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INTERNAL DEMOCRACY AND GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA: EXPERIENCE OF THE PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)

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Abstract

In a multiparty democracy state like Nigeria, internal democracy is sine qua non to sustained unity and improved fortunes of parties in their electoral pursuits. It is quite worrisome that in spite of the experiences of PDP for sixteen years in power, internal democracy within the party continued to be on the decline. This work strives to reflect on how the declining level of internal democracy in the Peoples Democratic Party eventually led to her failure in the 2015 general elections. Using the circulation of elites theory, the paper argues that when a political party willfully or unwittingly leaves no room for disposing and replacing her elites that cannot accommodate the needs and aspirations of the people, internal democracy in such a political party will continue to be on the decline and would eventually lead to its failure in an electoral context. The paper relied on secondary data which include periodicals, textbooks, internet materials etc. The findings show that, lack of internal democracy among political parties has been on the rise and even degenerated to a more chaotic situation in the Peoples Democratic Party leading to deep divisions that eventually led to its failure in 2015 general elections. Resolve to gradual and consistent shift to Top down up approach of participation in decision making, rethinking of their recruitment processes and specialized training for would be political leaders are some of the solutions suggested.

Keywords: Political parties, elite theory, circulation of elite, zoning, cross carpeting.

Introduction

Since the inception of democracy in Nigeria, it has not been easy coping with the task of selecting candidates at party levels to contest general elections. Prior to her intercourse with the western world, the various segments which now constitute Nigeria had unique processes through which their leaders emerge. In the far north, the aristocratic Hausa/Fulani mapped out some special families which were bestowed with the task of leadership. Members of such families were properly instilled with requisite leadership qualities to enable them prepare themselves psychologically, physically and emotionally. Their aspirations were shaped and targeted towards achieving greatness in leadership. Such people were less concerned with extravagant life style; they were rather concerned with impacting on the lives of the less privileged (Africa Report, 2010). Each member of the aristocratic family was properly groomed for leadership at any moment in time; such families were referred to as Royal families (Africa Report, 2010).

Among the Yoruba's in the south west, clear traditional processes were in place to ensure the emergence of distinguished men of integrity and other steering qualities as leaders, apart from family lineages, other processes such as rituals were employed to ensure that the right people always emerge as leaders. Leaders in Yoruba land were not seen as ordinary people, they were men who posses extraordinary powers (Buah, 1978). The semi autonomous societies, like the Igbos, Ijaws, Tivs etc erroneously referred to as stateless societies were not left out of this scheme, such societies

were carefully divided along lineages carved out in small socio-political entities known as villages, they were more democratic in nature; leadership was based on gerontocracy (Buah, 1978). However, decisions were taken based on village assembly where various village heads would converge and vote, at the end of the day, the collective views of majority of the village heads stand as the binding decision (Buah, 1978). In all the cases mentioned above, there was order, peace and tranquility, which created a smooth atmosphere for the navigation of social, economic and political lives of such societies to progress. Their economies were not harsh; political structures were fairly organized, their aspects of culture and social lives were cherished in most parts of the world and technological activities were promising (Buah, 1978). Needless to say, there was clear division of labour in such societies and people pursue their means of livelihood with greater enthusiasm and commitment.

The advent of colonialism led to the dislocation of the social, political and economic structures that were in place. Primarily concerned with securing and exploiting the economic resources for their personal use (Buah, 1978), the British colonial administration paid little attention to understanding the structures in place before their arrival and thus, discountenanced with almost everything about pre-colonial Nigeria and imposed their alien political, social and economic life style on her. This disposition was not an outright show of ignorance; rather it was a deliberate move to advance their colonial agenda of expropriating the economic resources of the colonies for the aggrandizement of their economies (Buah, 1978). Thus, the socio-political and economic advances already on motion were abruptly terminated.

Even though the traditional structures were not allowed to develop naturally, the new ones introduced by the colonialists ought to have been at an advanced stage. It is quite worrisome that up till today Nigeria is still grappling with task of effectiveness in leadership recruitment. This paper thus seeks to delve into the persistent problem of internal democracy in Nigeria, which has been negatively affecting electoral system in the country. To do this, the paper is subdivided into the following subsections; introduction, conceptual and theoretical framework etc …. internal democracy and general elections in Nigeria, the Peoples Democratic Party and 2015 general elections in Nigeria and conclusion.

