IMPACTS OF INTERNAL PARTY DEMOCRACY ON PERFORMANCE OF ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS IN THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the impacts of internal party democracy on performance of All Progressive Congress (APC) in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The issue of advancing internal democracy especially as it concerns the selection of candidate within political parties in Nigeria has been a contentious topic. Promoting internal democracy in political parties has not only gained ground in modern day politics and governance but it is believed that such practices will encourage democratic culture generally. Thus, it is argued that political parties across the globe have adopted party primaries as a mechanism for selecting candidates for elections. The study adopted documentary method for data collection while relying on sequential qualitative analytic techniques. The study also utilized the group theory as it theoretical framework for analysis. This paper argues that it is becoming worrisome that All Progressive Congress find it difficult to conduct free and fair primary elections and this has continued to increase internal party crisis and threatens the very survival of political party system and the relevance of practicing democracy in Nigeria. Findings reveal that the adoption of different modes of primary election by APC for selection of candidates in different states in Nigeria appears to be an attempt to subvert the will of the people. The study concluded that it is uncommon for political parties to experience internal conflicts and disagreements, especially when there are diverse group interests and agenda among party members. The paper therefore, recommends among others that individuals should join political party based on shared ideology rather than personal ambition.

Introduction

Political parties are vital to every democracy and their significance cannot be overstated. Public employees apply through these routes for a range of public employment at different levels of government. However, internal democracy is necessary for a party system to coexist peacefully and develop fully. Whether there are two or more parties in power, the foundation of democracy is a political party. It has had an immense impact on the democratic experience. Without question, political parties remain essential tools in most democratic institutions around the world for maintaining and promoting democracy. Political parties, originating from their catalytic nature, act as a middleman in democratic societies, ensuring that the nation upholds democratic values by acting as a link between the people and the government (Orji, 2013, Abdullahi, 2017).

The democratic process is actualized through the channels provided by political parties. Their core responsibilities include scouting and preparing candidates for elections, keeping an eye on government initiatives and policies, and acting as a check on ruling parties by the opposition. Interestingly, they teach political science, especially in poor nations (Abdullahi, 2017). Since the current democratic dispensation was established in 1999, however, political party organizations have turned into battlegrounds marked by enmity, hostility, victimization, and mistrust as a result of members' fierce battles to advance their own and/or the public's interests. There are political problems in the society as a result of some party heavyweights' excessive desire.

Political parties are the architects of democracy; without them, neither a democratic nor an undemocratic environment could exist (Omotola, 2009). Consequently, it is accurate to say that political parties serve as the guardian angels of democratic foundations, utilizing a variety of procedures to guarantee the safety and preservation of democratic frameworks. They are essentially carved out as institutions that support a broad spectrum of aspirants to hold political office through a formal and constitutional process, designating them as the official candidates of their respective parties (Janda, 2005). It is impossible to overstate the significance of internal democracy for political leadership in Nigeria, according to Ikelegbe (2013, p. 4). This suggests that the existence of internal democracy is essential to the political parties in Nigeria having internal coherence. Lack of internal democracy and subpar leadership in the Nigerian political party system results in an unorganized, non-participatory membership, rules and procedures that are not followed, the denial of party member rights, and a careless handling of grievances. Political parties in Nigeria do not select candidates with integrity, fairness, or merit. Nigeria's political landscape has been tainted by individuals with dubious moral fibers and damaged personalities due to poor candidate selection.

Moreover, the establishment of a political party's acceptable climate ensures that all members take part in decision-making and the overall management of the party. This is known as internal party democracy. Momodu and Matudi (2013) claim that such an environment encourages the active participation of all party members, not just a select group of wealthy and influential people. Thus, the goal of internal party democracy is to establish an even playing field for all party members to actively participate in party affairs, to forge a strong, vibrant party that can win elections, and to establish a government that is dedicated to providing high-quality services and democratic dividends. Most significantly, internal party democracy is necessary for the selection of candidates in a general election because its absence frequently leads to crises, factionalization, and party member defection in the majority of political parties (Momodu & Matudi, 2013). Because democracy is supposed to be a competition between and among political parties, not within them, internal party democracy is therefore essential (Disch, 2012). Therefore, the specific objective of this paper is to examine the impacts of internal party democracy on performance of All Progressive Congress (APC) in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications

