

## **The Challenges of Intra-Party Conflicts in the All Progressive Congress in Ogun State, Nigeria**

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### Abstract

Intra-party conflicts among political parties have constituted a serious concern to democratic development in Nigeria. Rather than political parties being the strong bedrocks of democracy, their activities have affected democratic development in all ramifications. The All Progressives Party in Ogun State is not exempted from the internal party crisis affecting other political parties. In order to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, the paper interrogated intra-party conflict in the All Progressive Congress Chapter in Ogun state. The desk research method was used to obtain secondary data. The Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGCT) was used as a theoretical framework. The paper argued that intra-party conflicts in the All Progressive Congress (APC) in Ogun state were primarily driven by factional and tribal-related interests, while leadership crisis, lack of internal democracy, monetization of democratic processes, and god-fatherism aggravated the crisis. Also, it further maintained that lack of coherent party ideology, egoistic and selfish ambitions of political leaders caused conflict in the party. In addition, the zero-sum approach to political succession and fragmented leadership styles contributed to the crisis in the party. It therefore recommended that winners- take all ambition and coercive leadership style should be discouraged in order to uphold unity of purpose in the party. The misuse of power of incumbency should be discouraged through strong institutional measures to curb further factionalization. The party leaders need to embrace alternative dispute resolution in addressing party crises by acquiring skills in different conflict management styles through professional training programmes.

Keywords: Intra-Party Conflict, Internal Democracy, Party Cohesion, Political Party, Party Primaries,

### Introduction

Political parties are the platforms through which interested individuals in running the affairs of government contest. Hence, political parties form the basic elements needed for democratic development in the contemporary times. As argued by Aleyomi (2013), parties are needed to articulate group aims, nurture political leadership, promote policy alternatives and present voters with coherent electoral alternatives. Therefore, political parties are critical institutions in the electoral democracy. In spite of the critical roles played by political parties in a democracy, they have inadvertently constituted barriers in advancing democratic course due to contentious internal challenges. Though no political party is completely organically free from inherent internal wrangling's but when the challenges are not managed by the party stakeholders, they can lead to unresolved intra-party conflicts which can affect their electoral fortunes. As argued by Obiora and Chiamogu (2020), political parties in Nigeria are weak institutions with different level and degree of intra-party crisis

caused by poor leadership style, lack of internal democracy, non-adherence to party rules and regulations, monetization of political processes, among others, leading to party defection, assassination and political violence.

Intra-party conflicts in the political parties are not new as they were parts of the political events that led to the collapse of first and second republics. As a matter of fact, intra-party wrangling's predated the post-colonial Nigeria. The recurrent internal party crisis in Nigeria has torn political parties apart leading to factionalization, political brigandage, abduction, politically motivated killings, defamation of character, cross carpeting and other nefarious political activities denigrating the sanctity of electoral processes. Looking through the republics in Nigeria, the acrimony characterizing the activities of political parties have constituted a great danger to entrenchment of democratic values the citizens long for.

As eluded by Adenuga, Adenuga and Oderinde (2021), intra-party conflict has been an aged long and recurring phenomenon in Nigeria political landscape affecting Nigeria's path towards achieving democratic consolidation and good governance. Adenuga, et al (2021) argued further that the conflicts in political parties which might transmute to destruction of lives and property can be caused by factors god-fatherism, lack of internal democracy, sectionalism and selfish ambition of the political class who deploy all whims and caprices to hold sways in the parties. The All Progressives Congress (APC) has been characterised by intra-party conflict which has had adverse effects on the internal democratic process of the party. In Ogun State, the conduct of 2019 APC primary election was characterized by crisis and power struggles. The anti-democratic tendencies that characterised the internal workings of APC have weakened the expected party ideology, cohesion, stable transition of tenure and succession politics that can enhance delivery of dividends of democracy in the interests of the people.