Conceptual Analysis

Internal democracy

Internal democracy or Intra-party democracy according to Scarrow (2005) is a very broad term describing a wide range of methods for including party members in intra-party deliberation and decision making. She posits that some advocates for intra-party democracy argue, on a pragmatic level, that parties using internally democratic procedures are likely to select more capable and appealing leaders, to have more responsive policies, and, as a result, to enjoy greater electoral success. Some, moreover, converge on the premise that parties that "practice what they preach," in the sense of using internally democratic procedures for their deliberation and decisions, strengthen democratic culture generally.

Realistic practitioners according to her recognize that intra-party democracy is not a panacea: some procedures are better suited to some circumstances than to others. Moreover, some procedures seem even to entail distinct costs, and there are stable democracies with parties that lack guarantees or regular processes of internal party democracy. Nevertheless, the idea of intra-party democracy has gained increasing attention in recent years because of its apparent potential to promote a "virtuous circle" linking ordinary citizens to government, benefiting the parties that adopt it, and more generally contributing to the stability and legitimacy of the democracies in which these parties compete for power.

Along this line, parties have voluntarily undertaken important reforms to promote internal democracy. Katz and Mair (2002) report that different parties in an increasing number of countries have begun to open up decision-making procedures, as well as candidate and leadership selection processes, to the 'ordinary' party members, often by means of postal ballots. As a result, ordinary members are winning access to rights formerly held only by party elites and activists. The apparent aim of these initiatives, introduced in countries such as Germany, Canada, Norway and Britain, has been to make party membership more appealing and, in particular, to staunch the loss of mass members, who remain an important source of funds, campaign volunteers, and traditional legitimacy for mass-branch party organizations (Scarrow, 1999).

The classic classification by Duverger distinguished among the 'mass-branch', 'caucus-cadre' and 'militia' types of party organization where various degrees of intra-party democracy exists. More recent work has added the concept of the 'cartel' party to this list (Norris, 2004).

Mass-branch parties

The classic ideal of mass-branch parties was one where parliamentary leaders were based on a larger circle of engaged grassroots membership, and an even broader base of loyal voting supporters (Duverger, 1954 and Epstein.1980). Further arguments show that this type of organization facilitates internal party democracy, encourages stability and continuity since loyalty is expressed towards the broader organization rather than to particular leaders, and promotes linkages between civic society and the state, particularly thick networks among voters, local activists, parliamentary representatives, and party leaders in government.

This extra-parliamentary structure was thought to have evolved in Western Europe with the expansion of the franchise, as more and more electors needed to be contacted in traditional campaigns, well beyond the number who could be reached by the poll book list maintained by electoral agents and individual candidates. Labour intensive socialist parties lacking financial resources, exemplified by the German SPD, relied on a volunteer network of community supporters for contacting and mobilizing voters during election campaigns. In return for their work, the structure provided members with opportunities for direct involvement in internal debates about party policies and principles at local and regional levels, culminating in regular national conventions.

Collective decisions eventually became embodied in the manifesto that set out the official collective party platform and bound the hands of government. Moreover where localized channels of recruitment prevailed, candidates for elected office were selected by, and thereby accountable to, party members, and ultimately constituents. In this model, the role of activist foot soldiers was to carry out the hum-drum local party work: attending branch and regional meetings, donating money, signing petitions, passing motions, acting as local officers and campaign organizers, displaying window posters and yard-signs, helping with door-to-door canvassing and leafleting, training and selecting candidates for office, attending the national party convention, and assisting with community fund-raising events, in short, making tea and licking envelopes. Not all parties, by any means, met this model, even in post-war Western Europe, although Duverger believed that this model would gradually spread through 'contagion of the left'.

The motivation for getting involved in party work can be explained as the product of three types of rewards: *ideological* incentives (the achievement of gaining collective goals and giving expression to deeply held beliefs); *outcome* incentives (the rewards that come to the individual from achieving certain personal goals such as expanding social networks, getting a patronage job, or becoming an elected representative); and *process* incentives (derived from the inherent interest and stimulus of being politically active) (Whitely, Seyd and Richardson, 1994). Of these, mass-branch parties are heavily dependent upon the ideological rewards that come from working together to achieve certain common principles and ideals.