Scarrow (2005) defines "internal party democracy" as a broad category of strategies that enable party members to participate in discussions and decision-making. Originally, it was believed to be the internal structure, organization, and synchronization of political parties in line with democratic ideals, which had a direct impact on the selection of candidates, the ascent to prominence of leaders, the drafting of policies, and the distribution of financial resources (Ojukwu et al., 2011). The three interrelated parts of political parties are the party-in-government (PIG), party-as-organization (PO), and party-in-the-electorate (PIE). The core of internal party democracy is the structural relationship that exists within a political party (White & Shea, 2000).

Political parties use primary elections to select their nominees for the general election ballot. To choose their candidates for the general election, political parties organize primary elections. Voters can indicate their preference for their party's nominee in a general election by participating in primary elections. A candidate must receive more votes than any other in the race and at least 35% of the party's total votes cast for that office in order to secure the nomination of their political party. Primary elections serve as platforms for voters to indicate which party's candidate they support in the main election. Therefore, it appears that the main cause of the internal party problem in Nigeria is the dispute surrounding the primary elections.

A period of intense shock, difficulty, and suffering that develops within a political party due to the party's inability to effectively resolve internal disagreements is known as an internal party crisis. For example, it's common knowledge that a number of parties—mainly the PDP, APC, APGA, LP, and others—are factionalized, and politicians have a duty to resolve conflicts in accordance with the law. None of these parties have been able to resolve their differences. An inter-party crisis, on the other hand, happens when there is a great deal of strain, difficulty, distress, and shock within political parties that run for office and reject the outcomes.

Political party performance is the ability and success of a political party to fulfill its promises and achieve its objectives. This idea encompasses a variety of elements, including the general consensus, internal unity, the execution of policies, the caliber of government, and electoral success. A wide range of metrics and indicators are widely used by political analysts, scholars, and the media to evaluate the effectiveness of political parties. Success for a political party is not just determined by how well it does in elections, but also by its overall impact on society, governance, and the political system. The All Progressives Congress (APC) faced an internal conflict in the run-up to the general election of 2023 that was not carefully resolved, which had an impact on the party's performance in national elections.

Remarkably, the issues at hand are the same as those that caused the party to lose to the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the general elections of 2019 in Zamfara and Rivers States. This is because, prior to the elections, the Supreme Court ruled that the party had not legally held primaries to select its candidates for state assembly, national assembly, and governorship. As a result, the party lost all of its seats in Zamfara State. See Adenekan (2020) for more information on this. An argument amongst the APC leaders in the North West state was the reason the primaries could not be held in the allocated time. While the group backing Zamfara Central senator Kabiru Marafa insisted that no primary was held, the group backing former governor Abdul'aziz Yari claimed to have convened congresses and fielded candidates.

In Nigeria today, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC) are the two main political parties. One of the major political parties in Nigeria is the All Progressives Congress (APC). Formed in 2013, the alliance was comprised of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), and a section of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). The APC's primary goal upon inception was to overthrow the People's Democratic Party (PDP), which had controlled Nigeria since the nation's return to democratic governance in 1999. The All Progressives Congress (APC) has had a major influence on the political landscape of Nigeria ever since its formation. Its success in ending the PDP's long-standing control and its following attempts at governing has had a significant impact on the country. The APC still has trouble addressing internal party disagreements that result from grievances that were voiced during the party's primary elections and account for unhappiness, despite its advancements in areas like economic diversification and anti-corruption. Consequently, the party's performance and durability in Nigerian politics would be greatly influenced by its capacity to handle these challenges.

Research Method

This study employed documentary methods for data collections. Data generated from secondary sources (Journals, internet materials, books, book chapters, newspapers and among others) were analyzed using sequential qualitative analytic techniques. The study also adopted expo-facto research design.

