

**PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S INTRA-PARTY CONFLICTS AND MANAGEMENT OF
GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION BY INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (INEC)
IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA**

BY

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Abstract

In most democratic countries Nigeria not an exception, political parties remain vehicles through which the goals of many political aspirations are realized. While a plethora of studies on intra party conflicts and the entrenchment of democratic values within those parties in Nigeria exists, the intra-party conflicts within the PDP during the 2019 polls and the implications these conflicts had on INEC's Management of the election have received little attention. Therefore, the objectives of the study are: investigating the causes of intra-party conflicts within the PDP prelude to the 2019 governorship elections in Kogi state and identifying implications if any such conflicts had any on the operations of INEC in its management and conduct of the 2019 gubernatorial polls in Kogi. Data was obtained through unstructured interviews and questionnaire and analyzed using simple percentage. The population of the study covers the members of the opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the state, INEC, Security personnel and observers. A sample of 315 respondents were chosen from the population of the study in the three metropolitan local government areas. Findings of the study were that the factors that led to intra-party conflicts within PDP included suspicion and distrust; bribery and corruption; lack of a proper internal dispute resolution process and attendant lack of spirit of sportsmanship; power tussle; ethnic and regional politicking; unfair treatment of members and political godfatherism with imposition of candidates. Also, the implications of the intra party conflicts within the PDP on the effective conducts of election by INEC were largely negative as it prevented INEC from proper evaluation of the PDP primary; It affected INEC personnel safety during the poll and it affected the submission of names of candidate by the party; also, PDP intra party conflicts led to persistent violence which eroded trust in the electoral process, leading to decreased confidence in INEC and the democratic process as a whole; It led to fear and intimidation. The study recommended that: There should be ideological commitments and transparency in PDP's financial administration; The imposition of candidates into any elective position by the party should be abolished. The right of every member must be respected and preserved; PDP should embrace the concept of reforms and review the zoning arrangement; There is need to infuse a mechanism for conflict resolution and peace building; Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) must attach greater importance to the legal framework of election in Nigeria; Independent Electoral Commission should be independent in its outlook and purpose.

Keywords: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Intra-party Conflicts, Conflict Management, Implication, Independent National Electoral Commission

Introduction

The centrality of elections to democracy has been predicated upon a number of reasons, which revolve around the multiple roles credible elections can play to reinforce democracy. First, elections help to institutionalize the process of democratic succession (Hughes, 1988). Elections also serve the instrumental purposes of legitimisation and mobilisation of popular support for the government (Joseph, 1999). Put together, credible elections promote political participation, competition and legitimacy, all of which are central to democracy and development (Omotola, 2021). A number of forces however, including social, economic and political variables intervene to play prominent roles in influencing the process, integrity and outcome of elections. Nevertheless, good elections are said to be impossible without effective electoral administration (Omotola 2021). This is where the role of political party becomes important and a political party according to Agbaje (1999) is a group of persons bonded in policy and opinion in support of a

general political cause which essentially is the pursuit, capture and retention for as long as democratically feasible, of government and its duties. Gamut of researches however have also established incidences of troubled elections across the world, especially within developing and upcoming democracies as a result of intra party conflicts. Evidence from Sweden on how internal disagreements affect the success of political parties argued that deep divisions and rampant factionalism can become existentially detrimental to the life of a political party. Also, parties' policy proposals, manifestos, leadership and candidate selections are regularly accompanied by internal conflicts, as revealed by the media or by party actors' own public behaviour. We need only think of Labour's leadership election in the UK, Angela Merkel's immigration policy, or Donald Trump's nomination as a presidential candidate. But since parties try to conceal this as much as possible, it is difficult to know the exact extent of intraparty conflict, its facets and the coping strategies of parties. (Johnathan & Ann-Kristin 2016)