Caucus-cadre parties

In contrast, Duverger also described alternative types of party organizations, including '*caucus-cadre*' models of shifting 'top-down' parliamentary factions, with leaders selected by smaller circles of acolytes, local notables and financial backers, with a minimal role for a wider membership and formal organizational structure (Duverger, 1954). Caucus-cadre organizations are essentially based on political elites and leadership factions usually created within parliament. The United States has moved from 'caucus-cadre' party machines towards direct voter primaries for candidate selection, bypassing any substantial and ongoing policy role for party members (Aldrich. 1995). This model may be the most appropriate for parties in some other established democracies, notably Japan, as well as in some of the newer democracies.

In Latin America, for example, despite the spread of free and fair elections since the early 1990s, and the growth of multiparty systems, party organizations often remain poorly institutionalized. The defining features of institutionalized systems are that party organizations generally have regularized procedures, relatively cohesive structures, stable roots in civic society, and an independent resource base (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995). By contrast, parties in Latin America commonly reflect personal support for particular leaders or parliamentary factions based on the division of the spoils of patronage and clientelism, rather than being founded on coherent programmatic party platforms, a core set of well-defined ideological principles, and a stable mass-branch organizational structure. In presidential elections, such campaign organizations are ideally suited to candidates launching personal leadership appeals directly through television advertising, with fundraising conducted through affiliated groups and personal backers, rather than working through decentralized membership structures and programmatic party appeals.

Lack of institutionalization is even clearer in many African states, which achieved independence later than in Latin America; African parties are often based on informal personal and lineage-based clientalistic networks and ethnic identities, rather than clear programmatic identities and institutional structures (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2001). In consolidating democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, some parties can trace their lineage back to inter-war era, but older and newer parties have difficulties in attracting members since partisanship continues to be greatly influenced by the old Communist party (Lewis, 1996). Party building among local neighborhoods, workplace and welfare associations, and housing communities often proved difficult during the 1990s, an era of rapid social and economic transformation. The remnants of Communist parties in Eastern Europe, reflecting long-standing cultural traditions, may function more as 'top down' electoral and fund-raising machines dominated by the leadership rather than as channels of 'bottom-up' internal debate and political accountability.

Militia parties

Duverger also identified *militia* parties, adopted by Fascist and Communist parties during the interwar years, characterized by a hierarchical top-down command structure with supporters enrolled upon military lines. Such parties may persist today in some authoritarian states where most forms of political organization other than the ruling party are banned, and where the governing party maintains power based on control of the military and civilian bureaucracy. Under these regimes, leaders often use patronage, corruption, and intimidation to encourage local party supporters as another means to exert control over the general population (Diamond and Gunther, 2001). Party membership may be relatively widespread, but it functions essentially as a top-down mechanism of control rather than a genuine form of bottom-up political participation where activists can influence the policy process, hold political leaders to account for their actions, and remove them if necessary.

Catch-all, electoral-professional, and cartel parties

Many accounts have described how West European mass-branch parties evolved from the 1950s onwards towards an organization less reliant upon volunteer grassroots activists than upon electronic channels of communications, state subsidies for resources, and paid professionals for advice (Ware.1987). Argument continues to surround the best way to describe these developments; in the 1960s, Kirchheimer (1966) saw this as part of the growth of the '*catch-all*' party that abandoned its ideological anchors in helter-skelter pursuit of electoral gain. Epstein (1980), influenced by the loose decentralized structure of American parties, characterized the key developments as the rise of the '*electoral-professional*' party. Subsequent work by Katz and Mair (1995) has depicted these most important developments as the rise of the '*cartel*' party that derives its financial resources and related services from the public purse, with the spoils divided among those parties already in parliament.

Selle. (1991) considers Duverger's model of the mass-branch party as a widely influential ideal-type, and in this context any fall of party membership has commonly been regarded as prima facie evidence of an erosion of the channels of political participation. Yet it is unclear whether this model has indeed declined and been replaced by alternative organizational types. Moreover the literature was heavily influenced by the experience of Western Europe and Anglo-American democracies, where the historic roots of most major party organizations were established as the franchise expanded in the late 19th and early 20th century, during the pre-television era. It remains unclear how relevant this model remains in newer democracies where party organizations developed when the electronic media were already widely available.

