



The Crises of Internal Party Democracy of Political Parties In Nigeria: The November 18, 2017 Anambra State Governorship Election Experience

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ABSTRACT

Historically, there was nothing like Party Primaries, Convention or Congress (internal democracy) during and after our struggle for independence in Nigeria. All that we had were Party caucuses and party personalities, however, our past leaders emerged through these systems. The internal democracy of Political Parties took place first in 1999 Convention of PDP held in Jos that produce the Former President Olusegun Obasanjo as the Presidential flag bearer of the Party while All Peoples Party (APP) had its own convention in February at Kaduna. This was how the internal democracy of the parties apart from the legal provision in the constitution that it is the internal responsibilities of the Parties to elect their candidates, was introduced from National, State and Local Government levels. However parties face both external and internal pressures that affect their decisions about candidate nomination. External pressures that bear on parties include how they will be evaluated by voters and presenting candidates the party believes will maximize their vote. If certain candidates are seen as liabilities, they will not be nominated by the party. Additionally, an aspirant's track record and activism in the party organization is important – those with name recognition or who are visible in the community through their profession or by holding public office will stand a better chance of nomination. But in Nigeria the lack of creditable internal democracy in the parties had led to growing number of aggrieved party members seeking a window elsewhere in search of an opportunity to vie for positions. Therefore, the political parties in Nigeria should embrace the ethnics of democracy in carrying out party primaries/congresses/convention for creditable candidates to emerge.

Keywords: Internal Democracy and imposition of candidates, political violence, Anambra State and Election Management Body.

INTRODUCTION

Party politics means different things to different people in Nigeria. To the organized civil society groups it ought to be a profession of service through which political leadership of the state is recruited and harnessed. But to the average Nigerian political party partisan, it is an occupation or business through which one makes a living and/or profit and secondly affords one a possible participation in the distribution of political patronages otherwise called “dividends of democracy” for the benefit of one's family, village, community, local government or state in that order of importance.

The struggle for political values or what might aptly be termed distributional politics is a critical and pervasive feature of all politics. But in underdeveloped and heterogeneous societies it takes on rather violent dimensions. The Nigerian experience is apt in this regard as her political history has been chequered by intense and disintegrating struggles for socio-economic benefits at all levels and from all sections of the society. Prominent among such struggles is the nagging and almost endemic agitations for internal political party nomination.

It is perhaps in the light of the foregoing that one can understand and sympathize with The Guardian Editorial Board, when its Leader of December 15, 2014 blazed forth in a celebratory tone holding up the outcomes of the various party primaries as a “remarkable preparedness to break with previous practices that were antithetical to a genuine democratic process.” And it further went home with the optimism that the outcomes sign-posts a “hope of a blossoming democracy in the nation.”

The Guardian Board sentiments was equally shared by the former Head of State, General Ibrahim Babangida, who in an interview with the Daily Sun was disenchanted with the exercises and unambiguously bemoaned the absence of internal democracy in the various primary elections conducted by the parties to nominate candidates for the 2015 general elections.

Nigeria political space was therefore captured by dictators who paraded as democrats, though we had kleptocratic men dressed as democrats. The primitive acquisition of wealth by some of our leaders is best described as legendary. They amassed so much that they may not even have need for. The docile and tensile nature of a gullible citizenry only presents a lamentable narrative of a myopic generation, who would rise to support leaders that have ruthlessly looted away their future, simply because the culprit is from their tribe.

The general elections of 2011 and 2015 adjudged to be free, fair and credible have not yet corrected the crises envisaged in the conduct of internal democracy of the political parties. The crises of internal democracy of the parties are a major concern for the Nigerian people as politicians engage themselves in a do-or-die affair during primaries. This becomes worrisome considering how parties in Nigeria during party primaries nominate their candidates which many a time are viewed by both their members and the people as imposition. This is what many observers described as lack of internal democracy of the political parties and many a times lead to all kinds of crises, kidnapping, killings and the defections to other parties.

The lack of internal democracy in the parties has led to growing number of aggrieved party members seeking a window elsewhere in search of an opportunity to vie for positions. A great number of the rancor and acrimony that afflict parties today are traceable to non-adherence to democratic ethics in the conduct of internal affairs of the parties (Okoye, 2012, 2012). It is universally agreed that while the parties have by themselves failed to deepen democratic culture among them, the work of the election management body (EMB) is made cumbersome and the task of free and fair elections becomes elusive.

