the view of Curtis, states that parties are a "group of people who hold certain beliefs in common or who are prepared to support party candidates, work together for political victory, attain and maintain power". Johari provided 3 essential features inherent in a political party as: i. a group of persons with a common view on some important matters of public policy; ii. An organization of people whose main objective is to participate in the struggle for power; and iii. a body of persons whose members struggle to ensure that policies and programmes of theirs are implemented through a legal and democratic means. Scarrow(2005) cited in Adakai and Olorunsuwa(2019) outlined five typical models of political parties organisation to the understanding of party internal democracy. To her, the nature of the party organisation explains the extent or level of inclusiveness or otherwise of party members in decision making process.

Table 1: Models of Political Party Organisation

S/N	Types of Party	Centralization of Decision Making	Level of Inclusiveness of Members
1	Dominant Leader	High	Low
2	Party of Notables individual	Medium (often in strata and hierarchical)	Low
3	Individual Representation	Medium to high	Medium to high
4	Corporatist Representation	Medium to high	Medium
5	Mass bases Democracy	Low to high	High

Source: Scarrow (2005) cited in Adakai and Olorunsuwa (2019)

Intra-Party Conflict

Noting from the inevitable quest of man for political power as a harbinger to economic benefits, conflicts are an inevitable component of man's struggle for access to such opportunity. Intra-party conflict as a concept most time interchangeably used to mean intra-party opposition connotes the manifestations of series of tussles, misunderstanding, crises and wrangling within a given political party. It is pitifully reflected in the form of political opposition within a political party (Okokwo and Unaji 2016). To Okonkwo and Unaji (2016) and Momodu and Matudi (2013), the scourge of intra-party conflict is usually triggered when members of the same political party nurture and pursue different political objective and try to influence the decision making process of the party to their favour. In the view of Okoli (2001), intra-party opposition is a political opposition that takes place within a political party that is internally created where a rebellious group within a party constitutes (itself) into a factional clique that stands opposed to the activities of the other group(s) within the same party. Thus, intra party conflict occurs most often when members lock horns in the pursuit of divergent political aspirations and goals, most especially in nominating members for both elective and appointive offices (Ibrahim and Abubakar, 2016).

To Adakai and Olorunsuwa (2019), intra-party conflict is captured as:

Series of disagreement, disputes and displeasure that emanate within the party from or about the conduct of party affairs. It is manifested through overt or covert confrontations between factions, which sometimes are violent in nature thereby resulting in bodily harm or injury, and or anti-party activities and subsequently a dwarfed electoral fortune for the party.

To Eme and Anyadike, 2011: 43 cited in Ibrahim and Abubakar, 2016), It is social and political phenomenon that is manifested in “*great shock, difficulty and distress created in a political party due to the inability of the party concerned to resolve and reconcile effectively its internal differences or disputes*”. In the considered view of Ibrahim and Abubakar (2016) intra-party conflict could be manifested either in the ‘constructive or destructive’ form. The duo is of the opinion that that the constructive conflict is on immense benefit to the polity as it activates the mechanism of internal checks within the party. The nature of the Nigerian intra-party conflicts however is in the manner of the destructive conflict where “the dimension, multitude and impact of intra party conflict continue to be a worrisome phenomenon to the development of democracy” (Ibrahim and Abubakar, 2016). Olaniyan (2009) observed in concurrence with Ibrahim and Abubakar in their submission that “party politics has adorned the toga of notoriety in Nigeria to the extent that its defining characteristics have been intrigues, bickering, backbiting, schisms and violence”.

Rubin et al (1994) and Shale and Matlosa (2008) argued that there are 3 principal factors responsible for conflict within political parties; which include: 1) favouritism in the form of promoting the interests of kith and kin; 2) unequal sharing of resources- conferring huge resources on the leader(s); 3) centralised authority-concentrating power at the top. Shale and Matlosa (2008) however further added lack of regular meeting as part of the triggering factors for intra-party conflict in Nigeria. Okoli (2001) concluded that intra-party crises is caused principally by difference in personality of political actors in the party, clashed socio-economic interests, incompatibility of ideology among party members.