In another vein political parties in countries such as Switzerland (Ladner & Brandle 1999), United Kingdom (Anstead 2008) and Australia (Gauja 2006) have come to agree on the weakening effect of intra-party democracy on political parties. According to Gauja (2006), intra-party democracy impedes decision-making within parties, precludes parties from choosing candidates they regard as most appealing to the electorate and transfers key political decisions to a small group of activists at the expense of the broader party membership. (Shale & Matlosa 2008). Also, sergiu(2019) pointed out that due to the diverse party composition, intra-party conflicts occur frequently between and within the party units: party members' dissatisfaction with their local section; divisions at party congresses surrounding the elaboration of the party platform or leadership selection; disunity of legislators in voting behavior; conflicts between party parliamentary caucus and ministers in government. (Andeweg & Thomassen, 2011; Bowler et al., 1999; Carey, 2007; Hazan, 2006; Kam, 2009; Sieberer, 2006; Stecker, 2015)

The paradox of the majority of African political parties is that most of them are poorly organised and lack institutional capacity, their decision making processes are unstructured and power often lies in the hands of the party leader and a few of his cronies who are usually wealthy enough to bankroll the party Wanjohi (2003).

Since the return to democratic governance in Nigeria in 1999, the democratic process has been bedeviled by poor party politics as a result of factors such as: ethnicisation of party politics, poor political leadership, excessive westernization of the concept of democracy, party indiscipline, lack of clear cut party ideologies which principally is termed generally as a lack of internal party democracy (Ntalaja 2000). It is therefore safe to assert that the desperation for political power in the country is because power seekers in Nigeria see politics as an avenue for making money, a sort of open sesame to wealth, because to be in power is to control state resources that are often converted to personal use (Edoh, 2002).

In Nigeria, the rules regulating political parties in Nigeria in Section 221-229 of the 1999 Constitution are flagrantly often disregarded as political actors like godfathers and shadow parties, government executives and leaders within and without the party's remain a central figure in internal politics. INEC as a subset of electoral governance, defined as a comprehensive and multi-tasked activity involving three elements, namely rule making, rule application and rule adjudication, electoral administration focuses on rule application. Rule making involves designing the basic rule of the electoral game; rule application deals with implementing these rules to specifications to organize the electoral game; and rule adjudication entails resolving disputes arising from the game (Hartnly, McCoy & Mustillo, 2008 cited in Ibietonye 2021). Nigeria's electoral history has always been marred by series of intra-party conflicts, these conflicts or internal wrangling have telling effects on the conduct and outcome of elections in Nigeria with some having far-ringing impacts on not just the electoral process but also the socio-political scope of the Nigerian State. In particular, intra-party conflict has a tremendous negative influence on the conduct of elections by INEC. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the effect of intra-party conflict within the People's Democratic Party (PDP) on the conduct of the 2019 Governorship election by the Independent National Electoral Commission INEC in Kogi State, Nigeria.

The study will significantly add more knowledge to the body of studies on intra-party conflict in Nigeria giving light to its causes and implications while making meaningful and practicable recommendations that could help mitigate its

causes and effects on the electoral and democratic process in Kogi, Nigeria and the world as a globe. The aim and objectives of the study are to: i. investigate the causes of Intra-party conflicts within the PDP during the Kogi 2019 Governorship election; ii. identify the implications of intra-party conflicts within the PDP on the management of the 2019 Governorship election by INEC in Kogi State, while the research is guided by the following questions: What were the causes of intra-party conflicts in the PDP in Kogi state? And at were the implications of intra-party conflicts within the PDP on the management of the 2019 Governorship election by INEC in Kogi State?

The study scope covers the gubernatorial electoral period of 2019 in Kogi State. Attention was given to the major opposition party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) how internal political skirmishes within the party affected INEC's conduct of the 2019 gubernatorial polls in Kogi State. The study was conducted in the three metropolitan local government areas viz Lokoja, Kotonkarufe and Ajaokuta in the state capital The reason for its selection is their placement around the state capital and the seat of the State offices of all the critical stakeholders that were interviewed in this study. The study will be premised on the causes of intra-party conflicts within the PDP with view on leadership tussle, leadership and aspirant nominations, non-inclusiveness and how these factors affected the conduct of the 2019 governorship polls in the state by the electoral empire.