In Anambra State, thirty- seven (37) registered political parties and their candidates were cleared by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for November 18, 2017 Governorship election. Among the candidates/Running mates cleared were: the incumbent governor, Willie Obiano and Dr. Nkem Okeke of APGA, Dr. Tony Nwoye and Mr. Dozie Ikedife Arinze of APC and Mr. Oseloka Henry Obaze and Mrs. Chidi Onyemelukwe of the PDP among others. In APGA, there was leadership tussle on who become the National Chairman of the party between Chief Victor Oye and Chief Martin Agbaso. Obi (2017:37) posited that on August 17, 2017, the appeal court sitting in Enugu, set aside an earlier judgment by an Enugu High Court which declared Chief Martin Agbaso as the Acting Chairman of the APGA and reinstated the, hitherto, deposed Victor Oye as Chairman of the party.

The internal democracy of the dominate political parties in Anambra State were greeted with different crises in November 18, Governorship election. For instance, APGA had parallel primaries in Anambra State, the faction led by Victor Oye, on August 15, 2017 at Prof. Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre, Awka saw the reelection mandate in the primary of Chief Willie Obiano as APGA flag bearer. In other words, Chief Martin Agbaso faction elected Mr. Hygers Igwebuikie in Party Primary held in Orumba South Local Government Area though was not recognized by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

In APC Primaries, Tony Nwoye defeated eleven (11) other candidates to emerge as the flag bearer of APC. The National Working Committee (NWC) of APC appointed the Governor of Borno State, Alhaji Kashim Shettima to head the five-man committee that organized the party primaries. Obogo (2017:1) said that about four groups registered with the National Secretariat of APC rejected the nomination of Tony Nwoye as the party's Governorship candidate for November 18, 2017 Election. They appealed to the National Chairman of the party, John Oyegun and the NWC to drop Nwoye as the standard bearer if the party must win the Governorship election.

There was mild drama on August 28, 2017, the venue of PDP primaries after the counting of votes, when Ifeanyi Ubah collected the microphone in protest and accused the chairman of primary election, Dave Umahi the Governor of Ebonyi State, of giving the aspirants the delegates' list which was not the one used for delegate election, thereby rejecting the result. Senator Stella Oduah said she was treated unfairly by the party and alleged that her absence was because of the imposition of a candidate on the state chapter of the party. However, Oseloka Obaze defeated four other candidates to emerge as the flag bearer of the PDP (Anyanwu, 2017:44). Moreover, Ifeanyi Ubah who came third in the PDP

primaries was allegedly accused of carrying out a vitriolic attack against the leadership of the party in the aftermath of its governorship Primary in Anambra State and was suspended by the Party (Orji, 2017:44).

Theoretical Perspectives on Internal Democracy of the Parties

The test of true democratic society, has been said time and again, rests on its ability to ensure that the rules of law guiding the internal democracy of the parties are carried out to the satisfaction of all the aspirants. Sadly for us in this part of the world, it seems this vital requirement is far-fetched and that is exactly why most of the perpetrators of heinous electoral rigging go punished.

The selection of candidates for 2017 Governorship elections in Anambra State has come and gone by the Political Parties but the wound has refused to heal. The high cost of nomination form by the political parties as Omale (2017:16) posited that it is another form of electoral inequality in our political system and a deliberate attempt to sideline some good people from the race, who may not have political sponsors or much money to contest. The race for the Anambra State gubernatorial election confirms this assertion, where the All Progressives Congress (APC) expression of interest form goes for ₦500,000 and the Nomination Form at ₦5 million, bringing the total to ₦5,500,000.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) expression of interest Form goes for ₦1 million while the Nomination Form is ₦10 million amounting to a total of ₦11 million, while each female aspirant will purchase the expression of interest form for ₦1 million the nomination form for ₦5 million which will amount to ₦6 million as against previous arrangements where female aspirants only pay for the PDP expression of interests form and get the nomination form free. The question is how many honest people can afford huge amount of money, which is the starting point? After a careful look at the cost of nomination form in the entire major political parties in Nigeria, One may conclude that the ruling political class belongs to the "riches" at the detriment of the low class with integrity.

In a liberal democracy, election is the best option to change government periodically and it does not only promote leadership change, it encourages accountability in leadership. Nwabueze (1994:87) opined that politics, whether as an occupation or not, is sought after in Nigeria, not so much as an opportunity for service to the public but as an avenue, first and foremost, for self-enrichment through corruption and then for staff aggrandizement. The corruption of the political class in Nigeria, their inordinate love for office with the grandeur and prestige that go with it and their predilection for unprincipled behaviour and for causing confusion thus pose great obstacle to the establishment of democracy. To achieve this, political economy approach is used to analyze those who seek public office do so for egocentric reasons ranging from stealing to personal enrichment at the detriment of helpless Nigeria.