Mbah (2011) had provided a useful hint on the propelling force(s) for incessant intra-party conflicts in Nigeria when he aver that:

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

Adakai and Olorunsuwa opined that intra-party squabble has its roots in the rent-seeking nature of Nigerian politicians where politics is seen as the fastest means to economic prosperity, hence politics is seen as an end in itself, rather than being a privilege to offer selfless service to the society. Therefore, personal ambition of party men is a critical factor for intra-party strife. The duo further aver that the “weakness of political structures and institutions which promotes lawlessness in high places encourages in no small measure, disregard for party’s rules and regulations which in turn leads to wrangling, disputes and crises in the party”. The process and outcome of selection of candidates that parties present to the electorate must be reflective of democratic norms and practices (Scarrow, 2005). Norris (2004) cited in ACE (2008) has pointed out that one of the main issues in party internal democracy is the process of nominating candidates for elections, which according to him depends on 1) centralization of power (whether the state chapters are empowered to make selection), 2) the scale of participation by members is a considered factor and 3) the scope of decision making-talking about the number of candidate vying. Most legal framework recognizes party liberty to decide the most appropriate process and internal regulations. This last statement perhaps explains why parties fail to practice what they preach by thrashing internal democratic practices in carrying out their affairs in the dustbin of selfishness. This breeds a lot of conflicts within the party.

Ibrahim and Abubakar (2016) added a new dimension to the triggers of intra-party crisis. To them, another party could sponsor crises in the camp of its rival so as to brighten its chances for winning election. The Action Group conflict of 1965 was deepened by the covert involvement of NPC led federal government, by offering its support for the Akintola faction that later moved out of the party to form NNDP. So was the case of APC when Alh Buba Galadima declared himself factional chairman of APC. It was believed that Buba Galadima was sponsored by Atiku and PDP to destabilize APC during the run-up to the 2019 elections. Event later confirmed the link

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between PDP and Galadima as the former continued to wage war of tongue against APC and Buhari.

Intra Party Conflict in Nigeria: A Reflection

Intra party conflict in Nigeria dates back to the colonial period. The history of political party formation in Nigeria right from the creation of the first political party (the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1923 shows the disturbing nature of intra party conflict and the inability of the party leaders to successfully manage their differences. The Nigerian National Democratic Party(NNDP), according Nnadozie, (2005) was “wrecked by personal jealousies and quarrels over the spoils of office”. The lack of openness in the party and the autocratic approach of the party hierarchy caused a serious political rift, that led to the eventual formation of the Lagos Youth Movement (LYM) in 1933 which later metamorphosed to the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) in 1936. The NYM (Nigerian Youth Movement) originally started as a national-based political party by attracting membership that cut across Nigeria. It also broke the monopoly of the NNDP in Lagos and broadened the traditional catchment area in Lagos from which unofficial members were elected (Nnadozie, 2005). However, the NYM was short-lived mainly due to intra party feud and could not realize the promise of national front it held forth. The ethnic sentiment undermined internal democratic value of the party as it was dismembered by the *Ikoli-Akinsanya* crisis in 1941. As Innocent (2012) recounted:

“In 1941, the NYM, to its intents and purposes, shed its national character. NnamdiAzikwe and the Ibo members of the movement together with Samuel Akinsanya and the Ijebu Yoruba left the movement. The reason being that the non- Ijebu Yoruba had supported the victorious candidacy of the Ijaw, Ernest Ikoli, to the legislative council over that of Samuel Akinsanya”.