Studies have been conducted on the impacts of intra-party conflict on democratic consolidation, democratic governance, political party electoral success, party structure, cohesion and supremacy adopting different theoretical and methodological perspectives (Gambo, 2022; Moliki, 2020; Egobueze, 2020; Adekeye & Abdulrauf, 2017; Aleyomi, 2013). Empirical evidence has also shown that the intra party conflict has caused political violence and attacks of factional groups, resulting to political apathy, due to fear of intimidation (Momodu & Matudi; 2013; Gambo, 2022). However, there seems to be a paucity of literature on intra-party conflict in the All Progressives Party particularly in Ogun state.

#### The concept of Intra-Party Conflict

Intra-party conflict has attracted different meanings from scholars with various ideological backgrounds. Nkechi (2011) conceptualised intra-party conflict as a period of great shock, distress or difficulty within a political party, resulting from the inability to resolve disputes and reconcile internal differences. From the opinion of Christopher (2013), conflicts in political parties occur due to internal struggling within the political parties. This conception of conflict is not negative as he sees it as necessary natural occurrence within political parties. However, the only danger could be how the conflicts are responded to without compromising the extant goals of the party. Hence, intra-party conflict can be due to competition for scarce values and clash of interests in accessing and benefiting from them.

As opined by Awofeso, Obah-Akpowoghaha and Ogunmilade (2017), intra-party conflict occurs when party members struggle to access the limited social value in the group in terms of prestige, wealth, positions and even recognition. As argued by Ogundola (2023), intra-party conflicts arise as a result of incompatibility of political goals among members and in the process of decision making where every member influences the process at the detriment of others. Conflicts within political parties involves all battles and internal strife within a political party that are unfavorable to normal nomination or election of party flag bearers, as against inter-party politics which is a political activity among many political parties (Atelhe, Lawal&Terhile, 2019). Arguing further, Atelhe et al (2019) note that intra-party conflict is like having an opposition party in a political party which implies that there is a situation where there are factions in a political party fighting over who becomes the flag bearer of the party in general elections. Most often the situation leads to anti-party activity, disloyalty and sabotage.

According to Egobueze (2020), intra-party conflict is related to situations where there is a lingering and pervasive disagreement among members of the same political party, usually engineered by clash of divergent interests and egos as against the collective interest, ideologies and manifesto of the party. In this regard, the cohesive and directional purpose of the party is fractured and democratization doomed as a result of the incessant fracas among party members. However, even though conflict is inevitable, the manner and finesse put into handling, resolving and/or managing it determines how it affects the political party in question. Lawal and Terhile (2019) highlighted the major factors responsible for conflict in a political party to clashes of interests among few powerful party members and sometimes display of ego due to difference in personality. It is imperative to point that that intra-party conflict is detrimental to the growth and development of any political system.

#### Theoretical Framework

The paper adopted the Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGCT) as theoretical framework to explain political leadership crisis and internal party conflict in the All Progressives Congress (APC). The theory originated in the 1960s to analyse how competitions for resources, economic, social and political, cause animosity and acrimony among different groups in society. In contrast to other theories that employ personality or value disparities to explain why conflict occurs in group interaction, RGCT pays attention to situational influences external to the individuals, making them resort to conflict in pursuit their interests.

Donald Campbell (1965) was the original proponent of the theory while Jackson (1993), Brief, Umphress, Dietz, Butz, Burrows and Schoelten (2005), Baumeister and Cohs (2007) popularized the theory. Realistic group conflict theory explains relationships that exist among members of a group within the context of the available resources (Adekeye & Abdurauf, 2017). The RGCT theory espouses that humans are naturally selfish, wanting their personal interests to rise above those of others. With this situation herein, conflicts arise due to incompatibility of interests that are influenced by psychological and behavioural elements among members. The theory also aptly concludes that the conflictual pursuit of interests and power by the prevailing group are mediated through zero-sum or winners take all approach, implying that the success of member(s) of the group to achieve desired purpose, translates to the defeat of other member(s) of the group.