The election period in Nigeria is best described as warfare. As Nnoli (1981) rightly pointed out, this approach enjoins, analysts to probe beneath what people say they are doing, and what they seem to be doing in order to discover the laws of human behaviour which are critical for the development of society. In Nigeria political system, patronage and rent-seeking are way of life and the political temperature is always at a boiling point, the essence of service is largely misunderstood (Jega, 2001:1). The political crisis in Nigeria across states of the federation is triggered by the usual corruption practice in which individuals with lots of money and time to spare (many of them half-backed, poorly educated thugs) sponsored their chosen candidates and push them right through to the desired political position, bribing, threatening, and on occasion murdering any opposition in the process (Achebe, 2012:245).

(a) The APGA Ruling Party Perspective:

The state is viewed by most politicians as the biggest industry in Nigeria and they conceive state as that of National cake which every sections of the society struggle to harness and partake in the sharing. The All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) perspective is that the Party has done well in the administration of the state for several years and that the incumbent Governor Willie Obiano should be given another chance because of his trumpeted achievements in office. And that state should not be seen as a national cake but as a means of carrying out the collective will of the people.

The party argued that, he is reputed to have made Anambra safer, increased workers salaries and never owned them as well as his exploits in agriculture and changing the face of the state capital, Awka. It is argued too that being a second term candidate, he will not scuttle the zoning arrangement in the state, as his re-election would complete Anambra North's eight years in power (Iwuoma,

2017:34) Indeed, Obiano's blaze of excellence began with his decision to head-butt criminals out of the state. He spared no effort in this regard, going as far as Israel to get a security expert that laid the structural framework for operation sweep and other winning strategies (Eze, 2017:42).

One of the greatest Obiano's contributions to modern democracy is his widely acclaimed choose-your-project initiative for every community in Anambra State. This is something that no other democratic leader has done before. Through this initiative, every known Community in Anambra State has been touched by the Obiano administration. These communities were asked to choose any project that was dear to them, which the government would build. There could be no better way to bring government closer to the people or allow the people the space to exercise their freedom of choice. With this initiative, Obiano has wiped away the tears of neglect from far flung communities and endeared government to the people (Eze, 2017:42). However, this development model is already being seriously considered for a wider adoption, as an effective model of development for the Third World countries.

For decades, Anambra, was best known as a crime fiefdom. Kidnappings, violent robberies, ritual killings and political racketeering were the order of the day. Travelers, visitors and indigenes lived in constant horror of the gangs that reigned with impunity. Those who could live with the nightmare stayed on, but many people moved out of town. Businesses closed down one by one in response to rising overhead in ransom pay out for kidnapped executives, family members, and private security cordon against robberies left their accounts in deficit. Today, millions of Nigerians who must go through the state to other parts of the country are no longer haunted by the fears that once made travel through the state such a misery only a few years ago. To many Nigerians, this, extraordinary security scenario is Obiano's most important achievement (Agaji, 2017: 44).

The party accepted that the real catharsis dawned among APGA faithful, following the vacation of the order of Mandamus with which Chief Martin Agbaso was desirous of diminishing Chief Obiano's radiance in the build up to the November 18 election. The August 16, 2017 Enugu Court of Appeal Unanimous judgement, voiding Agbaso's spurious claim to APGA leadership fundamentally scuttled the major ingredient of Obiano detractors who, in Agbaso, crave to create internal disaffection and plunder the party's soft underbelly consequently. But APGA's solidarity, its diligence and the goodwill it has garnered over its eleven and a half years of stellar governance in Anambra, in addition to its legendary adherence to the rule of law, availed the party victory over the machinations of imposters.

(b) Opposition Parties' Perspectives in the State

To this group, the political calculation to select the incumbent as an unopposed candidate has done more harm than good in the history of Nigerian politics with impunity called internal democracy. In the name of continuity, they go into the computation of sidelining or close doors against the most intelligent, honest, and competent and humble individuals from participation in the race for primaries and automatically deny them the opportunity to participate in the main election. And this is a gross sign of inequality in our political system. This is done to preempt many qualified Nigerians, who are eligible and capable to be our leaders and it happens because of the fear of defeating the incumbent candidate peradventure it is open for competition. Without a level playing round for all to compete, inequality prevails (Omale, 2017:16).