If the root of intra party conflict could be traced to the NNDP and the NYM, it was nurtured by the succeeding regional based parties of National Congress of Nigeria and Cameroon which later changed to the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), Action Group (AG) and Northern People’s Congress (NPC). It is remarkable that NCNC which started as a promising national party was reduced to a regional party due to intra party conflict fuelled mainly by tribal sentiment. In the same vein, the Action Group (AG) faced internal conflict between its leader Chief Obafemi Awolowo and

his deputy leader, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola. The intra conflict in the AG led to the formation of a new party known as the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) whose membership was drawn from and comprised the supporters of Akintola from AG and NCNC. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) which was established in 1949 by Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was also not spared of intra party crisis as the disgruntled members of the party pulled out to form the Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU). These and other minor parties such as United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) and United National Independent Party (UNIP) faced intra- party conflict of varying degrees which polarised and factionalized them leading to some aggrieved members taking solace in smaller parties (Puke 2010, Dedley 1973 cited in Abubakar and Ibrahim 2016).

The Second Republic's experience was also not different from that of the pre-independence and First Republic eras. All the political parties registered and competed in the 1979 General Elections were riddled with internal crises. The National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), the Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP), the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) and the Nigeria Advance Party (NAP) were characterized by crises. Internal crisis accounted for the break-up of the NPN/NPP alliance and the splits that occurred in the GNPP and PRP (Tyoden 2002 cited in Olaniyan 2016, Onyishi 2015)

In the Fourth Republic, the encomium that greeted the transition to democracy in May 1999 tempted one to conclude that Nigerian politicians have learnt great lesson from the previous republics in terms of adhering to the principle of internal democracy in the management of political parties. However, it is quite unfortunate that the Fourth Republic has not only recorded critical incidences of intra party conflicts but the highest rate of defection therefrom.

According to Muhammad (2008), the intra party conflict has remained a predominant feature of partisan politics in the Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Virtually all major political parties in this republic are afflicted with internal crisis. However, in recent years, the magnitude of crisis within the PDP is so intense (Aleyomi, 2013). The magnitude of intra party conflict therefore tends to be according to the strength and size of a party in Nigeria. In fact, the PDP (national headquarters) has had to contend with series of intra party crises since its creation. Some major cases of internal crisis in the party include the internal division within the party in 2000 when it was divided into two camps one

led by Chief Sunday Bolorunduro Awoniyi and the other headed by Chief Ume Ezeoke; the Anambra State internal tussle between former Governor Chris Ngige and his godfather, Chief Chris Uba; the crisis in the Cross River State that led to two factions; the Imo State crisis that led to the defection of Senator Ifeanyi Ararume to Action Group of Nigeria (ACN) ; the Ogun State crisis that led to the defection of Senator Ibikunle Amosun to ANPP later to ACN; the Ekiti State case that led to the defection of former Governor Segun Oni to ACN later to PDP; the crisis in Ondo State that led to the defection of Governor Segun Mimiko to Labour Party, now back to PDP, Bayelsa State crisis that led to the defection of former Governor Timipre Silva to the All Progressive Congress (APC) (Chukwuma and Ali, 2014; Nwanegbo, Odigbo and Nnorom, 2014).

In Congress of Peoples' Change (CPC), the conflict arose due to the controversy over the choice of candidates for the April 2011 General Elections. There was allegation of imposition and illegal replacement of candidates for the governorship candidates in Kano, Katsina and Bauchi States by the leadership of the party. Those who have won the primary elections conducted by the party had their names replaced in the said states and some other places in the country, for the favoured candidates of the leadership. In Kano State, the candidate who won the primary election was Muhammad Sani Abacha but the party ticket was given to Colonel Lawal Jafaru Isa (Rtd). In Katsina State, Alhaji Lado Danmarke won the gubernatorial primary election but the party replaced him with Aminu Bello Masari. The same scenario happened in Bauchi State between Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu (Dan China) and Engineer Nuhu Gidado. Dan China was said to have won the primary election as the "Peoples' choice" but the party replaced his name with that of Engineer Nuhu Gidado. This action has seriously caused conflicts within the party and contributed to the defeat recorded by the party during the 2011 elections. (The Point Blank New, February 7th, 2011, The Nigerian Voice, February 22, 2011, Daily Trust, February 15, 2011) The history of political party's activities in Nigeria's Fourth Republic like the previous experience is replete with chaotic, destructive and unhealthy intra party rivalry that has continued to constitute threats to the success of party politics in Nigeria.

