

PARTY ADHERENCE TO NOMINATION PROCESS IN NIGERIA POLITICAL PARTIES IN KOGI STATE NIGERIA: STUDY OF PEOPLE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)

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ABSTRACT

The study examined party adherence to nomination process in Nigeria political parties in Kogi State with specific focus on the People Democratic Party (PDP) for the period 1999-2013. Specifically, the study examined nomination process, of the party; and the consequences of poor party internal democracy on its democratic consolidation. The study has its method rooted in the survey design using close and open ended structured questionnaire, textbooks, journals, internet materials, etc. using Multi Stage Sampling, 1919 study participants were randomly selected from the 12 local government, party leaders and these leaders comprised of 8 Local Government party chairmen and four Local Government party secretaries proportionally selected from across the 3 senatorial districts in Kogi State. Data obtained were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed descriptively on percentage tables using the Special Package for Social Scientist (SPSS). Findings of the study show that; imposition of candidates by party leaders was identified as the major issue regarding nomination process in PDP, despite the fact that the party has explicit rules on leadership selection, and the consequences of this among others includes defection to other political parties and poor internal democracy, result of hypothesis computed chi-square value (χ^2) of 89.74, which is significant at the 5% level was greater than the critical χ^2 (3.84) which implies that a significant difference exist in respondents agreement and disagreement over the adherence to party nomination process. Since a greater proportion agreed that the nomination process is adhered to, it means that, from the statistical view, the nomination process is significantly adhered to by the political party. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. The study recommends that; First, to enhance the nomination process, party leaders should be discouraged from imposing candidates on party members, party rules should be strictly adhered to in the nomination process. Any ambiguous or obsolete aspect of the rule should be democratically addressed in order to minimize or eliminate conflicts, Party delegates should be encouraged to vote their conscience when casting their ballot, and the supremacy of the party hierarchy over elected officials should be made an article of faith.

Key Words: Democracy, Nomination Process, Party Adherence, and consequences of Poor internal Democracy

INTRODUCTION

The modern conception of democracy has come a long way from its classical notion, as well as its practice whose history can be traced to ancient Greece. This is in the sense that democracy is generally believed to have emanated from the attempts in Greek City-State of Athens to reform, organize and manage its political community (polis) about two thousand five hundred years ago (Jega, 2007). Democracy, when it emerged in Athens during the time of Kleisthenes (508/507BC) was such a simple but powerful and appealing idea. According to Dunn:

The power and appeal of the idea come from its promise to render the life of a political community something willed and chosen... to turn the social and political existence that human beings share into a texture of consciously intended common action. In a democracy, the people (the demos), its human members, decide what is to be done, and in so deciding they take their destiny firmly into their own hands. The power and appeal of democracy come from the idea of autonomy... of choosing freely for oneself (In Jega 2007:4)

The Athenian example, which is considered the ideal classical notion of democracy was truly government of the people, for the people and by the people, hence the overwhelming participation by the people of Athens directly in the governance and piloting of their affairs. In Oyovbaire's words,

Democracy is more than a political procedure. It is a political framework from which public policies emerge and are administered for society. These policies, according to him, are propelled (through articulation and aggregation) by members of a political class—a class ideally open to recruitment and exists and assumed to possess the confidence of the entire citizens of the political system. Modern democracy is thus an elitist theory of politics that depends upon the masses holding certain attitude and beliefs about who should govern and how government should be conducted (Oyovbaire, 1982:3)

From the foregoing, it is no doubt that the experience in Athens gave birth to the emergence of the modern nation of democracy which therefore evolved our time. This sees democracy in terms of popular participation in the election of representatives who are in turn assigned the responsibility of managing common affairs in society. This notion otherwise, termed "representative democracy; emerged in the 17th century in Europe particularly after the comedian rebellion against the British monarchy. Some of the political responses which accompanied that rebellion constituted what have secure the essential attributes of modern or representative democracy, and because of this historical European origin of the notion of representation democracy, many of these essential attributes have been conditioned, shaped and influenced by European culture and value systems particularly, they have been

conditioned by the development of capitalism in Europe which brought about fundamental transformation of societies.