Operational terms pivotal to the study which are; Political party; conflict and Intra-party conflict and are hereby defined:

Political Party: A political party is defined as a political group that is officially recognized as being part of the electoral process and who can support (put forth) candidates for elections (free or not) on a regular basis (Sartori, 1976)

Conflict: According to UNICEF (2016) conflict involves a clash or struggle between groups who perceive that their needs, goals or strategies are incompatible, mutually exclusive or antagonistic. Conflict can involve contestation around demands, interests, collective memory, emotions, perceptions, values, beliefs, history, culture, behaviors, actions, symbols and power. Conflict can manifest from micro interactions to macro systems. It is a natural outcome of normal human interaction.

Intra-Party Conflict Intra-party conflict can be defined as a conflict which occurs when members of the same political party pursue incompatible political goals or try to influence the decision making process of the party to their advantage. Intra-party conflict often plays out in the selection of members for elective positions both within and outside the party.

Literature Review

There are several literatures on Intra-party conflicts and their effects on politics, the electoral process and governance in general. This section reviews some of the relevant studies on intra- party conflicts. The review is carried out under three themes which are; the conceptual discourse; review of issues and narratives relating to Kogi State.

Conceptual Discourse

This section gives clarification to terms engaged in which are of intricate value to the study. Though many descriptive terms in this area of study may be viewed as concepts and invite analysis, two are of central significance in this study: 'political party' and 'intra-party conflict'.

Political Party

According to Lemay (2001), a political party is referred to as any group of politically active persons outside a government who organize to capture government by nominating and electing officials who thereby control the operations of government and determine its policies. This definition does not however do justice to the concept, hence Sartori (1976), opined political party as 'any political group identified by an official label that presents elections candidates for public office'.

From the above, it is safe to assert that a political party is an entity made up of people whose aim is to gain power through elections and to further translate the agenda that unites them into policy-based actions after gaining political power via the electoral process. According to Agbaje (1999) these functions are categorized into three, which are: electorate-related functions, government-related functions and linkage-related functions.

Intra-party Conflict

Intra-party conflicts of all shapes and complexions have been part and parcel of Nigeria's democratic journey. However, in recent times, they have become much more pervasive and even assumed crisis dimensions, with negative implications for democratic stability and consolidation (Adeniyi, 2019). They (intra party conflict) continue to be a predominant feature of partisan politics in the Nigeria's political and democratic process since 1999. Suffice to say that virtually all major political parties in this republic have had their fair share of internal crises. Olorungbemi (2014) avers that, 'since the inception of the present democratic rule in 1999, political party organizations were transformed into a battle field characterized by hatred, enmity, victimization and suspicion resulting from bitter struggles among party members in their quest to achieve public and/or personal interests'. The adverse effects of the discords within parties are the all-pervasive phenomenon of party splits, the proliferation of parties and the prevalent trend in many countries today towards the appearance of independent candidates'. No party in recent times, epitomizes the crisis dimension that intra-party conflicts and their poor management have assumed better than the PDP. It was the conflict within the PDP that paved way for its loss during the 2015 general elections as disgruntled members under the aegis of n'PDP led by Bukola Saraki weakened the then ruling party when they moved into the APC just months to the elections of 2015. One would expect that the PDP would have learnt from this, however the party continues to be a house divided against itself as members at local government, state and national level continue to go at each other over hegemonic tendencies.

Causes of Intra-Party Conflicts

This section engages what the causes of intra-party conflicts are with cognizance to the Nigerian context. These causes include the following; Favoritism, Unequal sharing of resources; Lack of regular meetings; and Centralized authority – power concentrated at the top. According to Momodu et al (2013), there are many factors that cause conflicts within political parties in Nigeria which are linked to those afore mentioned but defined in clearer terms to localize it to the Nigerian context, they include: leadership tussle, paucity of ideology, absence of internal democracy, interference by the executive arm in the domestic affairs of political parties, desperation for power as it guarantees opportunity for aggrandizement, culture of impunity, ethnicity and religious brinksmanship.