Plagued from Conception: The Birth, Electoral Fortune and Conflagration of APC

On February 6, 2013, the All Progressive Congress (APC) was birthed as a result of the merger of Nigeria's three biggest opposition parties; the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive (CPC), the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), to form a mega party that is strong enough to challenge the electoral invincibility of PDP (The Nation, May 29, 2015). The rise of APC was very significant because several attempts in the past to form a mega party in the country had been unsuccessful (Egwemi, 2009). The newly formed APC became more strengthened after five serving PDP governors defected to the party from the then ruling PDP. They are: Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers State, Abdulfatah Ahmed of Kwara State, Rabiu Kwankwanso of Kano State, Murtala Nyako of Adamawa State and Aliyu Wamakko of Sokoto State (The Nation, May 29, 2015). Similarly, 49 legislators defected to join the APC. On January 29, 2014, 11 senators led by former Kwara State Governor, Bukola Saraki decamped to APC. Other political heavyweights such as ex- Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aminu Tambuwal (now Sokoto State Governor) and former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar defected from PDP to join the APC (Hassan and Lamidi 2017 cited in Saka and Amusan 2018).

The new mega party had a successful electoral outing in 2015 as its presidential candidate, Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (retd) defeated the incumbent president, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP with about 2.6 million votes margin on the March 28, 2015 (The Nation, May 29, 2015). Aside APC winning the Nigerian Presidency in 2015, the party had 22 executive governors, 64 senators and 225 members of the House of Representatives (including both the Senate President and the Speaker, House of Representatives) in 2015 (Adakai and Olorunsuwa, 2019). The electoral fortune of APC greatly nose-dived in the 2019 general elections due majorly to unresolved intra-party squabbles within the party. The party in almost all its state's chapters was faced severe crises that later impugned on the electoral outcomes in some states. The most destructive and injurious intra-party conflicts in APC was that of the leadership tussle that rocked its Rivers State chapter; the primary election crises Zamfara, Ogun and Imo States. The party was barred by the court from fielding candidates in the 2019 elections in Rivers and Zamfara States. The governors of Ogun and Imo States openly worked against the party. While the party managed to win Ogun State, it initially lost the governorship seat in Imo State but won through the court.

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Donnelly (2018), a Deputy Head of the Africa Programme at Chatham House, while reviewing the formation of APC submits that the beginning of the party did not provide it with a stable and secured foundation. She captures her view thus:

"It does seem that this fragile, somewhat uneasy alliance is really starting to show significant stress. At the time, [the formation of the APC] was [an example of] quite astute political thinking in seeing what could be done by forming an alliance across regions and with real political heavyweights in Nigeria. However, with the different regions and different political heavyweights also come complications. So we can now see how the work of being a ruling party has taken its toll." (www.dw.com, 6th June, 2018).

Olisa Metuh former PDP Publicity Secretary sarcastically described APC as follows:

"..... The APC has shown itself to be "nothing but a party of ill-bred frustrated and intolerant politicians; bad losers for whom resorting to personal attacks, blackmail and mudslinging, in addition to promoting violence, has become an ideology." (Premium Times, September 26th, 2014)

The first sign of 'unwellness' of the mega party was manifested at its first convention when Tom Ikimi one of the prominent personality behind the success of the merger, sought to be the chairman of the party, but he lost to John Oyegun-Odigie. In reaction, Ikimi resigned his membership of the APC (Premium Times, August 27th, 2014). Senator Annie Okonkwo former National Vice Chairman (South) had dumped the party on the account of lack of internal democracy (Daily Post, 25 October, 2014).

