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## The Implications of Intra-Party Conflicts on Nigeria'S Democratisation

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*Abstract-* Incessant intra-party conflicts which come in varying magnitudes and intensities have become the hallmark of party politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Some of these conflicts have led to the factionalisation of some major political parties and the consequence of decamping from one political party to the other by party members. Intra-party conflicts are engendered primarily because of the insatiable greed of the political elites for political power which creates the access for primitive accumulation of the commonwealth of the people. This negative trend in political parties has been having profound negative impact on the country's democratisation process, against the background that political parties are vehicles of representative democracy and a strong pillar for consolidating democratic governance. However, the ability of political parties to achieve this very important role is dependent on whether the relationship that exists between their members is harmonious or conflict ridden, owing to the fact that social groups exist by conflict and cooperation as it has been articulated in the theory of intra-group cooperation proposed in this paper. It is recommended therefore that political parties should ensure that they entrench internal democracy within their internal dynamics, especially with regards to selection of candidates for elections within and outside their parties. It is also obligatory on all members of political parties to subordinate themselves to their party constitution and not to the whims and caprices of power mongers in their parties. Finally, political parties should also orient their members to imbibe and exhibit values and ideals that would sustain the process of democratisation in Nigeria.

*Keywords:* conflict, cooperation, democratisation, internal democracy and intra-party conflict.

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# The Implications of Intra-Party Conflicts on Nigeria'S Democratisation

Momodu, A. Jude <sup>α</sup> & Matudi Gambo Ika <sup>σ</sup>

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**Keywords:** *conflict, cooperation, democratisation, internal democracy and intra-party conflict.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's experience with party politics dates back to the colonial time, and the contemporary incidences of intra and inter-party squabbles associated with party politics in the country is nothing but a throwback to the past which was replete with schisms, bickering, backbiting, intrigues, violence, packing and sacking (Olaniyan, 2009:52). This scenario is borne out of the fact that party politics is about contestation for political power between or among the political elites. Therefore, the notion of contestation, according to Landman (2005: 52), "captures the uncertain peaceful competition necessary for democratic rule, a principle which presumes the legitimacy of some opposition, the right to challenge the incumbents...the existence of free and fair elections and a consolidated party system".

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Essentially, the gamut of activities that take place in political parties make it needful for their members to articulate their common or divergent interests and this sometimes engenders intra or inter-party conflicts, which consequently create factionalisation within parties or some sort of intra-party conflict. As Harmel et. al. (1995:7) observes that "factions exist: 'factionalism is a fact of life within most political parties". Indeed, 'most parties in the world have wings or tendencies' (Chambers, 2008: 304), because factions hold different preferences and conflicting views about party platform (Debus and Brauning 2009). Consequently, "political parties are driven by the spirit of faction...factions are ubiquitous" (Heller 2008: 2). Ultimately, factionalisation creates the incentive for the political elites to align and re-align their political interests.

Nigeria's Fourth Republic (May 29, 1999 to date) has been characterised more by recurring intra and inter party conflicts resulting in factionalisation of the major political parties at the national, state and local government levels, than bequeathing a legacy of progress and development on the nation. As Olaniyan (2009:53) observes that the Fourth Republic has "recorded bitter and acrimonious struggles within parties as well as violent inter-party (and intra-party) relations". The ubiquity of intra and inter political party conflicts in the country's democratic system can be attributed to the mindset and perception that politics is the most lucrative industry in the country. This perception is exacerbated by the increasing culture of impunity and flagrant disregard to the rule of law exhibited by the Nigerian political elites. Unfortunately, political parties have become veritable platforms for the political elites to capture power through elections that are often marred by fraud and other forms of malpractices. This is because the occupancy of political power gives the political elites the direct access to primitive accumulation of public wealth for their selfish gains and this has heightened the desperation for the acquisition of political power among the political elites. Nna-Emeka (2006) also corroborates this line of argument that politics in Nigeria is often "conceived as a big investment to be pursued with deadly seriousness". Tragically, O'Donnell (2004) has affirmed that "many new democracies have successfully installed competitive electoral regimes but their elites are corrupt and lack a commitment to the rule of law that is needed

to enforce the civic freedoms that define democracy." By and large, the intense struggle for political power among the political elites has often fuelled intra and inter-party conflicts thereby creating ominous trajectories for the process of democratisation in the Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Nevertheless, within the frameworks of the internal dynamics of political parties in Nigeria, the elites have always ensured that they strike a balance in resolving their incompatible interests whether by forming coalitions or cooperating to embrace the spirit of give and take in sharing or allocating political positions. As Maor (1997) observes "intra-party politics is a matter of conflict and cooperation with factions looking for equilibrium between the two". This is also necessitated by the fact that "party unity in fact enhances party strength in the electoral arena (e.g., McGann 2002; Snyder and Ting 2002). The incentives for parties to present a unified front in the wider political arena are strong' (Heller 2008: 2), primarily because "all group members benefit if the group acts collectively in defense of its shared interests, but even moderately sensible members might hesitate before joining a possibly fatal fray" (Gould, 1999: 359) and all political actors care, to some extent, about policy, office and votes (Muller and Strom 1999).