Intra-Party Conflict in PDP in the Build-Up to 2019 Elections

The PDP in its 16 years of rulership of the Nigerian state demonstrated flagrant abuse of internal mechanisms of resolving disputes and conflicting interests through manipulated nominations / primary elections, short-changing of party candidates, tele-guided elective party conventions / congresses. Virtually all states of the federation where PDP controlled witnessed abuse of internal party democracy. In some instances, PDP contested some electoral positions without clearly identified candidates. The situation is rife in ruling parties because they attract all manners of politicians (Obiora & Chiamogu, 2020) INEC, which has been organizing all elections since May 29 1999, has the prefix of 'independent' to its name. Why the prefix is meant to emphasize the neutrality and impartiality of the body, it does not by any means make it a sovereign entity (Adibe, 2015) because it still has to operate within the structures and processes of the Nigerian state to which it has no control. For instance, while announcing its decision to postpone the presidential election from February 14 to March 28, the INEC Chairman Professor Attahiru Jega was reported to have said: "...it has become pertinent for it (INEC) to seriously consider the security advisory presented to it by the Security and Intelligence Services. I would like to reiterate here that INEC is an Election Management Body, EMB, and not a security agency. It relies on the security services to provide a safe environment for personnel, voters, election observers and election materials to conduct elections wherever it deploys. Where the security services strongly advise

otherwise, it would be unconscionable of the Commission to deploy personnel and call voters out in such a situation!” (Desert Herald, 2015 in Adibe, 2015) Jega slated the 14 & 28 February 2015 date of general elections. But the Presidency for whatever reasons insisted for a change of date. Addressing the Council of State, the INEC boss insisted that he was ready for elections come 14 February. The Presidency had to bully INEC into compliance by using Nigeria’s already biased armed forces who formally notified INEC of its inability to ensure adequate security come 14 and 28 February owing to the security challenge of the country and an intention to have a 6-week operation against the insurgency in the northeast of the country. The mere fact that the Presidency could pull through this clout suggest among other things that INEC is not independent as it were. (Nairaland, 2015)

PDP and Intra-Party Crisis in Kogi State

From 2014, the PDP in Kogi had always been entangled in one crisis or another. This is perhaps owing to the confluence of principal political actors both at the local and national scene. These ‘big wigs’ have interests that are in conflict with one another. The then PDP national chairman Ahmodu Ali, Ibro, Idris Wada, Dino Melaiye, Isaac Alfa amongst a host of other big names were influential members of the party. (Nasir, 2019). For the 2019 gubernatorial polls in the state, the PDP primary was a contest most predicted to be between, Idris Wada the immediate past governor of the state, Abukakar Ibrahim the son of Idris Ibrahim (Ibro) and Dino Melaye who was rising in popularity and influence. However, at the conclusion of the PDP gubernatorial primaries for Kogi 2019, Musa Wada who is the younger brother to Idris Wada emerged victorious (premiumtimes,2019).The primary election was disrupted by violence as shooting started outside the venue and subsequently inside, an incident that left many injured and one dead according to official reports. The PDP eventually lost the polls to the incumbent Yahaya Bello of the APC. To further compound woes of the PDP and add to its misery, the court ruled that the PDP had no primary in Kogi as the process of its primary election was declared hasty and inconclusive (Punch, 2020). Although, the ruling was later overturned by the Supreme Court that affirmed Wada as PDP’s candidate.

Some of the aspirants that lost roundly rejected the process and its outcome. Melaye rejected the offer of being the Campaign DG of the party in the state (premiumtimes, 2019), while Abubakar Ibrahim took the party to court praying that he should be declared winner (Vanguard, 2019). It is worthy of note that Abubakar Ibrahim is the Son of Ibrahim Idris (Ibro) who is the former governor of the state and Major financier of the PDP in Kogi. The manner in which His Son lost did not go down well with him as he felt cheated. He also felt the PDP in Kogi were ingrates who should have reciprocated his financing gesture by supporting his Son. Idris Wada was also not happy with his brother Musa Wada who clinched the ticket. Wada’s emergence was seen as a shocker to most as he was not considered to be a front runner. Some even alleged his emergence to be a political ploy set in by Governor Bello of the APC to render PDP ineffective at the polls. Ultimately diss affection grew and members began exiting the party. Dr Idris Omede dumped the PDP and Chief Clarence Olafemi who is a former governor in the state also made plans to exit the party following what he termed as unfair treatment by the party leadership. (Opara, 2019). This was the state of affairs within the PDP for the 2019 polls.