There were crises in almost all the state chapters of the party across the nation, especially in the states where there were no sitting governors almost immediately after the take-off of the fledging party, it was rocked with series of internal tussle where political heavyweights schemed to emerge as leaders of the party in their respective states. A case of note was Alh Ibrahim Shekarau former Kano State Governor announced his resignation from the party in January 2014 for reasons he cited included lack of commitment by the party hierarchy and disregard to him for handling the party structure in Kano to the state governor that decamped to the party the previous year. He captures his mood the following words:

"We intended with the merger to form a solid foundation for entrenchment of democracy, the Legacy Group sacrificed all interests for the merger, but for the past six months all agreements reached by the merged parties had not being met No clear leaders, no registration of APC members at any levels. This shows a clear lack of commitment, transparency and accountability to all concerned." (Premium Times January 29, 2014)

MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Zamfara APC Crises: A self Implosion

"I want to use this opportunity to reaffirm to the people of Zamfara and other Nigerians that I remain an APC member. I want to inform Nigerians that APC in Zamfara remains divided. My faction is still intact and there is no going back." Marafa

Historically, since 1999, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) has never won reasonable election in Zamfara State, though it once had the fortune of governing it during Shinkafi Mahmuda who decamped to PDP from ANPP, the dominant party in the state since 1999 on whose platform he became governor in 2007. Ironically, Shinkafi's, tenure, which ran from 2007 to 2011, was adjudged by many, as remarkable. He had assumed office with a passionate resolve to build infrastructure in the state, a thing that was allegedly neglected by his predecessor. And he performed well within his first year in office so much so that his administration earned the sobriquet of "A Gani A Kasa", meaning "project of reality (Daily Sun 4th July, 2018). Going into the 2011 election therefore, Shinkafi was looking good to carry the day, but members of his party revolted against him due to imposition of candidates. One of those denied ticket at the time, and who eventually got sympathy votes from the electorate was Senator Kabiru Marafa, representing Zamfara Central Senatorial District. The result was a massive rejection of the then ruling PDP. Even when the party was in control of the centre at the federal level, state and councils at the time in Zamfara, Marafa's Zamfara Central Senatorial District gave Marafa 203,000 votes to defeat the incumbent senator that polled 93,000 votes. Ironically, the man who made the feat possible in 2011, is today in a fierce contest with the governor over the control of the structure of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state governorship contest (Daily sun 4th July, 2018). Marafa and Yari had been having a running battle over issue of governance in the state since inception which has put them more as

political foes than friends. This was manifested in the statement of one of Yari's Special Advisers, Alhaji Salisu Isah at a press conference in Kaduna in February 2018 where he boasted that "...yes we are going to kill him (Marafa) politically; we are going to bury his political ambition in 2019. He wants to be governor; he is not going to get it, even the senate he is not going to return" (Daily sun 4th July, 2018).

The APC crisis in Zamfara State which (majorly) centred on the choice of the governorship candidate of the party tore the party into shreds that it failed to select candidates for all elective offices before the October 7th of Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) deadline (Punch January 18, 2018). The Zamfara APC had been engulfed in a serious crisis as parallel primaries had been held by factions of the party, none of which was monitored by INEC. The two persons at the centre of the crisis are Abdulaziz Yari, the governor and the leader of party who was also a senatorial hopeful under APC, and Senator Kabiru Marafa, who is a governorship aspirant and was a senator. While Yari wanted his Commissioner for Finance, Mukhtar Idris, to succeed him by all means possible, Marafa had insisted that there must be a level playing field in the selection of candidates. This irreconcilable differences led to the conduct of parallel primaries across the state by the different factions which produced different sets of candidates (Punch Newspaper January 18, 2019). Consequent upon this, INEC had in October disqualified the APC from participating in all elections except the presidential poll for failing to field candidates through acceptable primaries within the time limit (Punch January 18, 2018).