From the foregoing analysis, some very pertinent posers can be raised such as: Does intra-party conflict pose any threat to Nigeria's contemporary faltering democratization? If it really does, to what extent does it affect democratisation process in the country? This paper therefore strives to find answers to these posers. In addition, this paper will also focus upon examining the implications of intra-party conflicts on the process of democratisation in Nigeria.

## II. TOWARDS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*Intra-Group Cooperation Theory:* The authors of this paper propose a theory of intra-group cooperation. The central thesis of this theory is that social groups exist through conflict and cooperation and this is because they are formed by association of individuals with divergent interests who agree to subsume their interests in the common interest of the group they belong to. As members of a group interact together, there emerge power relations in the internal dynamics of the group, which may polarise the group into two power blocs namely; the privileged and the less privileged power blocs. These power blocs compete for the control of the decision making machinery of the group with the aim of influencing the decisions of the group to their favour. This competitive relationship between the power blocs sometimes creates a communication dilemma within the group. Interestingly, the aspirations which bind the group members together ultimately creates the incentive for the privileged and the less privileged power blocs to strike a balance by cooperating to integrate

their incompatible interests in the larger group's interest so as to promote its corporate objectives. In order words, both power blocs break up in order to integrate their divergent opinions into the group's corporate objectives. This is why for instance, political parties are seen as organised groups of people working together to compete for political power so as to promote agreed-upon policies.

The above positions are toed by Alexander, Chizhik, Chizhik, and Goodman (2009), when they observed in their article that, "early on in the formation of groups, hierarchies of power and prestige become readily apparent. Such inequalities develop even in groups where members are of equal status at the outset of group interaction". Hierarchy within groups is not simply a status ordering of individuals; it often involves coalitions of group members (subgroups) and represents power differentials among these subgroups. Alexander et al. (2009) also reports that "once hierarchies of power and prestige are set into place, research suggests that they are viewed as legitimate and highly resistant to change...valid and helpful suggestions from low-status members are likely to be ignored, devalued, or discounted". However, members of disadvantaged group may challenge the imbalance so as to improve their group's position. The rivalry between the advantaged and disadvantaged groups within the larger group is often resolved by reaching of a compromise that would ensure that the interests of the two parties are integrated and articulated as the policy or position of the group. Framing the conflict as a step-level game (Pruitt &Rubin, 1986) has clear advantages from the perspective of the group, as it makes it rational for group members to contribute when they believe this is critical for their group's success (Kerr, 1992).

Similarly, realistic group conflict theory (LeVine & Campbell, 1972) posits that group members are driven by their desire to possess and maintain control over valued resources. Therefore, the disadvantaged group will compete to gain resources and status, whereas the advantaged group will act against any threat to their resources. However, far-reaching cross-cultural evidence demonstrates that such power disparities between subgroups are characteristic of human societies, regardless of their era, culture, or form of government (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In their article, Chizhik, Shelly, and Troyer (2009) posits that "conventionally, cooperation has been seen as adaptive in group problem solving, while conflict has been seen as maladaptive". King et al. (2009) also suggest that cooperation and conflict are best viewed as "processes" rather than outcomes and these processes make complementary contributions to group function and development.

Insko and Schopler found that group decisions were highly competitive—much more so than individual decisions under the same conditions. Insko and

Schopler (1987) offered two explanations for the observed competitiveness of groups. The "schema-based distrust" hypothesis explains group competitiveness in terms of fear. It postulates that group members compete because they expect the out-group to behave competitively and want to defend themselves against the possibility of being exploited. However, inability to channel competition within group to benefit all the group members may be counterproductive to the group interests. As Alexander et al. (2009:367) concludes, "Groups run the risk of losing out on valuable inputs and perspectives when the contributions of lower-status members are devalued or ignored. When group members fail to offer or consider unique information, group performance and decision quality are prone to suffer".