This notion of representative/liberal democracy, assumes that in every society (in modern state), citizens can constitute the electorate which in turn can elect representatives through a relatively impartial electoral system to represent them in the organs of government and to help design policies which are responsive to popular wishes aspirations and desires. Since it is a notion that is seen as being synonymous with 'popular representative a number of refinements were made with respect to representative democracy and these included; election, election based on party basis, constitutionalism, i.e the process of governance came to be defined in a document (constitutional document. It defines powers responsibility/functions, procedures etc of government, conception of civil rights and individual freedom, among other things. Here, all citizens are assumed to have certain inalienable rights which are usually guaranteed in the constitution. Right to freedom of expression/association/religion, right to life, right to human dignity, right of children and other minority such as women or ethnic group. The philosophical basis of these rights and freedom of course is the value orientation which underpin western society. Indeed, some of these rights are derived from ideological framework of the ideology of the west which promotes individualism, competition, appropriation or property acquisition. However, the incessant intra-party conflicts which came in varying magnitudes and intensities have become a major threat to democratic survival in Nigeria especially its fourth republic. Some of these conflicts have led to the factionalisation of some major political parties and the consequence of party members decamping to another. This negative trend in political parties has been having profound negative impact on the country's democratization process, against the background that political parties are vehicles of modern representative democracy and a strong pillar for consolidating democratic governance (Mamodu *et al.*, 2013).

However, the ability of political parties to achieve this very important role is dependent on whether the relationship that exists among members is harmonious or conflict ridden owing to the fact that social groups exist by conflict and cooperation. This has been articulated in the theory of intra-group cooperation whose central thrust bothers on the fact that social group exist through conflict and cooperation. It is important to note that as members of a group interact together, there emerge power relations in the internal dynamic of the group, which may polarize 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 is no doubt the situation in the People's Democratic Party (PDP) which more often than not occasions intra-party conflicts and rancor. Some of the sources of the intra-party conflict in the People's Democratic Party (PDP) according to Mamodu (2013) includes taking major decisions by few of the executive members, discrimination or favouritism in the selection of candidate, jettisoning, zoning arrangement, arrogance of party executive among other factors/problems have eaten so deep into the People Democratic Party (PDP) that the resultant situation is defection of members to other (opposition) political parties. These cases partly contributed to the defection of five sitting governors of the People's Democratic Party: Adamawa, Sokoto, Kwara, Rivers, and Kano States in 2013 to the All Progressive Congress (APC) which is the main opposition party. It is in consideration of the above identified internal wrangling within Nigeria political parties that this study was carried out to examine Party adherence to nomination process in Kogi state with reference to the People's Democratic Party PDP in Kogi State from 2013-2015.

The study tested the following Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant difference in agreement among respondents regarding adherence to nomination process into elective offices in the party

Ha: There is a significant difference in agreement among respondents regarding adherence to nomination process into elective offices in the party

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research work adopted survey research method and made use of primary data as the main source of data collection through the instrument of structured and unstructured questionnaire. The study randomly selects one thousand nine hundred and nineteen (1919) respondents from twelve Local Government Areas across the three senatorial districts that made up Kogi State: Kogi Central, Kogi West and Kogi East Senatorial districts. The senatorial districts have a total of 21 LGAs, comprising of 9 in Kogi East, 7 in Kogi west and 5 in Kogi Central. Proportional random sampling was used to select 50% of the Local Government Areas in each district. This is because the LGAs are of unequal size or number. Thus, 5, 4 and 3 LGAs were chosen from Kogi East, Kogi west and Kogi Central Senatorial Districts respectively, which gave a total of 12 Local Government Areas.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables		Kogi Central		Kogi East		Kogi west		Pooled	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Sex	Female	108	32.2	340	36.5	209	32.1	657	34.2
	Male	227	67.8	592	63.5	443	67.9	1262	65.8
	Total	335	100.0	932	100.0	652	100.0	1919	100.0
Age range (years)	18-25			187	20.1	8	1.2	195	10.2
	26-32	84	25.1	133	14.3	91	14.0	308	16.1
	33-39	94	28.1	211	22.6	166	25.5	471	24.5
	40-46	20	6.0	251	26.9	147	22.5	418	21.8
	47-53	13	3.9	122	13.1	113	17.3	248	12.9
	>53	124	37.0	28	3.0	127	19.5	279	14.5
	Total	335	100.0	932	100.0	652	100.0	1919	100.0
Educational qualification	Primary school			198	21.2	28	4.3	226	11.8
	Secondary education	167	49.9	363	38.9	288	44.2	818	42.6
	OND/NCE	48	14.3	184	19.7	162	24.8	394	20.5
	HND/University degree	54	16.1	142	15.2	108	16.6	304	15.8
	Post-graduate	66	19.7	45	4.8	66	10.1	177	9.2
	Total	335	100.0	932	100.0	652	100.0	1919	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2014

Table 1 shows the personal characteristics of the respondents, namely their sex, age and educational qualifications. The pooled results revealed that 65.8% of the respondents were male while 34.2% were female. The results of the study will therefore capture the views of both genders in order to gain a better understanding of their perceptions of the issues investigated. The higher proportion of males may be because majority of the households interviewed were males. Similar trend was observed at the senatorial level, with males

dominating with a percentage of 67.8%, 63.5% and 67.9% for Kogi central, Kogi east and Kogi west respectively.