The opposition parties posited that elections in Nigeria get even more unpredictable as its democracy matures. They demonstrated that in 2015, an incumbent president was voted out of office in a very unprecedented manner. Earlier 2017 an incumbent governor, Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo State, lost his bid to replace himself with his preferred candidate. Just in the same year in Osun State, the ruling party lost one of the key senatorial seats to an opposition party. They believed that the incumbent Governor had no achievement in Anambra State, the electorates may decide to dump him for any of the opposition in the state.

They argued that the problem is that people are poor and the so-called leaders (governors) now use the same money they looted from the people to buy their conscience. Nigerians keep recycling the same people from governors to the senate to the ministers and it keeps going on. Even if you want to be in power for ever, tell the people what you have achieved. Nobody comes with such a record and tell you that when he was a minister, Senate President, governor and so on that he achieved this for his people. We just hear what they would do, nobody has come to tell you what they have done. What they are going to do would never come to pass. And because of the poverty in the land, people just

join their bandwagon and worship and praise them. We do not need those kind of leaders anymore, the people are suffering (Mbata, 2017:19). What we have in Nigeria are greedy politicians? The poor is not even saying give us your money to share with you, they are simply saying give us the basic amenities.

However, they advised that our governor should emulate the governors of United States of America, whose motto is service to the people and not greedy accumulation or looting of the state treasury. For instance, go and Google McCain and look at the last man, Ben Sanders, that man is only worth \$450,000 and you know how many years he has been in the senate. After spending over two decades in the senate, he is just worth about \$450,000. Can we say that of any Nigerian Senator or governor? We should see Nigeria as an institution and we have to build it. People are killing themselves to get to the National Assembly. They believe they have constituency projects to oversee. They have for instance ₦2 billion for their constituency projects and they appoint contractors and manage the funds. For that reason alone, everybody wants to be. Is that how a state or country grows?

An overview of the opposition parties show that a party like the PDP is still quite strong in Anambra State as it boasts of majority of members of the National Assembly from the state and also has its structures on ground. With the backing of the federal government, the APC hopes to make an inroad in the south-East and it has indicated that it would work assiduously to gain grounds in the state. The Hope Democratic Party (HDP) came back into reckoning in the state shortly after the court of Appeal ruling on the protracted leadership crisis in the PDP, which favoured the senator Ali Modu Sheriff faction which the Supreme Court later reversed. Some notable PDP chieftains who had defected from the party were said to have initiated moves to HDP to be adopted for the purposes of vitiating the disappointing outcome of the Appeal Court and beat the factor of time for November 18, 2017 (Obogo, 2017:41).

In the midst of these uncertainties, the UPP, founded by the former chairman of APGA, Chekwes Okorie didn't have a good outing in the 2015 general election. It has not performed better at elections at the federal and state levels since then. But with the resurgence of energy in the party, driven largely by the quality of candidates that have joined its rank, the UPP appears to have gained more attention in recent times. In Anambra State, for instance, political analysts believe the party has gained firm roots. They believed the party has gained acceptability among the indigenes as its guiding philosophy and manifestos pressing questions that need answers in the state. The UPP governorship candidate, Chief Osita Chidoka, served as the corps Marshal of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) and Minister for Aviation under ex-President Goodluck Jonathan.

(c) The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) Perspective

The Nnamdi Kanu-led Indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) declared a sit-at-home protest on November 18, 2017, insisting that the people should boycott the governorship election in Anambra State. They posited that, election boycott is the only legitimate tool left in their hands to register their displeasure with the ongoing genocide, arbitrary arrests and torture of the people. If they vote, Nigeria will never take the Biafra agitation seriously. The whole World is watching to see how serious people are towards the realization of this great nation of Biafra. The successful boycott of the election on November 18, 2017, will prove to the entire world how determined the people are towards having their own new nation where all men will be equal before the law.

They argued that the truth remains that corrupt Igbo Politicians want to destroy IPOB by all means because they know that leaders of Biafra represent the people and will never take money from Abuja to compromise the struggle as they have all done. They were the people that begged Buratai to bring his Islamic Army into our land to kill the brothers and sisters of Biafra because they value the crumbs they are getting from Abuja over our well-being as a people. Earlier, the Federal Government proscribed IPOB, described it as illegal and terrorist organization. The IPOB insists that its planned boycott was the only legitimate tool left in the hands of the oppressed to register its displeasure over what it described as the genocide, arbitrary arrests, and torture of members of the group by security agencies across the country (Emma, 2017:13).