### **Intra-Party Conflicts in Nigeria: A historical overview**

Intra-party conflict is not peculiar to Nigeria alone as advanced democracies also experience political infighting. Since emergence of political parties in Nigeria, their evolution and development have been characterised by internal struggle leading to one crisis or the other. Ibrahim and Abubakar (2015) argued that the evolution of intra party conflict can be traced to the days of colonial rule when political parties were formed on the basis of division among ethnic groups which had effects on the running of every political party. For instance, the formation of the first political party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), in 1923 was characterised by intra party conflict and the inability of the party leaders to successfully manage their differences (Ibrahim et al, 2015).

Issues that led to the crisis in NNDP included personal jealousies and quarrels over spoils of office (Onu & Momoh, 2005) which wrecked the NNDP. In the similar vein, lack of openness in the party and the autocratic approach of the party leaders caused a political rift and the eventual formation of the Lagos Youth Movement (LYM) in 1933 which later became the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) by Eyo Ita in 1936 and he later became the Deputy National President of NCNC (Onu et al, 2005). The Nigerian Youth Movement was initially a national-based political party attracting members across Nigeria, which later broke the monopoly of the NNDP in Lagos and broadened the traditional catchment area in Lagos from which unofficial members were elected (Nnadozie, 2005).

It is interesting to note that Eye Ita later formed his political party (the National Independence Party) after leaving NCNC. As a matter of fact, intra-party conflicts made the Nigerian Youth Movement shortlived as it failed to deliver the promise of national front it held forth. One of the factors that led to the early demise of the party is ethnic sentiment that undermined internal democratic value and was dismembered by the Ikoli-Akinsanya crisis in 1941 (Ibrahim & Abubakar, 2015). The problem of infighting continued among the succeeding regional based parties like National Congress of Nigeria and Cameroon which later became the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), Action Group (AG) and Northern Peoples Congress (NPC). The NCNC which started as a national party apart from wanting to maintain a regional stronghold was reduced to a regional party due to intra party conflict fueled mainly by tribal sentiment (Innocent, 2019).

In the same vein, the Action Group (AG) faced internal conflict between 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 by the breakaway faction of Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, known as the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) drafting his membership from AG and NCNC (Ibrahim & Abubakar, 2015). 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 formed the Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU).

Other minority parties such as the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) and United National Independent Party (UNIP) experienced intra party conflict of varying degrees which polarised and factionalized to cross carpeting of the aggrieved members to smaller parties (Ogundola, 2023). There were cases of intra-party

conflicts in the Second Republic. The internal wranglings in political parties manifested in similar ways like in the first republic. For instance, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) and the Nigeria Advance Party (NAP) wriggled from one infighting to another (Gambo, 2022). As a matter of fact, internal crisis accounted for the break-up of the National Party of Nigeria and Nigeria Peoples Party alliance and the split in the GNPP in 1981 when some of its members supported the National Party of Nigeria (Gambo, 2022). In a characteristic manner, PRP was also dismembered as a result of internal conflict caused by personalistic selfish tendencies and acrimony.

In the aborted Third Republic Nigeria, the two major political parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) registered during the military administration of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida in 1989 by the Armed Forces Ruling Council, had their fair share of internal crisis. Despite the fact the two political parties had similar structures and objectives, and their party primaries were full of internal crises at the local government councils, the State House of Assemblies and gubernatorial elections in most of the states of the federation (Ogundola, 2023).

Despite the political parties were the caricature of the military creation purportedly intended to unite the political aspirations of Nigerians under two major umbrella parties, internal conflicts still manifested though a bearest minimum. Due to the ethno-religious intentions that guided the creation of the parties, the success of the parties could not see the light of the day. In spite of the inherent internal challenges experienced in the parties, they produced the freest and fairest June 12 presidential election. As opined by Adenuga, Adenuga and Oderinde (2021), the nature of political parties in Nigeria was influenced by the nation's history and political past, which encouraged the mishandling of ethnic diversity, resulting in many parties relying ethnic affiliations, particularly during the first and second republics (Adegbami & Uche, 2015).