The age distribution of the respondents indicates that highest modal categories were 33-39 years and 40-46 years with a percentage of 24.5% and 21.8% respectively. The average age of the respondents, at the aggregate level, was about 38 years, while for Kogi central, east and west it was 40, 39 and 40 years respectively. The finding suggests that the respondents were young and full of energy. About 10.2% of the respondents were 18-25 years, 16.1% were 26-32 years old while 12.9% were 47-53 years old while 14.5% were above 53 years old. The responses captured in this study thus reflect the different age groups, which is important in ensuring that their concerns are equally represented in a study of this nature.

In terms of educational attainment, Table 4.1 reveals secondary education to be the modal range (42.6%). About 11.8% had primary education, 15.8% had HND/university education while 9.2% had post-graduate certificate. The general results suggest that the respondents were literate. Thus, they would be able to understand political party constitutions and processes.

In political studies, it has been strongly advocated that the views or opinions of both men and women should be sought. This is pertinent since the government and international as well as local agencies have decried the tendency to relegate women to the background. This is even more so particularly in Nigeria, whose nature and character inherently debar the effective participation of women in the political process.

Table 2 Distribution of Respondents Response on Party Adherence to Nomination Process

	Kogi Central		Kogi East		Kogi west		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean*	SD
Party leaders impose candidate on the people	4.68	.52	4.44	.68	4.72	.50	4.58	.61
Party has clear rules on selection of leaders	4.12	1.06	4.15	.99	4.38	.95	4.23	1.00
Elective positions are open to all party members	2.25	.99	3.62	.86	2.38	1.06	2.96	1.15
Elections are used to select leaders and candidates	1.97	.97	3.44	1.08	2.17	1.04	2.75	1.24
Party rules/laws are followed in the nomination process	2.45	1.03	3.26	1.56	2.15	1.06	2.74	1.42
Party delegates are free to decide who they vote for	1.82	.82	3.01	1.26	1.92	.83	2.43	1.20

*Agreed (mean > 3.00)

Source: Field survey, 2014

Results for Kogi central and Kogi East senatorial zones showed similar trend. However, there was general consensus among respondents in Kogi east zone that election is used as a tool to select leaders and candidates (mean = 3.44), which Kogi central (mean = 1.97) and Kogi west (2.17) respondents disagreed with.

Results of Table 2 further classified the respondents based on their overall score on the party nomination process as a component of the internal democratic mechanisms. The aggregate results revealed that, overall, 60.8% of the respondents believed or agreed that the political party adheres to the nomination process while 39.2% disagreed. The level of

agreement was higher in Kogi east zone, where 88.8% of the respondents agreed that there was adherence to the nomination process. However, Kogi central (31%) and Kogi west (36%) respondents disagreed.

Table 3 Categorization of respondents based on perception of Party adherence to nomination process

	Kogi Central		Kogi East		Kogi west		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Agree (score>15)	104	31.0	828	88.8	235	36.0	1167	60.8
Disagree (score<=15)	231	69.0	104	11.2	417	64.0	752	39.2
Total	335	100.0	932	100.0	652	100.0	1919	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2014

Party Adherence to Nomination Process

Based on the mean benchmark of 3.00, the pooled results of Table 3 show that respondents in the study area agreed that the party leaders impose candidate on party members (mean = 4.58), the party has explicit rules on leadership selection (mean = 4.23) and the fact that elective positions are open to all party members (mean = 2.96). Respondents disagreed about the use of elections in selection of leaders/candidates (mean = 2.75), the alignment to party rules in the nomination process (mean = 2.74) and the fact that party delegates were free to decide on who to vote for (2.43)

Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant difference in agreement among respondents regarding adherence to nomination process into elective offices in the party

Ha: There is a significant difference in agreement among respondents regarding adherence to nomination process into elective offices in the party

Test of difference in level of agreement regarding Party adherence to nomination process (chi-square)

Agreement status	Observed freq	Expected freq	Chi-square
Disagree (score<=15)	752	959.5	89.747*
Agree (score>15)	1167	959.5	
Total	1919		

*Difference is significant at the 5% level (critical chi-square = 3.84; df = 1)

Statistical Inference

The computed chi-square value (χ^2) is 89.74, which is significant at the 5% level since it is greater than the critical χ^2 (3.84). Implying that a significant difference exist in respondents agreement and disagreement over the adherence to party nomination process. Since a greater proportion agreed that the nomination process is adhered to, it means that, from the statistical view, the nomination process is significantly adhered to by the political party. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis.