The leader and Director of Radio and Biafra Television, Nnamdi Kanu (2017:41) posited that the mission of the struggle is to restore Biafra and nothing under the sun can stop them. They have agreed to remain non-violent, irrespective of the well-documented brutal killings of unarmed peaceful demonstrators, abductions, torture, illegal detentions and summary execution of detainees. He assured

that Biafra agitation will continue until government fixes a date for a referendum to settle the issue, in civilized and democratic manner.

Anambra State which prides itself as the light of the nation was recently challenged by some forces that threatened to plunge it into darkness. The call for election boycott which was becoming increasingly louder was also getting popular among members of indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) that the November 18, 2017 will not hold in the state. There was palpable fear and uncertainty was the only certain thing about the political future of the state which boasts of the most billionaires and entrepreneurs among its contemporaries in the country (Habong, 2017:18).

As the IPOB continued to insist on Election boycott, the coalition of lawyers under the auspices of Anambra State Lawyers in Defence of democracy was one of such organizations which did not only rise to the occasion when it mattered most, it also took bold steps to recently petition the minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, to urgently bring the full weight of the law to bear on the separatist group. Also, the Anambra State association of Town Unions lent their voices in condemnation of IPOB among other groups and individuals. Other Associations are Anambra people's Assembly, Anambra Progressive Network even some pro-Biafra groups such as MASSOB were not entirely on the same page with IPOB on the boycott of election.

The advocacy of election boycott by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is never a solution to the struggle for the liberation of the people of South-East for Biafra. The fact is that other states in the south-East are having their sitting Governors while must Anambra State denied the opportunity to elect their own Governor. The truth is that, if the people decide to boycott the November 18, 2017 election, the federal Government will declare a state of emergency in Anambra State and a person from the North/West may be appointed to be the sole administrator for the state.

RESEARCH METHODS

A research design is a scientific logic that has a link with the data collected with appropriate analytical tools already specified and adopted under methodology. The discussion constitutes a major task that would largely determine the relevance of the work (Obasi, 1999:106). However, in a descriptive study such as this, its finding must be credible. The key criterion or principle of a good documentary research is found in the notion of trustworthiness and neutrality of its findings or decisions (Bouma and Ling, 2004). Just as a quantitative study cannot be considered valid unless it passes reliability and credibility tests, trustworthiness entails credibility and transferability, which is the extent to which the findings can be explored in another context (Bassey, 1981: 73-94). These qualities of a good methodology will help to explain the roles and involvement of different stakeholders and security agencies in the conduct of internal affairs of the political parties in the gubernational election in Anambra State. This thesis will help us to know how the conduct of primaries by different political parties helps to undermine the credibility of internal affairs of the parties in Anambra November 18, 2017.

The technique of content analysis will assist to draw some relevant information or facts that will help validate the research hypotheses. The technique is a scientific means or process of analyzing or comprehending information or facts scientifically. It is a universal process of carrying out a research work in order to generate a detailed knowledge of the work under study. This technique will be used to analyze data collected:

Content Analysis

S/N	Speech/Interview	Number of Paragraphs	Internal Crises of Political Parties
1.	The speech of Bar. Emeka Etiaba over the APGA internal party crises, "Appeal Court affirms Oye as APGA National Chairman", <i>Daily Sun</i> , August 17, 2017.	6	5
2.	The chairman of Fresh Congress Group (FCG) of PDP, Emma Obiorah said, "PDP group vows to resist imposition:" over the Anambra guber primaries, <i>Daily Sun</i> , August 23, 2017.	5	4
3.	The National Chairman of Hope Democratic Party (HDP) in his speech said, "PDP may not easily recover from the effect of its internal prolonged crisis", <i>Daily Sun</i> , July 25, 2017.	3	3
4.	The special Adviser to the PDP Chairman on Reconciliation and Conflict Management, Mr. Ighoyota Amori, said, "PDP Opens reconciliation, conflict Management Office", <i>Daily Sun</i> , July 18, 2017.	9	8
5.	The National President of Coalition of Civil Society Groups (CCSG), over Anambra Guber Primaries, Etuk Basseyy said, "Anambra Guber: Coalition petitions Buhari, APC over Nwoye", <i>Saturday Telegraphy</i> , September 2, 2017.	6	5
6.	The National Chairman of APGA, Chief Victor Oye said, "No Court of Appeal Order against me", <i>Daily Sun</i> , August 1, 2017.	4	3
	Total	33	28

SOURCE: From Newspaper cutouts

From the table above, the empirical research shows that out of 33 paragraphs that focused on the selection of gubernational candidates of the parties, 28 emphasized on the crises of internal democracy of the political parties in Anambra State. The empirical research findings was that we end reaping the pains of asymmetrical treatment by selecting mediocrity to lead and govern us instead of selecting our first eleven, who has the desirable leadership qualities with technical knowhow to lift his/her people from the circle of poverty that has pervaded our land. These are part of the opportunity cost or other prices we must pay for allowing inequality to subsist in the selection of leadership in Nigeria. It is obvious that political caucus will impose president, state governors, local government Chairmen, and councilors on the electorate in the name automatic tickets.