It is noteworthy that the sudden termination of the first, second and third republics by the military juntas are as a result of lack of internal democratic ethos in the political parties which have negative implication on democratic development and its consolidation in Nigeria. It is also important to state that a long period of military rule further entrenched authoritarian practices that influenced the decision-making procedures among political factions. The authoritarian leadership styles coupled with personal selfish ambitions of political office seekers contributed to the emergence of conflicts in political parties (Ogundola, 2023). One important feature that characterised the activities of the floated political parties in Nigeria's fourth republic is intra-party conflicts.

As a matter fact, the phenomenon became more prevalent from one administration to another. The incidences of the phenomenon generated a lot defections making political observers to ask the question of what do the politicians actually want? What are their intentions of forming political parties in the first place, why is that the perceived friends after coming together to form a political party, what kind of interest do they represent that will make them abandon their party and begin frolicking with another party? Virtually all major political parties in this republic are afflicted with the virus of internal crisis. As argued by Olorungbemi (2014), since the inception of the fourth republic in Nigeria in 1999, political party organizations became battle fields based on

hatred, enmity, victimization, blackmail and suspicion resulting from bitter struggles among party members in their quest to achieve personal interests.

The All Progressives Party has demonstrated several basic elements of internal conflict affecting the essence of its formation. The party was formed on 6 February 2013 when the All Nigeria Peoples' Party (ANPP), Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Congress for Progressives Change (CPC) and a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) were merged. Prior to this era, the political scene of the country had been dominated by the People's Democratic Party (PDP), controlling both the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as state governments, including various states' Houses of Assembly and Local Government Councils (Basiru 2019; Ogundola, 2023).

The coming of the APC was therefore generally believed to herald a strong opposition party that would give the ruling PDP strong competition. The APC reversed the dominance of the PDP in subsequent general elections. Specifically, it won the 2015 presidential election by almost 2.6 million votes (Basiru, 2019). . In addition, it won the majority of seats in the Senate and the House of Representatives. Not long after the victory of the party at the poll, it was embroiled in internal crises and fissures over of the sharing of executive positions. Barely a year after its formal recognition by the electoral body, three of its founding leaders, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, Chief Tom Ikimi and Chief Annie Okonkwo, left the party, arguing that they felt almost marginalised (Premium Times, 2014).

#### Internal Conflicts in the All Progressives Congress from the Inception in Nigeria

The All Progressive Congress (APC) was formulated in 2015 through the amalgam of four different political parties – the CPC, ANPP, ACN and some members of the APGA and PDP. Internal conflicts that were eating deeply the fabrics of these political parties stimulated the creation of the APC in order to integrate their political opinions and interests which were not met in hitherto political parties (Yahaya, 2019)The major rationale behind this merging was the necessity to take over power from the ruling PDP which had ruled the country for sixteen years. When the APC came on board as a ruling party in Nigeria, people had expected it would not fall into the traps of its predecessor PDP and face the challenges the country were confronted with. As declared by its first interim national chairman, Bisi Akande, who noted that APC is a pan-Nigerian political party that would give hope to the long-suffering people and ensure they enjoy the dividends of good governance and democracy (Owete, 2022). All his talks were mere rhetorics as the party was embroiled in internal crisis deviating from all the electoral promises it purposed to fulfill to the Nigerian citizens.

It is worthy of note that the formation of the APC as a political party was not based on any strong ideological basis. It just rode to victory on its political mantra “change”. The self-serving purposes of each of the parties that joined in the coalition began to surface with the domineering instincts of the elites, which in effect aroused intra-party conflicts that continued to grow in the All Progressive Congress (Ogundola, 2023). There were many cases of intraparty conflicts hinged on the denial of party members of the privilege to run as candidates. Internal conflict in the APC was instigated by the complexities attached to the selection of the Senate President in 2015 (Sule, 2022).

As a result of the complex interplay of forces, influence and powers from powerful individuals, groups and sections of the country and the party, there was unmitigated hot pursuit which pushed groups like the new PDP into assuming what gave rise to a new turn in the power equation at the Senate with Dr Bukola Saraki as the President against the interest of the new ruling APC supposed leadership and the presidency (Obiora & Chiamogu, 2020); Ogundola, 2023). The election of Dr Bukola Saraki as the new Senate President of the 8th National Assembly was occasioned by variegated positions and perspectives as some APC members and leaders alike reprimanded this political achievement of the Kwara-born politician. Having established unforeseen wrangling in the party, some factions of the party began to counteract and expose the party's actions and inactions that infringe on the law.