Research has however shown that "all group members benefit if the group acts collectively in defense of its shared interests, but even moderately sensible members might hesitate before joining a possibly fatal fray" (Gould, 1999 359). The issue of interest is typically not how groups overcome internal obstacles to collective action but rather why members of distinct social groups see their interests as conflicting in the first place....The transition from group interest to group action is often treated either implicitly as unproblematic, or explicitly as a function of response to conflict (Gould, 1999). The theory of intra-group cooperation proposed in this paper is therefore plausible for explaining why despite the power relations which exist within political parties and the varied interests usually pursued by party members which sometimes threaten the survival of the group; the party members still try to close ranks by integrating their incompatible interests in the larger interest of the party so as to forge a common and united front to articulate the corporate objectives of the party.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL EXPLORATIONS

*Conflict:* There is no consensus on the precise definition of conflict (Thomas, 1992b) and, according to Pruitt (1998); there are almost as many definitions of conflict as there are authors writing about this concept. Notwithstanding the multiplicity of the definitions of the concept of conflict, we shall be examining a few definitions of the concept in this segment. Rubin, et. al. (1994) defines conflict "as a perceived divergence of interests or beliefs that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously. It can manifest itself in many forms, some of which may be violent and inflict pain and suffering on both parties in conflict and to other people who may not be directly involved, due to its spillover effect". Wolff (2006:2) also observes that "conflict is a situation in which two or more actors pursue incompatible, yet from their individual perspectives entirely just goals". Conflict "is a process

that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affects, something that the first party cares about" (Robbins, 1998). The aim of every party in a conflict situation is to achieve values or goals dear to it. Hence, each of the party in conflict employ moves and counter-moves to displace each other as they both struggle to achieve the valued resources, which is/are the object/s of contention.

Furthermore, conflict occurs when individuals or groups are entangled in the pursuit of incompatible goals. However, conflict has the potential to assume functional or dysfunctional outcomes, depending on how the parties in a conflict perceive the conflict and respond to it. On one hand, if the perception of the parties to conflict is positive, then their response to the conflict would be constructive and positive - vice versa. Functional conflicts engender creativity, positive growth and development, mutual understanding and healthy relationship between individuals and groups. According to Tjosvold (1997), 'conflict may be perceived as inevitable in successful organizations', because conflicts serve as a mechanism for engineering social relationship in groups and organisations for positive growth and increased productivity. While on the other hand, dysfunctional conflicts causes disunity, hinder progress and development, affect decision making, create animosity and hatred between individuals and within or between groups.

For the purpose of this paper, it is important that an attempt is made to define intra-party conflict. From a political view point, Kenneth Boulding (1963: 5) defines conflict "as a situation of competition in which the parties are aware of the incompatibility of potential future positions and in which each party wishes to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of the other". This definition vividly describes the nature of intra-party conflict. but it is still necessary to ask, what is 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.

Political party as a social group cannot avoid conflict because where ever people come together to associate even when they do so to pursue common interest, tendencies are that members of such group would pursue their personal interests rather than the group's interest. However, what is important is that the group members' interests should be subordinated to the larger interest of the group. As Dudley (1973:8) argues that "one basic characteristic common to all human organization is the interaction and interdependence among their members." Usually, political parties try to

aggregate the varying interests of their members and articulate a unified front for achieving party's objectives.

Boucek (2009) identifies 'three types of intra-party conflicts or factionalism, which include cooperative, competitive and degenerative.' Looking at the nature of all the three, cooperative factionalisation is most preferable because it creates the incentive for the constructive resolution of conflicts between party members. As Boucek (2003) argue that 'repeated interactions between factions foster the emergence of cooperative norms', which may create the incentive for the parties in conflict to embrace compromise in settling their incompatible interests.

#### IV. FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTY

A political party refers to "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" (Lemay, 2001). Political parties provide a veritable platform for conveying representation into elective offices in democratic systems. Essentially, political parties perform various functions in ensuring the growth and continuity of the democratisation process. According to a research conducted by The Friedrich Ebert Foundation Centre for Governance and Development (CGD) on institutionalizing political parties in Kenya published in (2010), political parties are the vehicles of representative democracy. They play several critical roles to make representative democracy a reality. These include:

- Representing societal interests within the state (by participating in Parliament);
- Socializing political leaders on the principles of democracy and democratic participation;
- Carrying out political education and communication (by providing information on which the voters may base their selection of candidates before them);
- Carrying out political mobilization and encouraging the public to cast their votes in elections;
- Recruiting political leaders;
- Aggregating and articulating interests;
- Promoting pluralistic debates by presenting alternative policy platforms; and
- Integrating the diverse groups within a country into a cohesive nation. In the same vein, the various functions of political parties are:
  - Aggregate and articulate needs and problems as identified by members and supporters;
  - Socialise and educate voters and citizens in the functioning of political parties and electoral system and generating general political values;
  - Balance opposing demands and convert them into general policies;
  - Activate and mobilise citizens into participating in political decisions and transforming their opinions into viable policy options;

- Channel public opinion from citizens to government; and
- Recruit and train candidates for public office. (Ace Electoral Knowledge Network, <http://aceproject.org>)

Furthermore, Almond (2000) argues that political parties have two major, but multifaceted, functions in any democracy, these are variables according to him are anchored on Input-Output functional variables and the historical method that provides a perspective background for discerning party politics vis-à-vis the problems associated with political instability in the Nigerian State (Omodia, 2010). Almond's Input-Output functions constitute seven functional variables which could be classified thus:

##### a) *Input Functions*

1. Political socialization and Recruitment – This refers to the introduction of individual citizens into different roles in the political system, as well as selecting them for membership in the organisation.
2. Interest Articulation – It refers to the process through which demands are injected into the political system.
3. Interest Aggregation – It involves the formulation of policies in which group interest are combined, accommodated and more or less committed to a particular pattern of public policy.
4. Political Communication – It is the channel through which political information is transmitted among the different groups and between the governed and their rulers and vice versa.