Theoretical Framework-Group Theory

Group theory serves as the study's foundation. The notion of pluralism, which was articulated by several English writers in the 20th century, is where group theory originated. Arthur F. Bentley (1908), John Figgis, F.W. Maitland, and Cole are among the proponents (Varma, 1975). Arthur F. Bentley is credited with creating group theory. Group theory serves as the study's foundation. Arthur F. Bentley (1908), John Figgis, F.W. Maitland, and Cole are

among the proponents (Varma, 1975). Arthur F. Bentley is credited with creating group theory. Bentley suggested that dynamic processes, not specific institutions or substantial material, constitute society and stressed the importance of group theory in politics. According to him, every group of people forms society, the nation, and the government by cutting across a great number of others. According to Bentley, each group has its own interests, and these interests invariably lead to group action. He claims that there is no such thing as an effective individual interest. Furthermore, no single group interest in society can represent everyone (Olisah & Okafor, 2023, p.102).

Group theory's fundamental premise is that the state is composed of actors, both institutional and non-institutional, who are products of their respective historical, socioeconomic, political, and contextual backgrounds. This suggests that many groups have competing interests and that the state is a means of preserving power. Therefore, a group cannot exist without its interests. This suggests that interests and groups are inextricably linked. Dappa et al. (2021) claim that the theory of group theory originated with the notion that humans are social animals and must live in groups. There is ongoing interaction between these groups. According to the theory, men work together to influence decision makers since every group of people has an objective or an interest that is inextricably linked to the group. Interest is what drives the organization. Proponents of this theory contend that many groups compete with one another for control and power in every civilization. Furthermore, no social group holds the exclusive authority. Since most calls for and arguments in favor of policy are made by formalized groups, it should be noted that the underlying assumption of group theory is that there is competition and struggle for domination between or among groups. Proponents of this theory contend that power is divided among interest groups that are in competition with one another for control (Izueke, 2020, p. 14).

The reason for the usage of the group theory in this study rests on the notion that group and interest cannot be separated. In truth, interest drive group into action. One of the many organizations still involved in a struggle for supremacy and control is the political party system (Olisah & Okafor, 2023). Internal crises can arise when political party members start pursuing opposing agendas, especially when fielding candidates for elected and non-elected office. In addition to anti-party activity, these crises have resulted in the factionalization of certain parties and the defection of members. The lack of internal democracy and party ideology, wherein the elite seek power for their own personal greed rather than to further party principles and interests, has been identified as the primary source of intra-party conflicts (Jude & Ika, 2013, Tino, Danbala & Fwaje, 2020).

Aleyomi (2013), Ojukwu and Olaifa (2011), and Tino, Danbala & Fwaje (2020) have identified the reasons for internal crisis in the APC as poverty of ideology, absence of internal party democracy, incumbency factor, goal incompatibility, godfatherism, and politics of self-interest. Both the ruling APC have suffered internal party crisis which has resulted in several political setbacks such as factionalization, defection, anti-party activities, and political violence. Momodu and Matudi (2013, p. 8) identified the factors responsible for internal party crisis as Godfatherism, lack of internal democracy, the imposition of candidates, injustice and oppression within the party, and leadership tussle between and among party members.

Challenges to Internal Democracy in All Progressive Congress (APC)

To ensure openness, equity, and representation in the selection of candidates and decision-making procedures, political parties must practice internal democracy. The notion and implementation of internal democracy have great importance for the All Progressives Congress (APC), a prominent political party in Nigeria, as it affects the party's legitimacy, unity, and electoral achievements. Nigeria's All Progressives Congress (APC) is confronted with a number of serious obstacles that threaten the country's internal democracy. The obstacles to internal democracy facing Nigerian political parties seem to be a series of vicious cycles of issues that reinforce one another. These difficulties include problems with the way candidates are chosen, the role of money in politics, the domination of strong people (godfatherism), the insufficiency of internal conflict resolution procedures, intra-party strife, a lack of a clearly defined ideology, the funding of the party by the elite, the impropriety of the party primaries and the imposition of candidates, and the haughtiness of the party executive (Omotola, 2009; Aleyomi, 2013: Nwabufo, 2017; Anene & Ndubuisi, 2024).