However, they will roll out drums to sing songs of wonderful performance for them even though the so-called "candidates" are performing poorly. The political jobbers must sell their products (godfathers) with bags of rice and we (docile electorate) will buy them considering the situation of our economy. But the reality of life will dawn on us after the election when the bags of rice finish and they all change their phone numbers. This is because the monumental challenge of none payment of workers' salaries across the sates of the federation is something to look into when it comes to the selection of the candidates (incumbent) if they try to impose non-performing governors on the people. Considering the high level of hunger, poverty, unemployment, battered foreign exchange and interest rate with negative impacts on the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in our dwindling economy, we should all demand performance records of any elective position.

Understanding the Challenges of Pre-2013 and 2017 Internal Crises of Parties in Anambra State Governorship Elections

Politics of Internal crises of political parties in Anambra State is unique because the state has the highest number of entrepreneurs and industrialists in the country. It is reputed to have produced some of the most influential personalities in Nigerian politics from Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Alex Ekwueme, Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, Chuba Okadigbo among others. The politics in the state is unique because money is the name of the game while other major characteristics of Anambra Politics border on godfatherism and apathy of the electorate who do not question their leaders they voted on the basis of what entered into their pockets.

Unlike other states in the South East, Anambra State has had the peculiar reputation of being politically volatile possibly because of the Republican nature of the Anambra Voters and the fact that the state has an abundance of very wealthy entrepreneurs, many of whom it is believed can compete with the state government in terms of resources. This factor has played a role in the emergence of some Governors of the state in the past where a wealthy “investor” bankrolls the election of a candidate and after the candidate wins, the “investor” begins the process of “recouping” his investments and the most often, the “investor” ultimately falls out with his protégé (Obogo and Nweje, 2017:32)

In 2013 Governorship primaries in Anambra State, the candidature of the PDP had been enmeshed in a legal tussle after Nicholas Ukachukwu, a former Gubernatorial aspirant went to court to pray to be declared the PDP candidate as against comrade Tony Nwoye who emerged from the Party’s primaries. The Federal High Court in Port Harcourt Division actually declared Ukachukwu as the candidate of the party. But the court of Appeal set aside that decision. The apex court (Supreme Court) made of five justices on November 4, 2013 presided over by Justice Mohammed Mahmud held that the decision of the Court of Appeal which declared Tony Nwoye as the candidate of the PDP has not been challenged, hence he (Nwoye) remains the candidate of the Party (Shinkafi, 2013: 64). Tony Nwoye was a former student union leader and human rights activist, who hailed from Anambra North senatorial district with the APGA’s flag bearer, Obiano.

The former Governor Peter Obi in 2013 Governorship Primary raised the issue of power shift to the Northern part of the state to produce Governorship candidate for APGA. It was one of the protracted muscle flexing between Obi and the former National Chairman of APGA, Chief Victor Umeh which was the former’s insistence on Obiano’s candidature even before the party’s primaries. However, Victor Umeh was not favourably disposed to Obi’s choice but at the end of the day, Obi had his way. Moreover, Obiano before his foray into politics, little or nothing was known about him except that he was a former executive director of Fidelity Bank while Peter Obi was the chairman of the bank before he became the Governor.

There have also been movements across party lines in Governorship primaries in 2013. One of the most prominent was Mr. Godwin Ezeemo who crossed from the All Progressives Congress (APC) to the Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA) having lost the former’s ticket to old war-horse, Ngige. In the beginning Ifeanyi Ubah was eyeing the APGA ticket but when it became obvious that he would not get it, he went to Labour Party (LP). A number of candidates have emerged from the various political parties in the state, ranging from the serious contenders to the pretenders.