##### b) *Output Functions*

1. Rule Making – This is the process through which laws are made. In a democracy, the legislature is basically charged with this function.
2. Rule Application – This involve the process of implementing laws and governmental policies. This function falls within the Executive Arm of government.
3. Rule Adjudication – This function lies within the province of the judiciary in the sense that the institution performs the basic function of interpreting laws that guide persons and institutions of the state.

Generally, political Parties serve as an index through which democratic governance could be compared in States, in that, the structure and operation of party politics in polities tend to serve as measuring rod for determining the fragility or otherwise of democratic systems (Omodia 2010). These numerous functions performed by political parties in the democratic system make them vibrant and indispensable players in the democratisation process.

## V. THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRATISATION

The concept of democratisation refers to a conscious, deliberate and committed attempt at entrenching enduring democratic values and ideals in political actors and the entire citizenry with a view to ensuring the continuity and sustainability of a democratic system. It can also be referred to as the process of engineering the behaviours and attitudes of the political actors and citizenry towards imbibing positive democratic ideals and values required for building and sustaining a democratic system. Such ideals and values include adhering to the tenets of the rule of law, equality, citizens' participation in democratic activities, respect for the rights of all including the rights of the majority and minority groups, tolerance for one another and creation of equal opportunities for all citizens among others. Democratisation is a gradual process of political growth often synonymous to emerging democracies that needs to imbibe and attain genuine democratic ideals and values necessary for building enduring democratic system.

More explicitly, Gunther et al. (1995) posits that the 'democratization process has three phases: the fall of the authoritarian regime, consolidation, and enduring democracy.' By these phases, it shows that democratisation is a gradual and developmental process. Grunther et al. (1995) also noted that "political party development and multiparty dialogue are necessary steps towards the creation of a stable, democratic political system that can be conducive to development, the protection of human rights and peaceful conflict prevention". Although it may take time for the positive effects of democratisation to manifest due to the fact that democratisation is a gradual and developmental process that requires a major ingredient like political parties to grow. As Dahrendorf (1990) observe that democratisation takes different amounts of time to accomplish different tasks: for instance, it has been observed that it takes a new democracy six months to complete the formal process of constitutional reform; at least six years to stimulate a general sense that things are moving up as a result of economic reform; and over sixty years to provide the social foundations which transform the constitution and the economy from fair-weather institutions to all-weather institutions which can withstand the storms generated within and without. Others believe that at least 20 years of democratic experience may be required for an egalitarian effect to be noticeable (Muller, 1988).

While we agree with the argument that democratisation process is developmental in nature and therefore requires some time to be nurtured, we would also like to argue that it is very necessary that emerging democracies should set some standards or parameters to really measure or determine whether the ideals and values of democracy, which are key ingredients of

democratisation are being entrenched in their democratic systems. We would therefore like to suggest the following questions, which if answered correctly could assist emerging democracies like Nigeria and others in appraising whether their democratisation process is making appreciable success in terms of entrenching democratic values and ideals in the political players and the electorates at large or not. These questions are as follow:

- Is the polity or democratic system witnessing increasing level of adherence to the rule of law by the political players and the citizenry?
- Is the electoral process open, accessible, free and fair?
- To what extent are the masses or citizens willing to participate in the democratic process?
- Are the public officers' accountable and transparent?
- To what extent do the citizens trust their elected officials?
- Do the electorates have trust on the political parties?
- To what extent are the policies of the government responsive to the needs and yearnings of the citizens?
- Are the political parties ideologically driven? and
- What is the degree of commitment of both the political leadership and citizens to the survival of the democratic system?

Predictably, if the above questions can be correctly answered by the countries under democratisation, then they would be able to determine whether they are really growing at an appreciable level of democratisation and if they are not growing appreciably, they would know the areas that would need to be addressed so as to be able to grow appreciably.

Political parties are essential institutions that drive the democratisation process. As Schattschneider (1942:1) famously asserted more than half a century ago, that political parties created democracy and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the political parties. Political parties are also widely seen as a sine qua non for the organization of the modern democratic polity and for the expression of political pluralism (Dode 2010). The affirmation of the centrality of political parties in modern democracy is generally accepted both by contemporary scholars as well as policymakers charged with fostering the development of newly emerging democracies and those saddled with the task of improving the quality of democracy in established democratic polities (Biezen 2004). This analysis therefore underscores the crucial role that political parties play in the democratisation process as it provides the channel for changing of government and continuity of the democratic system through periodic elections. This is so because democratic stability cannot be super-imposed or predicated on a shaky, unstable

and unpredictable crises-ridden social and political environment (Ogundiya, 2005:381).