Theoretical Context

Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca's theories of circulation of elite are found useful for explaining the declining level of internal democracy in Nigeria's political parties in general and Peoples Democratic Party in particular. Pareto (1939) sees the necessity of the circulation of elite taking place from time to time stressing that even revolutions come about through accumulation in the higher strata of society- either because of a slowing down in class circulation, or from other causes of decadent elements no longer possessing the residue suitable for keeping them in power, or shrinking from the use of force, while in the meantime in the lower strata of society elements of superior quality are coming to the fore, possessing residues suitable for exercising the functions of governing.

Like Pareto, Mosca (1939) also believes in the theory of the circulation of elites. According to him, the distinguishing characteristic of the elite is the aptitude to command and to exercise political control and once the ruling class losses this aptitude and people outside the ruling class cultivate it in large numbers, there is every possibility that

the old ruling class will be deposed and replaced by the new one. Explaining further Varma (2004) states that Mosca believes in a kind of law, that the governing elite, in course of time, is not able to provide the necessary services to the masses, or the services they continue to provide are no longer regarded as valuable, or a new religion arises, or some similar changes take place in the social forces pervading the society, and that in such cases changes become inevitable. Varma (2004) also emphasizes that Mosca takes up not only the psychological reasons for the change, as Pareto had done, but also the sociological reasons, he is able to establish some relationship between the changes in social circumstances and individual characteristic. New interests and ideals are formulated in society, new problems arise, and the process of circulation of elite is accelerated.

In plain view, the above theory explains why political parties in Nigeria lack stability and the Peoples Democratic Party could no longer maintain their dominion after sixteen years. It provides a clear insight into how the party did not recognize the inevitability of the circulation of elites and thus, maintains the same category of elites up to the point they lacked the aptitude to command and exercise political control. It also shows the extent to which the party was adamant in the face of the failure of its governing elites to provide the needed valuable services and general perception among the populace that the governing elites within its fold lose legitimacy and needed to be deposed and replaced. It thus explains how the new set of elites with the potentials to meet the aspirations of the people already jostling in the political arena rode easily on this nonchalant attitude and overwhelmed PDP in 2015. The theory eventually provides the framework for a recipe for improving interparty democracy and strengthening party stability for sustainable democracy in Nigeria.

Internal Democracy and General Elections in Nigeria

The tendency of political parties in Nigeria to adopt an open system that will allow members of the parties to participate in the decision making processes and have an unrestricted opportunity to contest in elections under these parties is often very low. These restrictions and constraints within political parties in the country oftentimes result to high level of wrangling, war of attrition, recrimination, acrimony, coordination dilemmas, and cross-carpeting in many Nigerian political parties. As Awosika in (Oyediran, 1999) captures it, such restricted politics is poisonous. It is politics of war not of peace, of acrimony and hatred and mudslinging not of love and brotherhood, of anarchy and discord, not of orderliness and concord, of divisions and disunity and not of cooperation, consensus and unity, not of integrity and patriotism; it is the politics of rascality, not maturity, of blackmail and near gangsterism, not of constructive and honest contribution. Such denials that most often led to emergence of unpopular candidates and the determination of ruling parties to win elections by all means have had varying degrees of negative effects on the nature and character of the outcomes of elections in Nigeria as shown below:

Table 3: Highlights of the Character of General Elections in Nigeria (1960-2015)

Election	Political Parties	Nature/Character	Outcomes
1964 Federal Elections	2 mega alliance parties: NNA and UPGA	Irregularities and boycott by the opposition, UPGA	Controversy and crisis ultimately leading to military take-over in 1966
1979 General Elections	5 parties: NPN, NPP, UPN, PRP, UNPP	Irregularities and violence	Controversy resolved by the Supreme Court in favour of NPN
1983 General Elections	6 parties: NPN, NPP, UPN, PRP, GNPP, NAP	Structural violence and manipulation of the electoral processes in favour of the incumbent	Controversy leading to military take-over in 1983, Dec, 31.
1992-93 General Elections	2 parties: NRC, SDP	Arbitrary postponement cancellations and state interference	National crisis arising from the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential elections
1999 General Elections	3 parties: AD, PDP, APP	Irregularities and Violence	Uneasy transition to civil rule, led by PDP
2003 General Elections	50 parties prominent among which are AD, AAP, PDP, APGA, LP	Violence and Irregularities	Controversial self-succession by PDP
2007 General Elections	62 parties prominent among which are: ACN, ANPP, PDP, APGA, LP	Violence and Irregularities	Controversial self succession by PDP