Records of Kogi State Pre- Election Litigation for 2019 Governorship Election.

Serial no	Parties	Summary of Crisis	Decision of Court
1	Abubakar M. Ibrahim V. PDP & 2 Ors.	The Plaintiff challenged the Party Primaries contending that it was marred with violence and irregularities	The State High Court held That the Party did not conduct a valid primary election on appeal, the Court of Appeal and Supreme court overturned the Judgment, thus dismissing the suit

2	Femi Joseph V. Musa Wada & 2 Ors	The Plaintiff averred that the PDP candidate, Musa Wada submitted a forged School Certificate to INEC, he prayed the Court for an Order disqualifying the said PDP Candidate.	The Petition was dismissed at the preliminary stage for failure to ask for per- hearing notice as scheduled by the law.
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(Source: INEC Office, Kogi State, 2019)

INEC and Elections Management in Kogi State.

Kogi has always been a difficult terrain for INEC as regards conducting elections. The Kogi is heterogeneous ethnic composition of the state is major contributor to the dynamics of political conflicts witnessed in Kogi. INEC has encountered all sorts of fortunes in its conduct of polls in the state including having to organize a fresh election when the courts annulled the 2007 gubernatorial polls in the state, a ruling that ultimately altered the electoral timetable in the the state. In Kogi too, polls have been declared inconclusive by INEC with run off polls conducted. A sojourn into the electoral history of Kogi state depicts a gory picture of violence and ballot looting that recklessly mars the electoral process making Kogi one the trickiest states to conduct elections Nigeria. A sentiment shared by the INEC chairman, in the person of Mahmood Yakubu. He stated that “Bayelsa and Kogi are not easy states when it comes to conducting governorship elections stating the challenges of the geographical terrain and its effect on logistics and the attitude of the political class” (Premiumtimes, 2019).

The 2019 gubernatorial polls in Kogi had a smooth electoral timetable with parties meeting the deadline for submission of candidates following the conducts of their primaries. The November 16 date set for the polls too did not change even following a process of litigation embarked upon majorly by Natasha Akpoti a lead candidate of the SDP following her disqualification. Even the order of the court did not stop the date as the SDP was only included in the list of Parties contesting the elections (The Guardian, 2019).

Intra-party Conflicts in the PDP and their Effects on the Electoral Process in 2019

INEC alone cannot resolve all the challenges facing the electoral and political system. A lot will depend on the collaboration and support of other key stakeholders in the electoral process, including political parties, security agencies, media, and civil society organizations. Rather unfortunately, INEC does not have control over these actors. The political parties, for example, hardly respect their own regulations governing party conventions/congresses and primary elections. These party activities often produce parallel executives and candidates. Internal mechanisms for redress are ineffective leading to a plethora of litigations over intra-party elections and nominations. Apart from the unnecessary distraction such lawsuits impose on INEC, they clog the courts with numerous cases arising from political disputes, which further exposes the judiciary to immense political pressures. (Omotola,2016)

According to the INEC chairman, the Commission “has been sued or joined in over 640 court cases arising from the nomination of candidates,” and as at the day of the postponement, there were “40 different court orders against the Commission on whether to add or drop candidates.” As stakeholders continue to grapple with the implications of the postponement of Nigeria’s 2019 elections, the main lesson seems to be that the success of the 2015 election is not a sufficient guarantee that electoral management is well institutionalized in the country. Unless members of the political class moderate their desperation to win elections using all means at their disposal and act within the provisions of the law, the postponement poses a real danger to the consolidation of Nigeria’s electoral democracy (Omotola, 2016). The implications of these stakeholders’ problems will continue to have lot of negative influence on the conduct of the elections in Nigeria..