Discussion of Findings

Imposition of candidates by party leaders was identified as the first major issue regarding nomination process in the study. Many have attributed the prevalence of this act on the exploitation of the country weak electoral laws. The amendment of the Electoral Act of 2006 section 87 (7) by National Assembly which states that: “where a political party fails to comply with the provision of this Act in conduct of its primaries, its candidates for elections shall not be included in the election for the particular position in issue” later gave birth to Electoral Act of 2010 which states that: “Every political party shall not later than 60 days before the date appointed for a general election under the provisions of this Bill, submitted to the commission in the prescribed forms, the list of candidates the party proposes to sponsor at the elections, provided that the commission shall not reject or disqualify candidates for any reason whatsoever”. The use of the phrase “any reason whatsoever”, make INEC to be stripped of its ability to determine the qualification or status of any candidate submitted by a party, irrespective of any circumstances surrounding a candidate’s status. With this provision, the cabals or godfathers within the party now has the power to dictate, impose, and determine how, who and why a candidate can context in an election in which they are participating, even if INEC has doubts over the candidates credibility (Mbah, 2011).

As a matter of fact, political parties in democratic societies should try as much as possible to involve members by giving them a role in the nomination of candidates for elective positions at various levels rather than the exclusive preserve and imposition of candidates by party leaders on the people. Hence party’s activities are to be guided by their constitutions, party laws and electoral law etc bothering in the internal functioning of political parties, regulations may also be voluntarily introduced by political parties themselves in order to ensure internal democratic processes and operations. This accordingly, was what prompted the desire of Bamanga Tukur (2013) as to resolve that “internal democracy should triumph over the current practices of imposition of candidates during the party congresses, thus collectively we sustain the political hopes and aspirations of Nigerians”, conserving the importance of setting new election guidelines for the party primaries and congresses to eliminate all encumbrances faced by participants and revitalize the party organs for optimum roles by ensuring transparent conduct of such events” (Bamanga Tukur, 2013).

In line with the National Democratic Institute (2008) in adherence to party’s internal rules, it adhere to party roles for making decisions, including selection decisions for candidates and leaders procedural frameworks can only contribute to party’s long-term stability of those within the party agree to abide by the stated rules. This however, does not mean that rivals within a party are permanently stuck with any given procedure. Party statutes should include procedures on how to amend the statutes and generally, party statutes are much easier to amend than national constitutions. It does not mean that competitors agree to respect the rules currently in force, and to follow due process unless and until they are able to change the rules to be more to the liking. Internal agreement to abide by set procedures helps to clarify the opportunities and boundaries for legitimate internal dissent. Moreover parties which follow their own rules strengthen democratic cultures in their country by demonstrating through their actions that rule matters (NDI, 2008). From what was elicited from this research work, candidate selection and nomination procedures differ among democracies and among typologies of parties. To what extent, however, there are two categories of candidates selected and/or nominated by political parties. Kura (2011) put that candidates are selected for manning the party offices across all

branches and chapters of political parties. Candidates are nominated also to contest general elections. Unlike for party leadership positions, in the latter, candidates nomination, which in broader term is synonymous with recruitment, is one of the important functions of political parties across democracies. Infact, many party scholars define a political party in terms of this function. Katz (2001) opines that candidate selection “is a vital activity in the life of my political party. It is the primary screening device in the process through the party in office is reproduced. As such, it raises central questions about the ideological and sociological identifies of the party as a whole. However, the method(s) which a party employs in candidate selection and nomination has inconvertible implications on those selected or elected and indeed how they behave in either party or public office (Gallagher and Marsh, 1988; Mainwaring and Shugart, 1997). In another development and in line with the information gotten from the research work, Katz and Mair (1995) argue that the technique of party’s candidate selection explains and provides adequate information in (i) how the party functions internally and (ii) the location of political power in a particular country (Katz, et al).

Method of candidate selection includes primaries (either restricted to party caucuses why or extended to ordinary party members). Internal party elections centralization; consensus, etc. the differences in candidate selection procedures among parties is explained party by the nature of a political party, and partly by “national laws intra-party decision making and the electoral fortunes of parties” (Penning and Hazan, 2001). However, the extent to which parties democratize their candidate selection procedures, despite its generic importance depends on the national laws and internal party rules, as well as the extent to which party leaders adhere to the laws (Kura, 2011).