## VI. CAUSES OF INTRA-PARTY CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA

Several factors can be posited as causes of intra-party conflicts in democratic systems. For instance, Shale and Matlosa (2008: 13) identifies the causes of intra-party conflict to be:

- Favouritism – promoting one's kith and kin;
- Unequal sharing of resources (leader's constituency gets a lion's share);
- Lack of regular meetings; and
- Centralized authority – power concentrated at the top.
- For Rubin et al. (1994), intra party conflict is triggered by factors such as:
  - i. Favouritism – promoting one's kith and kin;
  - ii. Unequal sharing of resources: (leader's constituency gets lion's share)
  - iii. Centralize authority: Power concentrated at the top.

In Nigeria for example, democratic process no doubt has been bedeviled by poor party politics as a result of not only ethnicization of party politics, poor political leadership, excessive westernization of the concept 'democracy', party indiscipline, lack of clear cut party ideologies, the politicization of the higher echelon of the military profession among others but also and more worrisomely, lack of internal party democracy (Ntalaja 2000). Similarly, Azazi (2012) has identified the zoning arrangement in the Peoples' Democratic Party, (which is the ruling party in Nigeria since the return to democracy in May, 1999) as one of the reasons for the rising level of insecurity in the entire country (The Punch April 28, 2012). One can therefore posit 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 to be in power is to control state resources that are often converted to personal use" (Edoh, 2002). This probably implies that the acquisition of political power is not an end in itself, but only a means to an end and the ultimate end of course is economic power and the primitive accumulation of public wealth for personal use by the political elites.

Generally, our study reveals that there are many factors that cause conflicts within political parties in Nigeria, which 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 brinkmanship. Two out of the above-mentioned factors are very fundamental to triggering off intra-party conflicts in Nigeria. These are paucity of ideology and absence of internal democracy.

Both factors are mutually reinforcing and each affects the other, in other words, if a political party is ideologically based, this would naturally bring about discipline and internal democracy in the party. These factors are fully discussed below:

### a) *Paucity of Political Ideology*

Political ideology refers to the programmes and activities that a political party is committed to implementing when voted into office. Morse (1896:76) perceives ideology as being the durable convictions held in common by party members in respect to the most desirable form, institutions, spirit and course of action of the state, which determines the natural attitude of a party towards every public question (cf. Iyare, 2004:81). In the same vein, Strickler and Davies (1996:1025) argue that "ideology functions as planks", that is, single issue statements within the platform, the exact ideological orientation of which is often used as a bargaining chip in seeking party unity." Entrenchment of ideology in political parties gives them a sense of responsibility and commitment towards implementing the programmes and manifestoes they have articulated during their campaigns and the extent to which they are achieved while in the government, forms the basis upon which the electorates can assess the performances of elected officials' vis-à-vis their party ideology.

It behooves therefore that political parties must be able to connect their ideologies with the needs and yearnings of the citizenry and ensure that they are efficiently addressed. This is so because 'an ideology without a connection to the needs and yearnings of the masses is a fantasy.' It is only when this is done that political parties can claim to be ideologically based and the electorates can perceive them to be synonymous to the ideologies they so represent. It is important therefore to note that "at the very heart of the success or otherwise of a political party is the important question of political ideology" (Omotola, 2009), as research findings have indicated that political parties in all political systems attempt to build linkages to voters, try to develop mechanisms for representation and aspire to articulate a more or less coherent ideological profile (Kitschelt, 1995 & Kitschelt et al., 1999).

In Nigeria for instance, the major problem with political parties is that they lack political ideology. This is attributable to the fact that the political players and the electorates have very limited knowledge and understanding of the true meaning of political ideology and its usefulness in shaping the political culture and programmes of political parties. Perhaps, this is the reason why politics is largely perceived as the most lucrative industry in Nigeria because it guarantees opportunity for primitive accumulation of public wealth. This, in part, explains the reason why political parties in Nigeria are run like clientelist ventures, which are devoid of political ideologies. The inability of some political

elites to capture power in one political party; would immediately make them to dump the party for another party. Indeed, most and if not all the politicians in Nigeria are political prostitutes. Unarguably, a principled and focused political party is supposed to be driven by ideology. This is because ideology is the force that fires the spirit which controls the actions and programmes of political parties. It is also central to the existence of political parties to the extent that the lack of it predisposes political parties to internal squabbles, lack of sense of direction and makes them to be mere platforms for actualising personal interests of the few.