In a bid to outdo each other, many party loyalists were allegedly making investments in thugs and other unconventional means to outplay opponents, a move which culminated in the violent eruption that engulfed the PDP primary (Iniobong

2019). Melaye and Mohammed Audu who is a close ally of Ibrahim Idris were reportedly indicted by suspected political thugs as sponsors of violent groups for the sole purpose of swaying advantage in the political process. (Ogundipe 2018) According to Situationroom.org, the general atmosphere of the state during this period was soaked in tension, apprehension and promising of chaos, there was high level backed hooliganism and proliferate use of thugs.

Methodology

The study employed the use of both the qualitative and quantitative research methods to determine the relationship between collected data. Hence, an experimental research was carried out to help evaluate and establish a relationship between the causes of Intra-party conflicts within the PDP in Kogi 2019 and what effects these conflicts had on the conduct of the elections by INEC. This study employed the use of an unstructured interview guide of research instrumentation which afforded the researcher the ability to modify questions and sequence of wording in order to extract valuable data from select respondents pivotal to the aims and objectives of the study. This was also supported by a guided response type of survey research instrumentation through 315 administered and retrieved questionnaires.

The population of the study is Kogi State with a population of over 3million according to the 2006 National Census figures for the state. However, the study will focus on the population of the members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state, INEC staff, security agents, election observers. 315 randomly selected respondents were chosen from the population under review as they had immediate nexus with the research topic. Those administered with the questionnaires comprises of 123 members of the PDP, 36 INEC staff, 63 security personnel and 93 potential voters and election observers. The respondents were strategically selected at various locations such as: The state party secretariat of the PDP, The state INEC office, police and civil defense stations and offices all located in Lokoja the state capital, Kotonkarufe and Ajaokuta.

Data Presentation and Analysis.

This section is divided into two segments; the first segment presents the demographic information on the respondents and the second segment presents and interprets the data generated from the field based on the research objectives and questions.

Respondents' Demography

In this section information as regards the sex, age, educational qualification and status of respondents under the population under review by the study is presented in percentage tables and further analyzed.

Sex

Sex	MALE	FEMALE
Frequency	180 (57.1%)	135 (42.9%)

From the above table, males have the largest number with 180 (57.1%) and females are 135 (42.9%).

Age

Age	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-65	65 above
Frequency	66 (20.9%)	129 (40.9%)	84(26.6%)	21(6.6%)	15 (4.8%)

The table indicates that; 66 (20.9%) respondents engaged were within the age range of 18-30, 129 (40.9%) respondents fall under the age bracket of (31-40), 84(26.6%) respondents ranged between (41-50), while 21(6.6%) respondents were within the age bracket of (51- 65) and finally 15 (4.8%) of the respondents were aged 65 and above. The advantage of this demography to the study is that persons who are of the suffrage age was targeted by the study.

Education

Qualification	Postgraduate	BSc/HND	Diploma/OND	School certificate	Others
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Frequency	51 (16%)	159(50.4%)	75 (23.8%),	30(9.5%),	0
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From the demography on educational qualification, those with the highest educational qualifications are: Diploma/OND holders stood at 75 (23.8%), this number was closely school certificate holders were 30(9.5%), post graduate degree holders were 51(16%) and followed by BSc/HND had the highest representation with 159(50.4%) This meant that the respondents were literate enough to understand the questions raised by research through its survey with little or no aid from the researcher.

Status

Category	PDP Card Carrying Members	Security Agents	INEC Staff	Voters & Observers
Frequency	123 (39.04%)	63 (20%)	36 (11.42%)	93 (29.52%)

The study targeted 123(39.04%) for card carrying members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as they were better placed to provide answers on the dynamics within the party during the lead to Kogi 2019 gubernatorial polls. In same vein, 63 (20%) representing security agents were engaged to provide answers on the security situation of the state during the period covered by the study scope, 36 (11.42%) representing INEC staff were engaged to give insights on the challenges faced by INEC as it relates to the aim and objectives of the study, and finally 93 (29.52%) representing voters and observers in order to provide answers on basics that influenced voting patterns, the evaluation of the entire electoral process.