2011 General Elections	62 plus parties prominent among which are: ACN, ANPP, PDP, APGA, LP	Violence and Irregularities	Post-election violence; regime perpetration by PDP
2015 General Elections	26 parties prominent among which are: APC, PDP, and APGA	Threats of violence	Uneasy transition to opposition All Progressives Congress.

Source: Adapted from Okori and Iortyer, 2014 as compiled from various readings: Iyayi (2004); Uwakwe (2011), and 2015 Election tracker.org/the political parties/

The Peoples Democratic Party and 2015 General Elections in Nigeria

Peoples Democratic Party came into being on the 19th August, 1998. It was formed by a group called G.34 Committee headed by Dr. Alex Ekwueme, the Vice- President of Nigeria in the Second Republic. Drawing on Omo Omoruyi's study, PDP arose from three main sources. First were the politicians, who were denied registration by General Sanni Abacha during his self succession project. They later metamorphosed to G.34 men, a Committee that petitioned against the self succession project of Sanni Abacha. Second, were those politicians who were former followers of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), and were not opposed to the self-succession of the Abacha and also not part of his machine. This group called itself the All Nigeria Congress (ANC) and was led by Chief Sunday Awoniyi. Third, were those who were the followers of the late General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua under Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM). Chief Tony Anenih and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar belonged to this group.

The political objective of the party include, to seek political power for the purpose of protecting the territorial integrity of Nigeria and promoting the security, safety, welfare of all Nigerians; to promote and establish political stability in Nigeria and foster national unity and integration; to provide good governance that ensures probity and participatory democracy; to offer equal opportunities to hold the highest political, military, bureaucratic and judicial offices in the country to all citizens; and to provide the political environment that is conducive to economic growth and national development through private initiative and free enterprise (http://pdpimostate.org/manifest.aspx).

The Peoples Democratic Party ruled Nigeria for sixteen years starting from the beginning of the Fourth Republic in May 1999, to May 2015. During this time, the party consistently controlled overwhelming majority in both houses of the National Assembly. The party in addition maintained its stronghold in majority of states in Nigeria. The Peoples Democratic Party introduced zoning so as to balance power sharing arrangement in Nigeria. It was anticipated that zoning would bring fair play in the distribution of both elective and appointive positions among the diverse units in the country. As Suberu (2004) notes, under a power sharing arrangement adopted since 1999 by the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the six most important political positions in the federation were shared among six geo-political zones. The expectation was that these positions will continue to rotate in accordance with expiration of tenures of Presidents.

After the 1999 general elections that led to the handover of power from military to civilian administration, subsequent elections in PDP witnessed various levels of dissatisfaction with the processes through which candidates emerge. This persisted and became a source of worry even within the ranks of the party as can been seen from the following statement made by Nwodo an erstwhile chairman of the party:

> We sought to restore the image of our party, because the image of our dear party, the largest political party in Africa, has been grossly eroded due to strife, imposition of candidates, god fatherism, money bag politics, injustice, and lack of understanding of our party manifesto. As the ruling party, if we get it right, Nigeria will get it right (Nwodo, 2010).

Corroborating the above statement, Metuh (2010) maintained that internal democracy must succeed for PDP to grow. Expressing his fears, he emphasized that if the party could not be managed very well one day it might be in opposition. Foreseeing a similar brink future for the party Nwodo (2010) further submitted that:

> The party has been handed over to godfathers who, with 'reckless abandon', impose candidates with questionable character and no leadership qualities on the citizens.

> *Such people elected under the platform of the party have consistently brought public odium on the party to the chagrin of PDP members and the nation at large*

The above reservations expressed by the top hierarchy of the Peoples Democratic Party points to the fact that the party was further moving away from bottom up approach to top down posture where a handful few took absolute control of the party and were solely in firm grip of the decision making mechanisms, thus denying the teeming party members the privileges of selecting credible candidates that would effectively fly the party's flag for electoral positions.