More specifically, when the party calculatedly delayed its elective party congresses and conventions, the angry forces or factions of the party pronounced the act as a disregard to the rule of law of the country. The illicit extension of the tenure of the party's National Working Committee was inciting, as it led to unavoidable discombobulating which made the Lagos state APC and Abdulazis Yari (Governor of Zamfara state) to move peacefully from issues related to the NEC completely.

As a result of this, a party member from the south east (Imo state) dragged the APC to the Federal High Court in Abuja asking it to sack the Chief John Odigie Oyejurgun led National Working Committee of the party (Ojo, 2018). Without any doubt, the APC have been battling with crises in varying forms most especially when the party plans to take absolute decision on its leadership structure. Particularly, the conduct of party primaries in preparation for the 2019 general elections generated severe intra-party crises than what was recorded in the previous elections (Akhaine, 2019). This wrangling and internal conflicts, as it were, in the APC was abounding due to its massive crops of followership and/or membership with its taxing demands of controlling the largesse of party members throughout the country (Akhaine, 2019)..

#### **Intra-party Conflict in the All Progressives Party(APC) in Ogun State**

The remote cause of APC crisis in Ogun State is the battle for leadership and control of the party structure (Owete, 2014). It is instructive to point out that the two major contenders were the loyalists of Governor Ibikunle Amosun and the National Assembly members who were loyal to the APC National Leader, the former Governor of Ogun State, Chief Olusegun Osoba (Olatunji, 2014). The crisis originated from the aborted meeting of the APC State Harmonization Committee in January 2014(Akinlotan, 2021). While the meeting was ongoing, alleged loyalists of former Governor Ibikunle Amosun invaded the APC state secretariat in Abeokuta. As reported by Owete (2014), the purported loyalists who are members of the Ogun State branch of the National Union of Road Transport Workers Union unleashed terror on journalists during invasion of the APC secretariat. The party's State Secretariat was also vandalized and members of the State Harmonization Committee led by Senator Gbenga Kaka had to relocate to the Iwe Irohin Secretariat of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (Olatunji, 2014; Vanguard, 2023).

With the incident, the APC chapter of the state was embroiled in crisis as Governor Ibikunle Amosun and the National Assembly members could not reach agreement on issues affecting the party (Owete, 2014). The division in the camp of Senator

Ibikunle Amosun group and the loyalists to the former Governor Olusegun Osoba played out during membership registration exercise of the APC in the state. There was an allegation that governor Senator Ibikunle Amosun who was the incumbent then favoured his loyalists during the registration exercise to the disadvantage of the loyalists of Osoba (Vanguard, 2023). Also, the foundation of the crisis that rocked the party in the state was due to non-adherence to party guidelines for the conduct of the congresses. The Deputy Governor, Prince Segun Adesegun, faulted the preparations for the APC ward congresses which caused a stir among party leaders, including Governor Ibikunle Amosun at the party stakeholders' meeting (Akinlotan, 2021; Ogundola, 2023). As contended by the deputy governor, Prince Segun Adesegun, some of the provisions in the APC guidelines for the ward congresses were no longer obtainable. In addition, the names of those who would conduct the exercise at the 236 wards were not published for the party members who undermined the arrangement for the congresses (Akinlotan, 2021).

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the State Congress Committee, Mr. Ope Salami, who presided over the meeting, had read out provisions of the guidelines for wards, local government and state congresses of the APC for party members. According to the party guidelines, any venue so identified for any congress must be announced 72 hours before the conduct of the exercise (Ogundola, 2023). The two factions of the APC in the state had to conduct parallel congresses and produced executives at the ward, local government and state levels due to their inability to harmonize their positions. However, parallel congresses were conducted in many of the wards across the state by the loyalists of former Governor Ibikunle Amosun on one hand and the supporters of the National Leader of the party, Chief Osoba (Vanguard, 2014). This further generated controversies, accusations and counter-accusations between the two opposing camps. The National Assembly caucus of the party called for the cancellation of the ward congresses in the state due to irregularities. The Ogun APC National Assembly also demanded a fresh conduct of the ward congresses (Vanguard, 2023).

