

The Implications of Party Leadership Crises on Nigerian Democracy: A Comparative Analysis of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC)

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The Implications of Party Leadership Crises on Nigerian Democracy: A Comparative Analysis of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC)

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Abstract

Political parties are the engine wheel and the machinery on which the vehicle of democracy thrives. Democracies require sound parties with focused leadership and a clear ideology for national development on the assumption of power. In Nigeria, the two dominant ruling parties of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) which ruled for sixteen years and the All Progressives Congress (APC) which is currently in its fifth year of ruling are pre-occupied with internal leadership crises which collapsed the former and are threatening to tear the latter today. The inability of the country's political leaders to establish parties with a dedicated and pragmatic party leadership is affecting the democratic governance in the country despite having the experience of the longest experiment in the history of the country. The research utilised both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources of data consist of an in-depth personal interview with some selected stakeholders in the subject matter study and direct participant observation. The secondary sources are documented materials such as books, journals, internet sources and other related documents. A suitable framework; Game Theory was adopted to support the views presented in the work. The data obtained were discussed, analysed and interpreted using thematic content analysis and statistical modules. The work discovered that the leadership crises in the two dominant parties in Nigeria are affecting democratic delivery and good governance because of the power tussle. The work recommends among others that the parties must develop a culture of internal democracy and ideological focus with a frame for national interest and development.

Keywords: All Progressives Congress; Democracy; Leadership Crisis; Nigeria; Parties; Peoples Democratic Party

Introduction

Political parties sustain democracy and embellish good governance in many countries. They serve as the engine wheel in which the machinery of democratic government moves its train of governance for the progress and development of any state (Agbaje, 2008). Political parties play the role of political awareness, leadership recruitment, opposition, policy agenda setting and execution, when in power, and community development services (Norris, 2005). For political parties to undertake such a giant task, it must be organised, coordinated, sustained and designed with some uncompromising values and ethics that will foster cooperation and unity of the members even in the time of conflict of interest (Duverger, 1963). Ideology and principles are two fundamentals that will guarantee the organisation, coordination and sustainability of parties in democracies (Duverger, 1966).

There are different views on what parties are and what their aim should be. Many scholars (Diamond & Gunther, 2001; Gunther, Montero & Linz, 2002; Biezen, 2003; Scarrow, 2005; Luther & Deschouwer, 2005; Deonandan, Close & Prevost; Karz, 2007; Gauja, 2010; Dalton, Farrell & MacAllister, 2011; Speijcken, 2011 and Cross, Kenig, Pruyzers & Rahat, 2016) argue that parties should represent the will and ideology of the like-minds in the pursuance of power for initiating policies and implementing them if power is successfully captured. Besides, parties should play the role of harmonisation of conflictual interests of the members while at the same time serving as torchbearers to the public in terms of mobilisation, recruitment, provision of a platform for representation and support base for civic voter education and participation in the process of government especially decision-making.

There are sharp arguments (Salih, 2000; Salih, 2003; Lindberg, 2006; Salih & Nordlund, 2007; Sagar, 2009; Yadav, 2011; Elischer, 2013; Michalik, 2013 and Schofield & Callabero, 2015; Tyulkina, 2015 and Wulff, 2017) on the nature, origin, role and structure of African political parties. This is anchored on the threshold of whether parties in Africa are possessing a sound ideology and principle, and whether they are performing a role of parties that are obtained in other parts of the world. Most of the strong arguments from the above scholars perceived that parties in Africa are disjointed, disorganised, uncoordinated and unable to situate themselves towards genuine democratisation and good governance due to the legacies of colonialism and the hijack of the states by the authoritarian leadership after political independence. Since democracy cannot flourish successfully without the support of active parties, then there is a problem that must be addressed in African democracies.

Nigerian political parties are a reflection of a narrower version of African parties as observed above (Adejumobi, 2010). The vicissitudes of historical antecedents of Nigeria revealed a fragmented political structure and a party system that failed to institutionalise the process of government

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