The APC leadership in Zamfara State swiftly approached a High Court in Gusau on October 8, urging the Court to prevail INEC to accept the winners of the Zamfara primary elections it sent to INEC. Not only that, the APC leadership in the state proved to the Court that the 28 political parties indeed conducted primaries, including APC as indicated in the INEC list of candidates from Zamfara state. It was also on record that the Zamfara High Court conducted a trial and witnesses testified and cross-examined. Even Senator Marafa also testified at the Court on December 28, 2018, where he admitted that primaries were conducted even though he didn't participate. While the Zamfara APC leadership was in Court, the APC National Chairman went to a Federal High Court in Abuja seeking, among others, a court ruling that will empower him to submit candidates to INEC. The counsel of Zamfara APC asked to be joined in the case and urged the court to dismiss the Oshiomhole's request. Eventually, the two courts delivered judgments. The High Court in Gusau presided over by Justice Muhammad

Bello Shinkafi affirmed that the ruling APC in Zamfara state had conducted primaries elections on October 3 and 7, 2018. The court also asked INEC to accept the primaries for the APC's Governorship, Senatorial, House of Representatives and State House of Assembly seats. After cross-examination of all witnesses, Justice Shinkafi granted the prayers of the APC and agreed that primary elections were conducted and won on October 7, 2018. On the other hand, the Federal High Court in Abuja presided over by Justice Ijeoma Ojukwu ruled that the APC national chairman has no powers to submit a list of candidates arbitrarily (Leadership Newspaper January 2, 2019). The Sokoto Division of the Court of Appeal however set aside the judgment of the Zamfara State High Court, which allowed APC to field candidates in the 2019 elections in Zamfara State. While ruling on the appeal filed by Marafa and 129 others, the appellate court gave a judgment that rattled the APC. Marafa and others had approached the appeal court and argued that the state High Court lacked the jurisdiction to entertain the suit and that its judgment should be declared null and void. The appellate court in a judgment delivered by Justice Shaibu Yakubu, held that the Zamfara State High Court failed to evaluate wholly all evidence presented before it before giving its verdict on the APC primaries in the state (Thisday Newspaper 31st March, 2019). Justice Yakubu, who delivered the lead judgment of the court, said all evidence placed before the court had shown that APC did not conduct primary elections, which accordingly, contravened the electoral law. His Lordship also noted that the party had made two unsuccessful attempts to conduct primaries in the State and list of candidates was not duly submitted to INEC by the National Headquarters of the party. Evidence shows that the state governor only appointed a special committee that later came up with candidates' names in place of primary elections. So far, all evidence constituted that primary election was not conducted which contravened the electoral law." The judge also faulted the lower court for relying heavily on oral evidence in taking its decision, saying "oral evidence cannot be used to discredit any written evidence. A procedure must be followed whether there is an order or not. This court hereby sets aside the judgment of the trial court (Thisday Newspaper 31st March, 2019)

But few hours before the general election, a Court order cleared APC to participate in the Zamfara governorship elections. There was a lot of misunderstanding between the party in the state and INEC, but in the end, the court gave a verdict and INEC complied. After the election, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) declared the APC governorship candidate in Zamfara, Alhaji Mukhtar Shehu, the

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winner of the gubernatorial poll in the state. INEC declared Shehu winner of the election which held on March 9 after polling 534,541 votes to defeat his close challenger of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Bello Muhammad Mutawalle, who polled 189,452 votes (Thisday Newspaper May 16 2019).

Murdered Democracy and Thwarted Peoples' Will

The crises on the choice of the governorship candidate of the party in Zamfara State tore the party into shreds that the party lost all the elective offices through the law court as it failed to select candidates for all elective offices before the expiration of October 7th INEC deadline (Punch, January 18' 2018 cited in Adakai and Olorunsuwa). The unresolved intra-party strife has introduced what Adakai and Olorunsuwa, (2019) called 'judicial democracy' which is thwarted mandate (from the law court) of the Zamfara voters to the benefit of people who they never voted. Hence the hope for good governance and accountability from the present political leadership is largely elusive as they were voted out in the poll because they never had faith in their ability to lead well.