Political parties consider the process of selecting candidates to be extremely important, as the candidates' choices and allegiances shape the party's image both in elections and during its rule. While it is the duty of a political party to determine who is eligible to run in an election, regardless of the method used, it is generally accepted that the selection process should be based on the membership's good standing and not be free from

discrimination, racial or ethnic discrimination, or bias. But given that the APC faces significant obstacles, Anyaoku (2010) argues that attributing disproportionate influence—particularly self-serving influence—to a party's parliamentary group during the candidate selection process would gravely jeopardize the democratic process. The APC's candidate selection procedure has frequently been tarnished by accusations of a lack of inclusivity and transparency. One recurring problem has been the imposition of candidates by party insiders, as opposed to democratic primaries. President Muhammadu Buhari's insistence on rival candidates to resign, for instance, paved the way for Abdullahi Adamu to become the APC national chairman, illustrating the top-down influence that can stifle wider party engagement (Tino, Danbala & Fwaje, 2020). As seen by the aftermath of multiple state congresses where conflicts erupted over alleged unfair tactics, such practices can cause discontent among party members and factionalism (Folorunso and Naeem, 2022).

Voter fraud, which includes vote buying and vote trading, is an increasingly common activity that compromises the credibility of elections in some countries. In many democracies, the practice takes in various forms. Voter purchasing is a problem in both developed democracies like the US and developing democracies in Latin America, Africa, and Asia (Yamaguchi, 2020). Concern over its prevalence in Africa's precarious democracies is currently growing. According to Matenga, 80% of people in 36 African countries think that politicians are bought off. Additionally, according to 16 percent of voters, they received material or monetary favors in exchange for their votes (Matenga, 2016). According to Onuoha & Okafor (2020), Nigeria is a moneyocracy or "cash-and-carry" democracy because of the blatant distribution of cash, food, and valuables among voters by political candidates and party agents during elections. It comes to the conclusion that vote-buying is a serious threat to both the electoral process and Nigeria's democracy's continued existence (Onuoha & Okafor, 2020).

Therefore, another major difficulty is the ubiquitous impact of money on the APC's internal processes. The impartiality and integrity of the candidate selection process have been weakened by frequent allegations of vote-buying during primaries and congresses. Rich candidates frequently have an unfair edge, which skews the party's democratic process. This financial power may cause candidates to be chosen more for their financial support than for their popularity or qualifications inside the party. For example, the party always sells nomination and expression of interest forms for a total of $100 million in order to select its presidential candidate, which encourages money politics (Johnson, 2024).

One of the main problems undermining internal democracy in the APC is godfatherism, or the influence of influential people within the party. These powerful individuals have the ability to influence party procedures in order to guarantee the selection of their favorite candidates, frequently disregarding the wishes of the larger party membership (Anyaoku, 2010). Internal democracy can be compromised, as seen by the instance of Abdullahi Adamu's appointment as national chairman, where other candidates were convinced to quit in favor of a consensus candidate backed by President Buhari. A detrimental effect on the internal democracy of political parties in Nigeria is predicted by the emergence of godfathers in those parties (Anene & Ndubuisi, 2024). The party members who fund almost all of the party's activities are known as political godfathers. As a result, they have a great deal of authority and influence within the party and frequently set the rules, including nominating or imposing their preferred candidates over the will of the majority of members.

The aforementioned occurred in Lagos when Bola Amend Tinubu, the national leader of the APC and a former governor of Lagos state who is currently serving as Nigeria's executive president, battled to prevent Akinyomi Ambode, the sitting governor, from running for reelection in the 2018 APC state primaries before the 2019 general election (Asadu, 2021). Similar circumstances were seen in Edo State, where the APC national chairman and the former governor of the state attempted to remove sitting governor Godwin Obaseki. Obaseki had defected to the PDP after the APC primary, where he was given the governorship ticket to run for Edo state governor in 2021 (Akpata, 2020). The rise of the "godfather" in Nigerian politics is a serious threat to stability in the country's democratic process, socioeconomic development, and good governance, in addition to political parties (Chukwuemeka, 2012).