The high turnover of Governors in the state is a reflection of the content and character of the politics of the state. The state which was created on February 3, 1976 by the Murtala Mohammed Military Government has produced six (6) Governors starting from May 29, 1999-2017. The former governor Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju, who hails from Uli in Ihiala Local Government Area of the State was the first democratically elected governor of the Anambra State in the fourth Republic. He was elected on the platform of the PDP and served between 1999-2003. While in saddle, he had a running battle with his estranged godfather, Sir Emeka Offor, an oil magnate from Oraifite in Ekwusigo Local Government Area of the state. While Mbadinuju and Offor flexed muscles, Anambra State was brought to its knees. The civil servants spent a greater part of the tenure on strike as a result of unpaid salaries. Perhaps, worst hit was the education sector, as schools were shut for several months. Within the period, the state witnessed little or no infrastructural development in the state.

Eventually, Mbadinuju made history as the only sitting governor whose party denied the ticket to go for another term. He pitched his tent with defunct Alliance for Democracy (AD), though he lost, Dr. Chris Ngige, a native of Alor in Idemili Local Government was returned by INEC in 2003. The

medical doctor turned politician had nursed the ambition of being in the senate but was conscripted into governorship race by his godfather, Chief Chris Uba from Uga in Aguata Local Government Area of the state. When the idea of running for governor was mooted, Ngige reportedly turned it down, explaining that he did not have the wherewithal to execute the project, but Chris Uba assured him that funding the project would be his own baby.

But shortly after securing victory, things fell apart between Chris Ngige and Chris Uba. This disagreement culminated in the abduction of Ngige at about 2pm on Thursday July 10, 2003 and destruction of government property including the governor's lodge. The bane of contention according to Ngige was his refusal to relinquish the resources of the state to political hawks. While Ngige was squaring up with his political godfather, Peter Obi who was the APGA governorship candidate in the election went to court, claiming that Ngige's camp rigged the election. In 2006, Obi who hails from Agulu, secured victory through the Appeal Court, thus ending Ngige's 33 months old administration. In 2007, INEC conducted another governorship election and Andy Uba of the PDP was declared as the Governor of the state. Obi went to court on the ground that his tenure had not lapsed, and eventually the Supreme Court nullified Uba's election and removed him after 16 days in office as Governor. But if Obi thought that his problem was over, he was mistaken. The Anambra House of Assembly made up of Andy Uba boys impeached Obi and his deputy, Dane Virgy Etiaba took over and Anambra State became the first state in Nigeria to produce a female governor. Obi returned to the court and his mandate was restored and was also re-elected in 2010 for another 4 years (Umuahi, 2013: 59-60).

With the conduct of the governorship primaries in Anambra State for the conduct of November 18 2017 Governorship election, the stage was set for the battle before the main elections as many of the primaries were enmeshed in one crises or the other. During the political primaries while some aspirants walked out of the venues, others complained of lack of transparency and outright manipulations and given strong considerations to pitching tent with the opposition. Yet a number of the aggrieved aspirants took to legal options.

In 2017 Governorship primaries of the APGA was bedeviled with parallel primaries in the state. The faction led by the National Chairman of the party, Victor Oye held their governorship primaries on August 15, 2017 at Prof. Dora Akunyili women development centre, Awka where the incumbent Governor, Chief Willie Obiano was re-elected the flag bearer of the party for the November 18, 2017 Governorship election. The other factional group was led by Chief Martin Agbaso held their own factional governorship primary at Orumba South Local Government Area where Mr. Hygers Igwebuike was elected as APGA flag bearer for the November 18, 2017 election.

In PDP and APC, the stories were similar in their respective governorship primaries. There was mild drama on August 28, 2017, the venue of PDP governorship primaries after the counting of votes, one of the aspirants Ifeanyi Ubah collected the microphone in protest of the manner the primary was organized, in favour of Oseloka Obaze and rejected the outcome/result of the exercise (Anyanwu, 2017:44). Another aspirant, Senator Stella Oduah alleged that her absence in the venue of the primary was because of the imposition of candidates on the state chapter of the party. The result of the governorship primary in APC was rejected by some other aspirants who alleged it was imposition of Tony Nwoye on the party for instance, Andy Ubah rejected the outcome and took a legal option against the party (Obogo: 2017:1).

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) validated the final result declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Anambra State governorship election held on November 18, 2017. They opined that the voters should have confidence on INEC's Official results for the Anambra 2017 gubernatorial election because it reflects the ballots cast at the polling units (Jibueze, 2017:3).

The incumbent Governor Willie Obiano of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) won the November 18, 2017 governorship election convincingly. He defeated his opponents in all the 21 Local government with 234,071 votes, representing 55.42 percent of the total valid votes cast. The APC flag bearer in the race, Dr. Tony Nwoye trailed him with 98,752 votes while Mr. Oseloka Obaze of the PDP followed closely with 70,293 votes. The Chief Returning Officer and the Vice Chancellor of the University of Calabar, Prof. Zana Akpogu declared that Willie Obiano have satisfied the requirements of the law and is hereby declared winner (Mordi and Nwanosike 2017:2).