Noticeably, within the few who appropriated the party's machinery, there were diverse notions. While the president and his cabal's actions depict his sole ownership of the party, majority of the governors were opposed to such notion likewise the national assembly caucus. This variegated posture of PDP in terms of dominance by the above mentioned stakeholders sow the seed of discord in the party resulting to her diminishing fortune in the 2015 General Elections. In concurrence with the above, Ogbemudia (2015) asserts that even though PDP is made up of responsible people in the country, these people hardly appreciate challenges, sound arguments and positive interference, they take decisions without consultations and never welcome observations after such decisions have been taken. According to him these people held sway at Jonathan leadership of the party for six years. On his part, Anumbor (2015) identifies some of the cabal in the following statement;

> *The vulgarity has become intolerable. We have now reached the bottom of obscenity and it's got to stop." President Jonathan's attack dogs {the infamous media team of Drs Doyin Okukpe and Reuben Abati}, his octogenarian advisers {Chiefs Tony Anenih and Edwin Clark and Alhaji Bamanga Tukur}, the PDP media team that foolishly got enmeshed in hate speech and General Buhari's so called certificate saga {Chiefs Femi Fani-Kayode and Olisa Metu} and his female power broker ministers Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and Mrs Diezani Allison-Madueke won't be decorated for helping him loose the election.*

> *Ekiti State Governor, Ayo Peter Fayose will have a new political complexion when Jonathan leaves the presidency, away from the rascality that his short return has caused Ekiti people; Fayose's warning to the electorate in a national daily not to vote for General Buhari because of his age (72 years} which to this most riotous governor spells imminent death, was an abuse and gratuitous indecency.*

Ndoma Egba a PDP stalwart and former Senate Leader in Tsan (2015) blames the PDP failure on the governors, according to him, the road to the March 28 April 11 electoral loss of the PDP started from the December, 2014 primaries when the governors deliberately shut out unwanted candidates and imposed theirs on the party. He recalled the scenario prior to the elections when there were wide spread complaints and petitions against PDP governors, especially those of South - South and South - East states which were not attended to. This, he continued had an unbridled defection on the party's fortunes as the massive defections did not only overheat the polity, but also upset the entire political configuration and destabilized the polity. He emphatically stated that:

> *For as long as ownership of the political parties is not with its members but with governors, they will become so overbearing that it is only their wishes that will rule. The party, (at the national level) suborns its constitution, guidelines and even court orders to please the whims and fancies of governors who appropriate the will of members and impose theirs in its stead. This has bred sycophancy, impunity and arrogance and eroded internal party democracy.*

Consequently, Egba added that this erosion of internal democracy, led to mass traffic out of PDP after primaries. Contestants who still had promising political life in them had to find safe haven where they would realize their various political ambitions. The party finally imploded under the weight of governors' impunity and arrogance.

In his submission, Terngu (2015) also blamed the defeat of PDP on the governors whom he referred to as field commanders. According to him, the gang – up against the president by the governors and their eventually decamping with their teeming party supporters to the opposition All Progressives Congress frustrated the party. He emphasized that the governors' action emboldened members of the House of Representatives and Senators to follow suit thereby depleting the ranks of PDP in the legislative arm of government. According to him, these governors went ahead luring the remaining PDP lawmakers with automatic tickets. Unfortunately, the governors out of the absence of intraparty democracy had already allocated state and federal legislative seats to their stooges and loyalists through kangaroo and

sham primary elections. In extreme cases even when their preferred candidates fail to scale through such façade primaries, results were blatantly re-written in their favor. This deplorable level of internal democracy in PDP made the governors to be in firm control of the party machineries in their state and thus, manipulate it in whichever way that pleases them. This eventually led to the failure of PDP in the 2015 General Elections.