Political parties in Nigeria, particularly the ruling parties, are growing too powerful and dominant in the nation to the point where they have transgressed democratic principles and internal democracy, enraged many members and leading to anti-party activities, defection, and other undemocratic practices. The party carried on harboring members' uncontrollable grievances and set a precedent for intra-party strife that the APC quickly adopted and carried on from where the PDP left off. Internal strife has resulted from many party

members feeling left out and alienated from the decision-making process (Yargwa & Abada, 2024). Members of the dominant All Progressive Congress (APC) exhibited a similar tendency in the general elections of 2015 and 2019, leading to tension between the party's controlled National Assembly and its APC-led executive branch (Nwabufo, 2017).

The result of these party conflicts is factionalization within the parties, which leads to boot camp departures and anti-party activities (Jude & Ika, 2013). Lack of internal democracy is exacerbated by the following: the imposition of candidates; godfather politics; corruption; lack of ideology and selfishness; lack of a level playing field for equal participation; institutionalization and inclusivity; hijacked or skewed party funding; flawed party primaries; and executive arbitrariness (Ojukwu & Olaifa, 2011). More than fifty political groups in Nigeria operate without an ideology. What exactly is the All Progressive Congress, one may wonder? Which political party is it—revolutionary, conservative, leftist, rightist, or progressive? The issue of internal democracy in the APC and other political parties in Nigeria will continue until this is resolved.

Taking charge of the party's operations during general elections was an example of the hubris of the party executive. Due to the party's executive hubris, many of the party's esteemed chieftains and founding fathers defected to other political parties, and the party was unable to handle the problem (Metuh, 2010). The party executives are the source of the internal democracy issue within the ruling All Progressive Party (APC), proving the adage "when the head of the fish is bad, the whole body is bad" to be true. This is due to the fact that some APC executives, particularly those at the national level, always believe they have the freedom to change the party as they see fit (Tino, Danbala & Fwaje, 2020). Additionally, the influence of some powerful APC members such as senator Ahmed Bola Tinubu, and the domineering behavior of Adam Oshiomhole, Abdullahi Adamu, and others have caused ongoing crises within the party, which ultimately led to the removal of Oshiomhole and Adamu as the APC National Chairman, respectively. Democracy will not develop in this manner, nor will the APC survive, unless leaders and members of the party promptly revert to actual democratic norms (Adedokun, 2019).

Impacts of Internal Party Democracy on Performance of All Progressive Congress in the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria

As one might expect, a building's strength is determined by the strength of its foundation. As a result, political parties' activities have had a detrimental impact on Nigeria's democracy process. Due to voter apathy brought on by the belief that their ballots would not be counted, people no longer have faith in the electoral system. For example, the selection of party flag bearers in Nigeria's general elections through party primaries has always been contentious and divisive, with the majority of the parties displaying blatantly anti-democratic tendencies and a disdain for popular will.

Researchers have identified a number of causes for the APC's dismal showing in Nigeria's general elections of 2023. Anene & Ndubuisi (2024) claimed that the nation's fledgling democracy is in danger due to the actions of political Godfathers. To the chagrin of other party members, they deny the voters the ability to choose the candidates of their choice, making elections and electoral processes worthless as they vie among themselves (godfathers) for control of state powers and resources through their favorite godsons. Additionally, some of the worst election violence in the nation has arisen from their quest for control of state power (Nkwede, Ibeogu & Nwankwo, 2014). Furthermore, the issue of strengthening the democratic ethos, credible elections, good governance, accountable leadership, rule of law, and development in Nigeria remains distant given the tainted elections, manipulation of the people's will by political godfathers and gladiators, and control over leaders at all levels in Nigeria while forcing them to carry out their will. This includes the appointment of commissioners, ministers, board members of parastatals, contract awards, and the exaction of a significant portion of the state's monthly statutory allocations from their planted godsons (the current case of former Governor Nwike and incumbent Governor Siminalayi Fubara, his estranged godson in Rivers State comes to mind).