This promiscuous character of the Nigerian political elites is attributable to the fact that all the political parties in the country lack ideological beliefs, hence Simbine (2004) has pointed out this problem, that "political aspirants cross carpet from one party to another for the flimsiest and selfish reasons to satisfy their ambitions – a practice that has resulted in both inter and intra-party crises in the country". Thus, an African looks more at democracy in economic terms than political ideology (Saliu, 1999:199). This also explains the reason why most political parties in Nigeria are just mere platforms for the elites to ascend to power and wealth. Indeed, scholars such as Gallagher and Marsh (1988) and Mainwaring and Shugart (1997) have argued that the methods which a party employs in candidate selections and nominations have incontrovertible implications on those selected or elected and indeed how they behave in either party or public office.

#### *b) Absence of Internal Democracy*

According to Scarrow (2004), internal democracy describes a wide range of methods for including party members in intra-party deliberation and decision-making. Internal democracy articulates the basic tenets of democracy within political parties and the extent to which political parties subscribes to the basic democratic values within their internal structures, in terms of selection of candidates for elective positions, discipline of erring members, conduct of party congresses as well as the general conduct of all the party members. Intra-party democracy according to Gosnell (1968) is that which "provides necessary vertical linkages between different deliberating spheres and horizontal linkage between competing issues." Internal democracy also refers to the creation of a permissible climate within a political party which guarantees the participation of all party members in decision making as well as the general administration of the party. Such a climate fosters active involvement of every party member and not a few powerful rich.

The aim of internal democracy in political parties is basically to create a level playing-field for the active participation of every member in the party affairs and to build a cohesive party that is vibrant enough to

win elections and as such provide a strong government committed to quality service delivery that will meet the needs and yearnings of the citizens. This vibrant role of internal democracy is affirmed by Scarrow (2005), thus "internal democracy describes a wide range of methods for including party members in intra-party deliberation and decision-making." Toeing the same line Omotola (2010: 125-145) affirms that parties' decision making structures and processes should provide opportunities for individual citizens to influence the choices that parties offer to voters".

More importantly, internal democracy is most required in the selection of candidates for elective positions both within and outside elections, as it has been observed that what normally causes factionalisation or conflicts in most political parties is the issue of selection of candidates through party primaries for elective positions in the general elections. It is imperative therefore that each political party should create a level playing field for every party member that is interested in running for any elective office both within and outside the party. The importance of this is to keep the party united as well as throw-up credible and popular candidates that would guarantee the chances of the party in winning elections. Political parties that are inclusive in their decision making process enjoy active participation of their members in their affairs. As Scarrow (2005) opines that in the most inclusive parties, all party members, or even all party supporters, are given the opportunity to decide on important issues, such as the choice of party leader or the selection of party candidates. Due to the fact that inclusiveness is a matter of process and formal rule, more inclusive parties will offer more opportunities for open deliberation prior to the decision stage.

However, the absence of internal democracy in political parties in Nigeria has often created a scenario where some powerful elites in political parties would want to foist their own selfish ideas or in some cases their candidates or their candidatures on their party. As Metuh (2010) points out clearly that "one thing I have noticed in States where there are crisis, is that the governors don't want to let go their grips on the party structures and other stalwarts insist that there must be separation of party from government. The governors fund the party but I don't subscribe to it that the governors should run the party. The party should be the conscience of the people, the party should be able to control the governor and say, you haven't done enough roads, you haven't done this and that. But it isn't happening especially where the legislature isn't acting as checks and balances on the Executive abuse of power. It is only the party that can do that, but the party isn't doing that".

Interference of the political leaders, especially those in the executive in the internal affairs of political parties has been possible because they control the



resources of the state and in most cases they are the major financiers of political parties in most emerging democracies. As the saying goes "he who pays the piper dictates its tune". The power elites therefore use their money or political power to control and influence party decisions to their advantage. In some instances, they create factions and instability in political parties, especially when they find it difficult to influence party decisions. As Ceron (2010) argues that factions do matter indirectly, due to their influence on party strategy, and directly, through the impact on the whole party system whenever they decide not to follow the line (splitting during roll call votes or building a new rival party before the electoral campaign). Consequently, the struggle for political power fuels intra or inter-party conflicts which undermine the process of democratisation in Nigerian.

## VII. METHODOLOGY

This study is survey research. The population of the study covers the members of the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), bureaucrats, politicians and members of the public. A sample of 100 subjects were randomly chosen from the population, comprising 40 card carrying members of the PDP, 30 electorates and 30 civil servants. The subjects were accidentally selected at various locations such as: State House of Assembly Complex, State Civil Service Secretariat, Governor's Office complex and the two universities all in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Questionnaire was constructed as appropriate survey instrument. The data obtained through an open-ended questionnaire was analysed using simple percentage and extraction of relevant data for analysis.