The perennial crisis rocking the party became worse when the loyalists to both Governor Amosun and Osoba loyalists clashed during the sitting of the Appeal Panel on the conducted ward and local government congresses. During the Appeal Panel in Abeokuta the the loyalists of Amosun and Osoba engaged in confrontation (Daud, 2018). The confrontation resulted in a free-for-all when Senator Gbenga Kaka took the stage and accused Governor Amosun of allegedly hijacking the whole process. An Appeal Panel was set up to present its report before the state congresses of the party, and that the crisis rocking the party would be resolved amicably. The congress produced two factional executives, with one loyal to the governor while the other was loyal to the "Matagbamole" that was being led by Chief Olusegun Osoba (PM News, 2015). In effect, the Matagbamole group moved out of APC to form Social Democratic Party (SDP) which eventually contested the 2015 election against the APC due to party infraction.

Political leadership crisis and internal squabbles continued into 2019 another election. With the 2019 general elections approaching, the National Working Committee of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Ogun State opted to adopt indirect primaries for selecting candidates in the state who will represent the party in the 2019 general elections (Ogundola, 2023) But many of the party members disagreed with the



indirect primary elections. The internal crisis in APC became degbami & Uchers had earlier shown interests in different posts. The candidates for governorship and deputy governorship were Prince Dapo Abiodun and Segun Adesegun, also there was Adekunle Akinlade (Amosun's preferred candidate).

It is important to state that Ogun state is characterised by tribal politics which contributed in a significant measure to affect party unity. There are four major tribes in Ogun State, the Ijebus, Remos, Egbas and Yewas, but the two dominants are the Ijebus and Egbas while the Remos and Yewas are minority. Since Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999 the past governors of the states have been from both Ijebu and Egba. Egba and Yewa are like brothers because they are closer, Ijebu and Remo are closer as well. Therefore, during election period, the contest has always been between Egba's and Ijebu's, and when it is time for Egba's to produce governor they will align with Yewa, also when it is time for Ijebu's to produce governor, the Ijebus will align with Remo to produce the next governor.

That has always been the permutation for governorship election in Ogun State. However, Adekunle Akinlade, Amosun's preferred candidate is a Yewa man. Following the outcome of the meeting, Amosun endorsed and forcefully imposed Adekunle Akinlade grounding his action on the basis that it is time for Yewa people to produce the next governor of the state. This caused acrimony anger among party leaders and other members of APC in the state. Many believed that it is time for Ijebu's to produce the next governor because Amosun who was the sitting governor is an Egba man and his deputy Segun Adesegun was Yewa. This made many strong men in the party left him and work with Dapo Abiodun, an Ijebu man who was also recognised by the National Working Committee of the party (Ogunnaike, 2018; Ogundola, 2023).

The conduct of parallel primaries by two leading factions within the party in 2018, in a situation where the party was expected to unanimously present a sole candidate to the Independent National Electoral Committee (INEC), substantiates the manifestation of intra-party conflict within the APC as a party. The Ibikunle Amosun-led faction conducted its primary election on the 2nd October, 2018 and presented Adekunle Akinlade as the winner while the rival group conducted its own on the 3rd October 2018 and Dapo Abiodun was presented as its winner (Ogundola, 2023). To also show that there as internal crisis in the party, there was a scenario that occurred at the All Progressive Congress rally held in Abeokuta, where a mob alleged to be loyalists of the Amosun-led faction threw harmful objects like stones, sachets of water, and sticks, among others, at dignitaries present at the events in reaction to the ceremonial presentation of the party flags to the party gubernatorial candidate, Dapo Abiodun by the party's presidential candidate. As the crisis continued, two factions were formed, one faction led by Senator ibikunle Amosun recognised Adekunle Akinlade as the governorship candidate while the other faction recognised Dapo Abiodun as flag bearer strongly supported by the APC National Working Committee.