As a result, factionalization sets in and leads to a lack of unity within the party, anti-party actions, and party members defecting to other political parties. For this reason, Mbah (2011) claimed that Nigerian politicians cross the aisle without cause because they are desperate to hold public office in order to amass fortune. The effectiveness of democracy sustainability through party processes is undermined by this act because politicians in Nigeria, particularly those in the ruling APC and

PDP, only switch parties to run for office or receive favors, not because of differences in party ideologies. As a result, the tables and graphic below show how the APC performed in the 2023 general elections.

Table 1: Showing the performance of APC in the Presidential Elections

S/N	STATES	2015	2019	2023
1	Abia	13, 394	85,058	8,914
2	Adamawa	374, 701	378,078	182,881
3	Akwa-Ibom	58, 411	175,429	160,620
4	Anambra	17, 926	33,298	5,111
5	Bauchi	931, 598	798,428	316,694
6	Bayelsa	5, 194	118,821	42, 572
7	Benue	373, 961	347,668	310,468
8	Borno	473, 543	836, 496	252,282
9	Cross-River	28, 368	117,302	130,520
10	Delta	48, 910	221,292	90,183
11	Ebonyi	19, 518	90,726	42,402
12	Edo	208, 469	267,842	144,471
13	Ekiti	120, 331	219,231	201,494
14	Enugu	14, 157	54,423	4,772
15	Gombe	361, 245	402,961	146,977
16	Imo	133, 253	140,463	66,406
17	Jigawa	885, 988	794,738	421,390
18	Kaduna	1, 127, 760	993,445	399,293
19	Kano	1, 903, 999	1,464,768	517,341
20	Katsina	1, 345, 441	1,232,133	482,283
21	Kebbi	567, 883	581,552	248,088
22	Kogi	264, 851	285,894	240,751
23	Kwara	302, 146	308,984	263,572
24	Lagos	792, 460	580,825	572,606
25	Nasarawa	236, 838	289,903	172,922
26	Niger	657, 678	612,371	375, 183

27	Ogun	308,290	281,762	341,554
28	Ondo	299,889	241,769	369,924
29	Osun	383,603	347,634	343,945
30	Oyo	528,620	365,229	449,884
31	Plateau	429,140	468,555	307,195
32	Rivers	69,238	150,710	231,591
33	Sokoto	671,926	490,333	285,444
34	Taraba	261,326	324,906	135,165
35	Yobe	446,265	497,914	151,459
36	Zamfara	612,202	438,682	298,396
37	FCT	146,399	152,224	90,902
	Total	**15 424 921**	**15,191,847**	**8,794,726**

Source: Authors compilation with data from INEC

Table 2: Showing the performance of APC in the National Assembly elections

APC	2015	2019	2023
Senator	60	65	57
House of Representative	225	217	162

Source: Authors compilation with data from INEC

It is evident from tables 1 and 2 above that the APC narrowly prevailed in the presidential contest. According to Anene & Ndubuisi (2024), the APC's dismal results in the general elections of 2023 can be linked to a lack of internal democracy within the organization. Furthermore, it is evident that the APC performed far better in the last two general elections than it did in the general elections of 2023. The APC's record in the National Assembly suggests that it lost more seats in the 2023 election for the National Assembly. This analysis makes it abundantly evident that a political party's performance in general elections can be severely hampered by an internal crisis and a lack of internal party democracy (Oyeleke, 2022).