The PDP legislative members at the National Assembly as well had their own dimension of the argument, this argument bother on their long years of experience acquired through huge investment by Nigerian government. Thus, they find it expedient to have their own share of control of party machinery. Expressing the need for continuity of legislative members for effective utilization of their experiences, Ndoma Egba cautioned against the consequences of high turnover among the legislators, according to him, the Institute of Legislative Studies (NILS) spends a lot of resources yearly on training and re-training of Nigeria National Assembly members and staff but the resources are usually wasted when parties fail to provide a level playing ground for their members to return after four years to make use of the knowledge gained. He further warned that doing away with lawmakers and electing new ones would not only erode institutional memory, but any progress gained in the skills and capacity of lawmakers would be Nigeria's lost (Tsan, 2015). Quite unlikely, the power brokers in PDP see the legislature at the federal and state levels as a compensation field for the lackeys and retirement homes. Any seeming attempt by any independent minded lawmaker to ensure continuity in office, without the stamp of authority of the governor or the godfather in the state, was misinterpreted to mean dissent which must be cut down quickly.

Let us consider the following examples; in Benue state, when a former Governor of Benue State and incumbent senator, Senator George Akume, was denied PDP ticket for the 2011 General Elections, he decamped to former Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) with his teeming supporters and did not only win his elections but captured most of the state and national assembly legislative seats, also, when a former National Chairman of PDP and serving Senator, Engr. Barnabas Gemade was denied the PDP Senatorial ticket and also fenced out of the party he decamped to the then opposition All Progressives Congress and defeated the incumbent Governor, Dr. Gabriel Torwua Suswam. The same scenario was replicated in Cross River State where the state governor, Senator Liyel Imoke ensured that the former Senate Leader, Senator Victor Ndoma Egba and Senator Bassey did not return to National Assembly. Bassey decamped to Labor Party and contested, even though Egba did not decamp immediately but his spirit was low (Terngu, 2015). It can be noted that what we have seen from the above few cases was replicated in almost all senatorial districts across the federation and this ultimately led to the failure of PDP in 2015 General Elections.

We can see from the above that internal democracy is not merely a party affair; its effects can lead to the overall instability of the political process and also affect the performance of government. Nwanegbo et al (2014) stressing in a similar vein, maintains that the absence of internal democracy can lead to party defections which could pose a threat to and destabilize party politics and sustainable democratic practice. This explains why Nigeria is still grappling with the challenges inherited from colonialism as captured by Anumbor (2015) thus:

> *Before President Jonathan assumed office in 2011, Nigerians chafed variously under colonialism, feudalism, injustice, military dictatorship, inequality, vested interests, corruption, banal civilian administrations, civil war, poverty, unemployment, maternal and infant mortality and hunger for close to a century. The institutions that make democracies function which Great Britain bequeathed in 1960: The courts, neutral and professional civil service, independent media, apolitical security service, armed and police forces that check government arbitrariness were purposely and systematically first weakened by politicians and then destroyed by military dictators.*

An insight into the above myriad of challenges shows that PDP required high level of internal democracy to be able to recruit competent and determined people that could fashion and implement sound policies that would have positive impact on the lives of the people. Lack of internal democracy in the party rather paved way for incompetent and avaricious politicians who led them to the dark side of the history.

Conclusions

It can be noted from the above that since the formation of the Peoples Democratic Party, internal democracy in the party continued to be on the decline. This continued decline of internal democracy bred divisive tendencies among the stakeholders – the president and his cabal, the governors and their cronies and the caucus of the party in the national assembly. As the level of competition increases among these stakeholders, the party becomes weaker and loses touch

with its teeming ordinary supporters. Worthlessly to the party is the fact these divisions are predicated on selfish interests of the groups involved and not on the basis of principles. Immersed in struggle for dominance of party machinery to assert their self centered ambitions, state's human, material and financial resources were diverted to galvanize their foot soldiers thereby abandoning the business of governance. This therefore account for why for sixteen years of its stay in power, PDP could not surmount the challenges they inherited. This paper thus concludes that intra party democracy is sine qua non not only to the unity and cohesion of political parties but good governance and sustainable development. Achieving intraparty democracy in an evolving democracy therefore entails a gradual and consistent shift of decision making process of the party from top down approach to bottom up approach to include professional bodies, labor and trade union, farmers associations etc. this can be done through rethinking their recruitment processes so as to open doors to all interest groups. Also, it is imperative to fill the vacuum created by jettisoning traditional method of leadership selection in Africa, this could be done by introducing courses that would instill leadership virtues into people right from the rudimentary levels and at high levels setting up institutions with particular mandate to shaping the mentality and psyche of aspiring leaders, this would go a long way in easing the task of recruiting credible leaders.

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