Findings and Discussions

Objective 1: What were the causes of intra-party conflicts in the PDP during the Kogi 2019 governorship elections?

Causes	SA	A	SD	D	N
Suspicion and distrust	270	39	0	6	0
Bribery and Corruption	285	27	3	0	0
Lack of effective internal conflict resolution mechanism and lack of spirit of sportsmanship	255	45	15	0	0
Power tussle	285	0	0	30	0
Ethnic and regional politicking	240	30	18	27	0
Poor reward system and unfair treatment of members	285	30	0	0	0
Political godfathers and imposition of candidate	180	21	114	0	0

From the data gathered 315, representing 100% of the respondents gave answers to the question from the 105 surveyed while none failed to give any response. From the data, the following were highlighted to be the major causes of intra-party conflicts in Kogi state PDP: The table posits an overwhelming agreement by the respondents that the points raised by the study were the major factors that fueled intra-party conflicts within the Kogi PDP. 270 of 315 surveyed strongly agreed suspicion and distrust in the PDP; 285 strongly agreed to bribery and corruption within the PDP leadership within and outside the state; 255 of the total respondents strongly agreed that lack of sportsmanship was a major factor that fueled the conflicts within the party. Also, from the table 285 of the respondents strongly agreed that hegemony and power tussle between party leaders was a key causal factor; 240 strongly agreed ethnic and regional politicking to be a reason; 285 strongly agreed, that the unfair treatment given to members as some members were allegedly given special preference and treatment over others. and 180 opined imposition of candidates and godfathers as factors that contributed to conflict within the party prelude to the 2019 governorship elections in Kogi. These findings are indeed consistent with data retrieved from reviewed literature earlier referenced in the study.

A party stalwart observed that imposition of candidate and God-fatherism are factors that can cause intra party conflict: *"...in the PDP, the big 3 Ibro, Idris Wada and Ahmadu Ali tried imposing their will on party members. Although it is fair to say that our own was not as pronounced as that of the APC, but there was a serious battle going on underneath.*

2 thing was a must for them, Kogi must be retrieved from the failing APC, and there was no collectivism or comradeship in the approach. Each wanted to be the hero of the story. For Ibrahim, **(KSI/PARTY OFFICIAL/October '22)**

Objective 2: What were the implications of intra-party conflicts within the PDP on the management of the 2019 Governorship election by INEC in Kogi State?

Implications	SA	A	SD	D	N
It prevented INEC from proper evaluation of the PDP primary	225	45	30	15	0
It affected INEC personnel safety during the polls	255	30	0	30	0
It affected the submission of names of candidate by the party	45	45	180	45	0
Effects on the general conduct of the Election by INEC	180	90	45	0	0
Erosion of trust and credibility of INEC and outcome of polls	240	30	30	15	0
It led to Fear and Intimidation	270	30	15	0	0

The following are effects of intra-party conflicts within the PDP on INEC with relationship to the conduct of the 2019 governorship election in Kogi: 225 respondents strongly agreed that intra-party conflict prevented INEC from properly evaluating the primaries of the PDP; 255 strongly agreed that the safety of electoral personnel was compromised as a result of intra party conflicts within the PDP; 180 strongly agreed that it had an effect on INEC's conduct of the 2019 polls; also 240 strongly agreed that intra party conflict within the PDP leads to the erosion of trust and credibility of INEC and outcome of polls; 270 respondents agree that intra party conflicts led to fear and intimidation; the atmosphere of violence as an off-shoot of intra party clashes affected a great deal INEC in mobilization of voters which can be said to result to voter apathy. To corroborate some of the data extracted from the survey, an interview with a security personnel who claimed to have covered the polls stated thus: *" I remember when there were reports of missing INEC personnel. Although the official statements read that the staffs scamped to safety..."* **(KSI/Security/ October 22)**