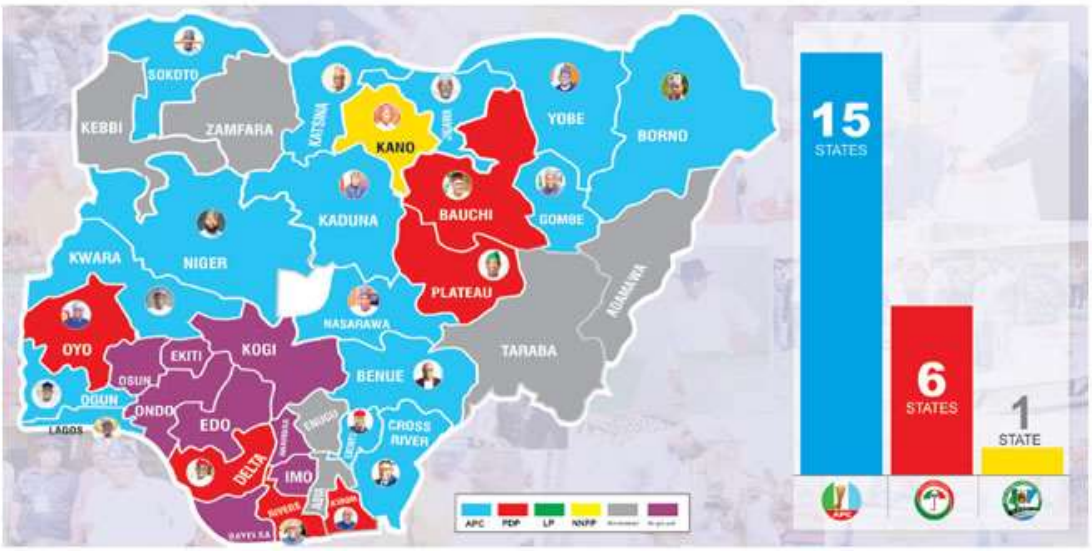
One measure of a party's strength is its internal democracy, or how solid its base is. According to Momodu and Matudi (2013), most political parties experience crises, factionalization, and party member defection as a result of an absence of internal party democracy. Due to the expectation that democracy will occur through competition between and among political parties, rather than within them, political parties must maintain their internal democracy (Disch, 2012). Within the APC, there is unhealthy competition among members, which creates a space for alternative groups to grow. Divided against itself, a house cannot stand.

Table 3: Showing the performance of APC in the Governorship elections

APC	2015	2019	2023
Governorship	19	15	15

Source: Authors compilation with data from INEC

Figure 1: Showing the number of states won by the APC in the 2023 Governorship election



Source: Habib, G. et al. (2023). https://punchng.com/apc-wins-15-states-pdp-six-nnpp-takes-kano/

Following the 2023 governorship elections, INEC released results that showed the All Progressives Congress had won in fifteen states (Sokoto, Katsina, Jigawa, Gombe, Lagos, Kwara, Niger, Yobe, Nasarawa, C'River, Ebonyi, Ogun, Benue, Kaduna, and Borno). Conversely, the New Nigeria Peoples Party prevailed in Kano, while the People's Democratic Party took home victories in the Plateau, Bauchi, Oyo, Delta, Rivers, Enugu, and Akwa Ibom states (Habib, et al., 2023). Abia state was also won by the Labor Party. Sadly, the opposition parties defeated both of the anointed candidates that the governors of Kano State, Umar Ganduje, and Plateau State, Simon Lalong, imposed against the will of the people.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that it is uncommon for political parties to experience internal conflicts and disagreements, especially when there are diverse group interests and agenda among party members. The study examined the challenges that affect internal party democracy and political party performance within the All-Progressive Congress in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The challenges encompass a range of issues, such as the selection of candidates, the role of money in politics, the prevalence of powerful individuals (also known as godfatherism), the insufficiency of internal conflict resolution mechanisms, intra-party conflict, unclear party ideology, elite funding of the party, faulty primary elections, and the imposition of candidates. Additionally, the arrogance of the party executive has contributed to the internal party crisis and has also sparked factionalization, defection of party members, and anti-party activities.

In light of this, this study suggests, among other things, that people join political parties in accordance with their shared ideologies rather than their own personal goals. In addition, political parties in Nigeria must be reformed in order to establish clear political ideologies, enshrine a system that brings about free, fair, and credible means of selecting candidates for elections, enforce strict party discipline, and establish credible means of raising party funds as opposed to allowing a small number of predatory godfathers to fund the party and use its structures for their own gain. Finally, a specific primary election procedure must be instituted nationwide.

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