The Statistics of Votes for the 3 major Parties are as follows:

S/N	LGA	APGA	APC	PDP
1	Awka South	18,987	6,167	5,354
2	Njikoka	16,944	5,756	3,477
3	Dunukofia	8,575	7,016	1,530
4	Anyamelum	14,593	5,413	2,323
5	Anaocha	11,237	5,297	6,544
6	Orumba South	8,125	3,802	2,412
7	Ekwusigo	8,595	5,412	3,856
8	Aguata	13,167	5,807	4,073
9	Onitsha North	10,138	3,802	4,143
10	Ogbaru	6,615	3,415	4,416
11	Idemili South	5,742	4,063	2,629
12	Orumba North	8,766	3,551	3,865
13	Awka North	7,164	3,727	3,347
14	Onitsha South	7,082	2,012	3,423
15	Oyi	11,840	5,085	1,296
16	Ihiala	14,379	7,894	4,706
17	Anambra East	20,510	5,248	1,132
18	Anambra West	8,152	4,261	1,578
19	Nnewi South	10,465	2,765	3,255
20	Nnewi North	10,845	3,616	4,157
21	Idemili South	12,180	4,632	2,767
	Total	234,071	98,752	70,293

Source: The Nation, 2017: 4

The outcomes of the governorship election in Anambra State as stated in table above shows the transparency, free, fair and credible conduct of the election by the commission. It is as a result of recent innovations introduced in the conduct of elections which was experimented in Anambra State governorship election that brought credibility and transparency in the Commission's image and integrity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The political situation in Nigeria is promising but the struggle for power tend to destroy the internal democracy of the parties. Of course, the political parties have a lot to do in terms of internal harmony of their members because of the issue of godfatherism and imposition of candidates on the parties. For instance, the APC would never transform into a real political party with a common sense of direction given very way it was born. The PDP, as you know, has its own problems, though it has begun to resolve most of these problems.

Most of the political parties still suffer from this problem of internal democracy of the parties. At the level of APC, it has enough of these challenges, the reason it has factions in roughly every state. Don't forget that it is a party with some kind of regional bias and sentiment. Of course, there is also heard recent claims in the APC that those from PDP that helped them to succeed in 2015 are now their own problems (Mgboh, 2017:30).

The crisis of internal democracy of the parties negatively gave rise to the problem of absence of a leadership strategy, thuggery, political assassination, treachery, and lack of ideological politics. About eighty per cent of our leaders just accidentally emerged into leadership, because a governor spends billions to become a governor and he says he has problems. We expect anybody that wants to become a governor to have a blueprint of the solution to the state that he wants to govern.

It is criminal for the governor to get to the seat when the people have voted for him and invested their hope on you for you to say that you are looking for solution. What solution are you looking for? What are you coming to do there? You should have come with solution as soon as you are getting in you should hit the ground running. So that is the challenge of our political space, if we can deal with those issues then we begin to have better policies, better implementation, better results, better populace, a

loyal, patriotic and committed populace who pays their taxes, who respected constitute authority, who produce and work hard for our productivity and the nation will be better for it (Okungbowa, 2017:9). For internal democracy to be effective, it requires a true leader who uses his astuteness, intelligence and leadership skills to produce events that transformed his people's life into better one and consequently a good history, because he does not shape only the present, but a good part of the future as well. Dividend of Democracy can only be possible when our leaders (Politicians) realize the importance of internal democracy in Nigeria. The following recommendations are necessary to checkmate elusiveness of internal democracy in the conduct of political system in the country:

- (a) The political class (politicians) should play the rules of the game by discouraging the imposition of candidates during party primaries.
- (b) The political parties should stop abusing the system of internal democracy because the greatest problem confronting parties today are traceable to non-adherence to democratic rules in the conduct of internal affairs of the political parties in Nigeria.
- (c) Any political party that recruit inexperienced political leaders in governance inevitably call for mismanagement, looting of the country's resources and possibly violence or anarchy.
- (d) The internal bad governance of the parties is a critical issue which if unchecked could derail any democratic government.
- (e) There should be a legislation in which the Independent National Electoral Commission should be empowered to monitored and nullify any party primaries/congresses that do not follow the lay down rules of internal democracy of the political parties.

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