## VIII. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The following demographic data were obtained.

*Table 1 : Demographic Data*

Age		Education		Social Status		Sex	
Range	Frequency	Qualification	Frequency	Category	Frequency	Sex	F.
20-30	19 (19.0%)	Postgraduate	11 (11.0%)	Card carrying members of political party	40 (40.0%)	M	62 (62.0%)
31-40	31 (31.0%)	BSc./HND	30 (30.0%)	Electorates	30 (30.0%)	F	38 (38.0%)
41-50	29 (29.0%)	Diploma/OND	35 (35.0%)	Civil Servants	30 (30.0%)		
51-60	17 (17.0%)	School Cert.,	16 (16.0%)	-	-		
60 and above	4 (4.0%)	Others	8 (8.0%)	-	-		
Total:	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Source : Field survey, 2013.*

In the demographic data, 19 (19.0%) respondents were between the ages of 20-30, 29 (29.0%) respondents are between the age bracket of (31-40), 31 (31.0%) respondents are in the age bracket of (41-50), 17 (17.0%) respondents are in the age bracket of (51-60) and 4 (4.0%) respondents are in the age bracket of (61 and above). This indicates that politically active people concerned with political party affairs were mostly between the ages of 31–40 years, while interests in party affairs are found to be on the decline among those within the age category of 60 and above years with 4 members. Those with the highest educational qualifications are Diploma/OND holders while the lowest educational qualifications are those with other qualifications lower than school certificate. The social statuses include forty (40) each for card carrying members of political party, thirty (30) each for the electorates and Civil servant. Finally, males have the largest number with sixty two (62) and females are thirty eight (38).

*RQ 1 : What are the causes of intra-party conflicts in Nigeria?*

In determining the causes of intra-party conflicts in Nigeria with an open-ended question, which states thus: "What do you consider to be the causes of intra-party conflict in Nigeria?" Only 74, representing (74%) of the respondents responded to the questions out of 100. Twenty six (26) respondents left the answer space blank, which represent (26%). The following causes of intra-party conflicts in Nigeria were extracted:

- God-fatherism,
- Lack of internal democracy,
- Imposition of candidates,
- Non-inclusive decision making,
- Non-compliance of members to the party's constitution,
- Injustice and oppression within the party,
- Power or leadership tussle between or among members of a political party,

- Conflict of interests between or among members of a party,
- Materialism and aggrandizement,
- Interference of the political leadership of the executive arm of government in the affairs of political party,
- Bad leadership of political parties,
- Non-inclusion of members in the affairs of party,
- Concealment of vital information to party members, and
- Corruption among leaders of political parties.

*RQ 2*: What are the effects of intra-party conflicts on the process of democratisation in Nigeria?

In determining the effects of intra-party conflicts on the process of democratisation in Nigeria with an open-ended question, which states thus: "What do you consider to be the effects of intra-party conflicts on the process of democratisation in Nigeria?" Only 69, representing (69%) of the respondents responded to the questions out of 100. Thirty one (31) respondents left the answer space blank, which represent (31%). The following effects of intra-party conflicts on the process of democratisation in Nigeria were extracted:

- Decamping of aggrieved members to other political parties,
- Distrust among members of political parties,
- Animosity and factionalisation of party members,
- Indiscipline among party members,
- Creates credibility problem and bad image for political parties,
- Creates the opportunity for opposition political party to criticize and factionalize the party in conflict,
- Results in waste of time and resources,
- Leads to divided loyalty among party members,
- Creates discontent among party members,
- Leads to breakdown of party activities,
- Creates instability in the party. and
- Over heating of the polity.

## IX. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the foregoing discussions and analysis, the findings generated in this study are discussed below:

### a) *Causes of Intra-party Conflicts in Nigeria*

The study for example found out that the causes of intra-party conflicts in Nigeria include: lack of internal democracy, god-fatherism, imposition of candidates, non-compliance of members to the party's constitution, injustice and oppression within the party, power or leadership tussle between or among members of political party, conflict of interests between or among members of party, desperation for materialism/aggrandizement, interference of the political leadership of the executive arm of government in the affairs of

political party, bad leadership of political parties, non-inclusion of members in the affairs of political parties, concealment of vital information to party members and corruption among leaders of political parties. On the whole, these factors have profound negative implications on the stability of political parties as well as the democratisation process in Nigeria. Therefore, these findings are in consonance with the observation of Ntalaja (2000) that party politics in Nigeria is bedeviled by factors such as poor party politics as a result of not only ethnicization of party politics, poor political leadership, excessive westernization of the concept of democracy, party indiscipline, lack of clear cut party ideologies, the politicization of the higher echelon of the military profession among others but also and worrisomely, lack of internal party democracy. This is why Maor (1997) argues that "intra-party politics is a matter of conflict and cooperation with factions looking for equilibrium between the two". The struggle for incompatible interests within members of political parties is normally engendered by what Riker (1980) noted as any type of institution that has an asymmetrical impact on political outcomes will be unstable, as actors will seek to modify it to suit their interests.