In another interview with a PDP member, He supported the fact that INEC Conduct of Elections can be negatively affected by intra party conflicts: *" , Although not INEC's fault entirely, however, the intra-party conflict within the PDP affected INEC, the shooting that happened at the venue of the PDP primaries meant that there was a breach in the process. Hence INEC may have lost track of the counting process and brought the entire credibility of the exercise to questioning"* **(KSI/ party member /October'22)**. An INEC official interviewed, agreed that intra party conflict affects INEC conduct of elections: *"Once there is crisis in a particular party, it brings about litigation processes in which most cases INEC is usually copied. This not only diverts attention but also ensures that excess resources are expended on the litigation process which are pathetically avoidable."* **(KIS/INEC/October '22)**

Conclusion

This paper posits that power tussle; bribery and corruption; ethnic and regional politicking, godfatherism and imposition of candidates, a non-existent ad hoc internal conflict resolution process and a general lack of sportsmanship fueled by a winner takes all mentality suspicion and distrust among party members which chases other members into

the warm embrace of rival political parties are the major causes of intra party conflict within the PDP during the build up to the governorship elections in Kogi 2019. All these had adverse effects on INEC's ability to conduct free fair and credible election in the state; for example, persistent violence eroded trust in the electoral process, leading to decreased confidence in INEC and the democratic process as a whole. So also, it must be noted that violence can instill fear in citizens, making them hesitant to participate in the electoral process or engage with INEC's mobilization efforts. It is evident that concerted efforts must be made by bodies, authorities and organization to acculturalise and re-orientate political actors, especially the gladiators, towards embracing and implementing politics in its altruistic sense of service to the people.

Recommendations

PDP must restructure to make do of its institutions; these institutions must not only exist on paper but must be fully empowered to carry out their designated responsibilities. The advantage here in is that institutionalization may cover a wide range of features, including a party's autonomy from other actors or a self-acclaimed or anointed leader. This will help in no small measure in democratization of its internal structure and development, supporters identify with the party, taking ownership of the party. There should be ideological commitments and transparency in party financial administration. Ideology plays a key role in shaping structural decisions within political parties. This is seen clearly in parties whose organizational forms are closely linked to their ideological identities. All party members must be made aware and observe the party financial guidelines and commitments. Doing this astutely, will help prevent kleptocrats from hijacking the party. This will also clear any doubt of indebtedness to a single financier who thinks He/She is owed.

The imposition of candidates into any elective position should be abolished. The right of every member must be respected and preserved. Candidate selection and emergence must be given constitutional backing. The process must be democratic and transparent to the satisfaction of the majority. Disputes and concerns raised by such processes must also be attended to and taken seriously. PDP should embrace the concept of reforms and review the zoning arrangement. PDP must embark on genuine reform agenda majorly on the issue of zoning to allow fairness, justice thereby bringing improvement into the party. The party should adopt a wide range of approaches to their internal organization, and they should constantly experiment with new structures and new procedures to cope with internal and external frictions.

There is need to infuse a mechanism for conflict resolution and peace building. Any organization that lacks this mechanism may find it difficult to function effectively. This will help build social trust, tolerance, cooperation and mutual understanding and reciprocity within party members. The judiciary needs to be reformed for enhanced electoral justice delivery, reforms to ensure efficient and speedy dispensation of electoral justice need to be urgently undertaken. An example will be for concerned authorities in Nigeria with INEC leading this campaign to establish special courts, like election petition tribunals, with jurisdictions over intra-party conflicts.

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and stakeholders like Civil Society Organisations must attach greater importance to the issue of the legal framework of election in Nigeria. INEC needs to be more proactive in this regard rather than being reactive as defendants in the post elections legal process. The pervasive nature of post-election litigation processes questioning the qualification of candidates after clearance by INEC, the legality or otherwise of the primaries that produced such candidates, loopholes and technicalities such as names and vote count in the primaries process now mean that there is an imperative need of strengthening the independence of the Independent Electoral Commission so that hers independence will no longer be only in its outlook but with all intent and purpose depicted in its nomenclature. This should broaden the power to monitor the structure and operation of parties in terms of membership recruitment, conduct of electoral primaries, background check candidates put forward by parties, party funding and party discipline.

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