The national chairman of the party, Adams Oshiomole declared Dapo Abiodun as the flag bearer of APC in the governorship election. Consequently, Adekunle Akinlade defected to Allied People's Movement (APM) to contest for the governorship post which was won by Dapo Abiodun. The candidate of the People's Democratic Party

(PDP), Ladi Adebutu, polled 262,383 votes to come second, thus trailing the winner with 13,915 votes (Olasunkanmi, 2019). The APC gubernatorial primary election was viewed as a battle between factions in APC Ogun state chapter. The factions led by former Governors Ibikunle Amosun, Olusegun Osoba, Gbenga Daniel; and incumbent Governor Dapo Abiodun and the group of Lagos West Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola. However, two most powerful groups were the Dapo Abiodun and Ibikunle Amosun factions.

The tension between the two factions reached the highest apogee in the late 2021 when Ibikunle Amosun's group held a parallel party conference and elected separate leadership to Dapo Abiodun's bloc. The national APC leadership later accepted the results of the Dapo Abiodun factional congress as legitimate. The Ibikunle Amosun's allies continued their efforts to unseat Dapo Abiodun as Adekunle Akinlade and Ramoni Olalekan Mustapha were set to challenge him. Ramoni Olalekan Mustapha later joined Dapo Abiodun's faction in May 2022 (Olasunkanmi, 2019). Adekunle Akinlade eventually lost in the 2019 primary to Dapo Abiodun before defecting to contest on the platform of Allied People's Movement (APM) and losing in the general as well, continued his campaign with pundits casting the primary as a potentially defining matchup between Amosun and Abiodun.

The internal squabbles continued into 2023 gubernatorial election. Before the party primary, Abiodun's opponents rejected the process that led to the election of the delegates, claiming their respective supporters were denied the opportunity to vote after purchasing forms for the delegate's elections. The aspirants rejected the final delegates list and criticized the appointed primary committee chairman as biased. Six candidates contested an indirect primary with Dapo Abiodun winning unanimously (Oludare, 2023). About a month later, Ibikunle Amosun allies led by Adekunle Akinlade defected to the Peoples Democratic Party as the party's deputy gubernatorial nominee (Oludare, 2023). Around the same time, incumbent Deputy Governor Noimot Salako-Oyedele was re-nominated as Prince Dapo Abiodun's running mate. As the crisis continued, two factions were formed. One faction recognised Akinlade as the governorship candidate led by Amosun, and the other faction recognised Abiodun as flag bearer which had the support of the National Working Committee of the party. The national chairman of the party, Adams Oshiomole declared Dapo Abiodun the flag bearer of APC in the governorship election, prompting Adekunle Akinlade to defect to Allied People's Movement (APM) to contest for the governorship post which Dapo Abiodun eventually won with 276,298 votes (Olasunkanmi, 2019). The candidate of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), Ladi Adebutu, polled 262,383 votes to come second, thus trailing the winner with 13,915 votes (Olasunkanmi, 2019).

#### Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper concluded that unabated deployment of incumbency power by political leaders and subjugation of party rules led to internal party conflicts in the All Progressives Congress. Also, tribal bigotry affects how members of APC relate which was one of the factors that caused intra-party conflict in the state. Therefore, the paper concluded that internal party conflicts will continue to be rife if political leadership fails to exhibit leadership credentials that can ensure party discipline and cohesion. Therefore, it is recommended that there is need for a total reform of party disciplinary measures for erring party men and women whose actions are incidental to growing avarice and crisis within the APC. There is also the need for a unified and

legally documented mode of primary elections in the party constitutions. This is to allow for a clear benchmark in the recruitment of candidates for elective position and also to de-radicalise transitional politics within APC as political party.

The Electoral Commission must also be empowered to continually review the performance rating of registered political parties on the index of party stability, internal cohesion and peaceful primary elections, including democratic ideology. This performance re-classification should be a four- year routine exercise as a condition for party registration to participate in elections in Nigeria.

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