Similarly, Shale and Matlosa (2008:13) identifies the causes of intra-party conflict to include: favouritism – promoting one's kith and kin; unequal sharing of resources (leader's constituency gets a lion's share); lack of regular meetings; centralized authority – power concentrated at the top. Olaifa (2011) also identifies the following as causes of intra-party conflict in Nigeria: poverty of party ideology; candidate selection; party funding; zoning formula; primaries and party unity and party executive arrogance. Generally, intra-party conflict fractures party's cohesion and create instability in political parties and by extension in the democratic process. Cohesion and a constructive relationship among members of a political party are very critical factors for building a strong, committed and united party. The veracity of this statement is confirmed by Ogundimu (2010) in his argument that "for any party to brace up for election, it must not go into the election as a divided house." This is because a divided and conflict ridden party would never be able to mobilise its members to deliver in political contest.

### b) *Implications of Intra-party Conflicts on Nigeria's Democratisation*

The study also found out the implications of intra-party conflicts on Nigeria's democratisation to include the following: decamping of aggrieved members to other political parties, distrust among members of political parties, animosity and factionalisation of party members, indiscipline among party members, credibility problem and bad image for political parties, opportunity for opposition political party to criticize and factionalize the party in conflict, waste of time and resources,

divided loyalty among party members, discontent among party members, breakdown of party activities, instability in the party and over-heating the polity.

Conflict prone political parties are likely to be unstable and this can threaten democratisation process. As Kellman (2004:13) observes concerning political parties, that 'while it is recognised that they can be crucial in the promotion of democracy, they can equally be a hindrance to its attainment as well'...true democracy has little chance of surviving'. Consequently, intra-party conflicts undermine the capacity of political parties to perform their key role of fostering democratic governance and ensuring that they are responsive to societal needs. Inability of political parties to perform this role would mean that "the whole democratic experiment can disintegrate" (Kellman 2004: 14–15). For instance, research findings have indicated that party conflicts, lawlessness and the devastating influence of godfatherism have continued to pose serious challenges to the sustenance of the country's democracy (Ogundiya and Baba, 2005).

Research findings have also indicated the centrality of political parties to both democratization and democratic consolidation (see Mohamed Salih, 2003 & Kadima, Matlosa and Shale 2006). Political parties are major players in the electoral process as they educate, mobilise and organise their members to participate in the political process, "they are teams composed by a variety of players that coordinate themselves to solve collective action dilemmas and coordination problems" (Aldrich, 1995 & Cox and McCubbins, 1993). Therefore, political parties are well structured to perform articulative, aggregative, communicative and educative functions; such a system is often associated with participant political culture which tends to ensure a stable democratic process (Almond 2010).

## X. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The central thesis of this paper is that intra-party conflicts have been having its toll on Nigeria's faltering democratisation. This is occasioned by the fact that politics in Nigeria is conceived in pseudo terms to the extent that it is reduced to a mere investment making machine by the political class. For democracy to deepen in Nigeria, this negative misconception of politics as a means of acquiring wealth must be changed to a positive conception of politics as an art and science of delivering public good which tends towards improving the quality of life for the citizenry and not about satisfying the greed of a few privileged class of individuals. This political re-engineering process can be achieved through the organisation of deliberate and aggressive value reorientation programmes for members of political parties, other stakeholders in the political system as well as the electorates. Importantly, the gamut of activities that take place in political parties

makes it possible for their members to articulate their common or divergent interests and this sometimes engenders intra or inter-party conflicts, which consequently creates factionalisation within parties or some sort of intra-party conflict. This study therefore established that intra-party conflicts have profound negative implications on the process of democratisation as it is currently playing out in Nigeria.

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

## XI. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings generated in this study, the following policy recommendations are proposed with a view to ensuring that political parties become effective institutions that would promote the democratisation process in Nigeria.

- a. Political parties must entrench internal democracy within their internal structure and workings, especially in the selection of candidates within the party and for the general elections.
- b. Members of political parties should subordinate themselves to their party constitution.
- c. Political parties must evolve political ideologies and their activities must be guided by the ideologies they so represent.
- d. Political parties should organise regular capacity building programmes to orient their members to imbibe and exhibit values and ideals that would sustain the process of democratisation in Nigeria.
- e. The conduct of elections in political parties should be free and fair so as throw up credible candidates.
- f. Personal interests of party members should be subordinated to the larger interest of the political party.

- g. Members of political parties should be treated with equity and fairness through the creation of a level playing-field for the active participation of all their members.
- h. Political parties should ensure that they instill discipline in their members by enforcing the party constitution on every member.
- i. Political parties must endeavour to be inclusive in their decision making process.
- j. Political parties should employ dialogue in resolving conflicts between its members.

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