Major issues found out in the nomination process as a component of internal democracy was that respondents agreed that the party leaders impose candidates on party members (mean = 4.58), despite the fact that the party has explicit rules on leadership selection (mean = 4.23) and elective positions are open to all party members (mean = 2.96). However, the general consensus among the respondents was that the party adheres to the prescribed nomination process (60.8%), which was found to be significant ($\chi^2 = 89.747$; $p < 0.050$), implying that the nomination process is significantly adhered to by the political party.

Analysis of Indepth Interview

Indebt interview session were held with party leaders at the local level, the number was 12, corresponding with the selected local government areas. They comprise of 8 local government party chairmen and four local government party secretaries.

With respect to the party nomination process, the interviewees in the three senatorial district, Kogi Central, East and West were unanimous in their responses that election is used as a medium through which party leaders and candidates emerged. As a component of the internal democratic mechanisms, the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) according to them adheres to the nomination process. This is used alongside with the information gotten from the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) secretariat where it was gathered that even as the political activities unveiled in the pre- 1999 when the country was once again returned to civil democratic rule, the party stakeholders met and resolved that as much as possible they should try to minimize the number of aspirants until the party gains more grounds, though intended contestants were not forced to step down for any candidate, but this decision by party stakeholders only minimize the number of aspirants, and what the party was interested

in was to see how popular candidates can emerge. And that the 1999 situation was slightly different from that of 2003, a period described as one of serious competition. It was a period of an opposition government in the state and despite Governor Abubakar Audu in government; PDP was still waxing stronger and stronger because quite a number of people believed then in PDP.

It was a period of serious competition in the sense that the People's Democratic Party was so hot and determined to succeed the All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP) in the state under Governor Audu. With this determination however, PDP cleared all the elective seats i.e 24 of 25 seats of Kogi State House of Assembly, against the ANPP one seat, Mopa-Muro constituency. In consonance with the adherence to internal democratic mechanism of nomination process, it was made available to the researcher (at the PDP secretariat) the number of contestants from inception in 1999 up to 2011, in the state congresses for gubernatorial primaries.

With respect to popular participation, they were of the view that there was relatively popular participation as all delegates participate in the party primaries with members give equal right to vote and be voted for. However, two of the interviewees expressed dissatisfaction as they disagreed with this positive popular participation. They said there are instances where the party leaders hijacked and took over the party activities and even went to the extent of producing a list of delegates for primary election process, that quite different from what the actual list is, and when it happened, the internal democratic process is scuttled by the activity of the so called party leader(s). This in turn negates the internal democratic mechanism of the process.

CONCLUSION

The present democratic regime in the country and in the State in particular has its root in the 1999 democratic elections that witnessed the transition from a military rule to a democratic regime. The period since 1999 has witnessed the birth, demise and merger of political parties but a major player in the political landscape of the nation is the People Democratic Party (PDP). This party has been at the reins of government at the national level as well as in Kogi state since 1999.

An examination of the internal democratic mechanisms of the party in Kogi State reveals that the level of popular participation in the party was very high while adherence to nomination process is commendable. However, serious fears were expressed regarding adherence to party policies/constitution by the party leadership. This mixed result for the internal democracy mechanisms invariably has mixed consequences on democratic consolidation. But if they are not some negative outcomes such as stalling or abandonment of development projects, intra-party conflicts or violence among others are inevitable outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. First, to enhance the nomination process, party leaders should be discouraged from imposing candidates on party members.
2. Also, party rules should be strictly adhered to in the nomination process. Any ambiguous or obsolete aspect of the rule should be democratically addressed in order to minimize or eliminate conflicts
3. Party delegates should be encouraged to vote their conscience when casting their ballot

4. The supremacy of the party hierarchy over elected officials should be made an article of faith
5. The successes recorded in the democratic consolidation processes need to be maintained
6. Electoral offenders need to be sanctioned to serve as deterrent.
7. A vibrant opposition is imperative if the democratic successes recorded are to be sustained.
8. Political parties should strive to establish clear and well-articulated rules in advance of each contest as this will go a long way in minimizing internal wrangling, while enhancing the legitimacy of those selected.
9. To foster adherence to party policies, party leaders should lead by example by submitting themselves to the party constitution. A situation where leaders disobey the constitution does not augur well for the future development of the party as it creates a precedence that other members will follow or make reference to.
10. There is need to strengthen the internal democratic mechanism and legal frameworks for fighting the imposition of candidate within political parties in Nigeria. As things stand now, Nigeria's political parties are still perceived as those whose destinies are in hands of the power-brokers within the parties. This work has in its own way contributed to the existing body of knowledge going by the recommendation it has suggested, and it also serve as a recipe for further studies on the area of democracy and consolidation of same.

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