The Supreme Court in a unanimous judgment by a five-man panel of Justices led by the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Tanko Muhammad, held that the APC did not conduct valid primary elections to nominate candidates for any elective position in the state and as such did not have any valid candidate in all the elections that held in Zamfara State. The Justices maintained that the Sokoto Division of the Court of Appeal was right when it held that the APC did not file any eligible candidate in the 2019 general elections in the State. The verdict further awarded a cost of N10million fine against the APC (Premium Times Newspaper May 28, 2019). The court went further to make a consequential order instructing the Independent National Electoral Commission to declare as winner the party with the second highest votes in all the elections. Consequently, INEC gave certificate of return to Bello Matawalle of the People's Democratic Party, as the governor of the Zamfara, and all the other PDP candidates for the National and State Assembly seats were issued certificates of return.

Consequently, the protracted Zamara APC crises and its subsequent manifestations has greatly made a huge mockery of the majority rule as a feature of democracy as outlined by Quigley(n.d) in his work titled '*Constitutional Democracy*'; as Bello Muhammad Mutawalle, who polled 189,452 votes currently functions as the governor of Zamfara as against Alhaji Mukhtar Shehu 534,541 votes. The will of the Zamfara voters to decide the party they prefer to govern them has being thwarted; just as history

has revealed that the no party has ever made any meaningful electoral success in the state except ANPP that later joined the new mega party – APC.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been revealed that, intra-party conflicts have been having its toll on Nigeria's faltering democratic experience in the Fourth Republic, much like it has on the previous pre- independence and post-independence experiences. This is occasioned by the fact that politics in Nigeria is viewed from the lens of investment which must be returned with huge profits. For democracy to deepen in Nigeria, this negative misconception of politics as a means of acquiring wealth must give way to a positive conception of politics as an art and science of delivering public good which tends towards improving the quality of life for the citizenry and not about satisfying the greed of a few privileged class of individuals. This political re-engineering process can be achieved through the organization of deliberate and aggressive value re-orientation programmes for members of political parties, other stakeholders in the political system as well as the electorates.

It is imperative therefore that political party should ensure that they entrench internal democracy within their internal dynamics such that would create the enabling environment for party members to actualize their political aspirations using the party as a platform. Political parties must also understand that they are indispensable institution in the democratic system because they form essential link between voters and government by providing the platform for renewal and consolidation of democratic government through periodic elections. In the final analysis, the sustenance and continuity of Nigeria's Fourth Republic owes much to the ability of the political parties in the country to be able to aggregate freely, articulate their interests, resolve the sometimes incompatible interests of their members through peaceful dialogue as well as inculcating the universal ideals and values of democracy in their members and the entire Nigerian citizen

Having adequate understanding of the previous unpalatable experiences from previous republics a link has being established between the enormous danger of an uncontrolled intra-party strife to the continued survival of democracy in Nigeria. Political parties no doubt have being found to possess essential flavour for the practice of modern liberal democracy, hence party must be protected from unhealthy issues that could hinder their function. It is in view of the aforementioned that the following are recommended:

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- i. The political parties especially, APC at all levels must embrace intra-party democracy in the conduct of its party affairs.
- ii. Processes and outcome of selection of candidate for elective as well as appointive offices must reflect democratic principle, norms and practices, such that every member of the party must be provided with the opportunity and right to participate in the party's affairs.
- iii. Party leaders must subject themselves to the party rules and all the activities of the party must fall within the confine the constitution of the party. Party leaders should eschew the habit of imposing their wishes in term of candidates' selection on the rest of the party members.
- iv. The political and institutional structure of the country must be strengthened such that no individual will possess enough influence and power to enable them being able to undermine the rule of law both within and outside the party.
- v. There is the need for the decentralization of decision making process in the party as concentration of power in the National Executive Committee of the party has the tendency of breeding undemocratic tendencies which could pose great danger to Nigeria democratic consolidation process, if resultant crises there from are unresolved
- vi. The judiciary should find a middle point between the law and the peoples will so that the mandate of the people as freely donated during elections would not thwarted on the altar of the law. This will remove the notion that elections are won in the court room and not in the polls.

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