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Party Politics, Intra-Party Crises and Turbulent Elections in Ogun State, 2016-2019

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Abstract
After the 2015 general elections, All Progressive Congress (APC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP), the two foremost political parties in Ogun State got enmeshed in intra-party animosity, distrust and crises of varying proportions. Both the APC and PDP were polarized into two warring factions led by prominent party leaders. Attempts to reconcile the opposing groups before the 2019 general elections were to no avail. The study examined the effects of intra-party crises on electioneering process in Ogun State between 2016 and 2019 through descriptive method. Data collected through questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics and secondary data were content analysed. Findings revealed that party politics often provoke intra-party crises majorly due to the nature and character of Nigerian politics and poor selection of candidates. It established that poorly managed intra-party crises in the state significantly precipitated turbulent electoral contests during the period. The consequences of the intra-party crises on the 2019 general elections included party defection, vote-buying, low voter turnout, fear and intimidation, irregularities associated with the elections and post-election disputes, which led to cancellation of votes in some parts of the state. To resolve these challenges, the study recommended that intra-party disagreement and crises should be quickly and properly managed by the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party. In addition, party internal democracy and intra-party crises management mechanisms should be strengthened, while strict enforcement of legal framework on party activities should be prioritized by regulatory bodies.

Keywords: Party politics, intra-party crises, turbulent election, electoral contest, violence

Introduction

Political trajectories of Nigeria have shown that the elections conducted since the return to democratic rule in 1999, and particularly since the dawn of 2007 were marred by incidents of widespread violence, thuggery, assassination, rigging and intimidation, predominantly from inter-party clashes and generally from intra-party crises. In the current democratic governance, elections have been transformed into battlegrounds where many contestants have lost their precious lives. It is reported that between June 2006 and May 2014, 3,934 election-related incidents were recorded across Nigeria with Plateau State having the highest number of fatalities of 850 (Bello, 2015, 7). In the 2015 general elections, 106 deaths were recorded, while the 2019 general elections revealed that, at least, 626 people killed between October 2018 and March 2019, from incidents of electoral violence (EU EOM, 2015; SBM Intelligence, 2019).

Party politics in the current fourth republic has been characterized by hatred,

enmity, victimization, suspicion, bitterness and acrimonious struggles among political elites in the quest for winning elective posts, thus resulting in political crises and instability. The ubiquity of intra-party crises in the country's political system can be attributed to the mindset and perception that, politics is the most lucrative industry in the country (Momodu & Matudi, 2013). There is also a general consensus that political parties in the current democratic dispensation often engage in internal crises due to personalization of politics, prevalence of the godfather syndrome, negative influence of money, ideological uncertainty and poor adherence to internal democracy (Akubo & Yakubu, 2014; Ayomola, 2016). Thus, Nigeria's electoral history is replete with a culture of flawed, violent, tumultuous and disputed elections, where many lives have been lost and properties worth millions of Naira wantonly destroyed (Ashindorbe, 2018).

It is unassailable that intra-party crises have been a characteristic and long-standing feature of Ogun State politics. The battles of succession and supremacy among the political and party leaders made some observers refer to the State as "traditional hotbed of politics" (Salaudeen, 2018). Election periods in Ogun State have often been riddled by all sorts of crises, assassination, thuggery and instability. The 2015 general elections in Ogun State witnessed intra-party and inter-party clashes and attacks by hoodlums, rigging, intimidation and violence (EU EOM, 2015, 30). Prior the election, leaders and members of the major political parties – All Progressives Congress (APC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) – in the state engaged in internal face-offs. This trend continued even after the 2015 elections. Hence, the two political parties were fractionalised and divided along party financiers and leaders/executives.

The APC, for instance, broke into two warring factions with one led by Senator Ibikunle Amosun (then governor), and the other, by Chief Olusegun Osoba (party leader). Similarly, the PDP broke into two factions. One led by Senator Buruji Kashamu and the other by Hon. Ladi Adebutu, respectively. The crises rocking these parties in the state remained unsolvable ahead of the 2019 general elections. Efforts by stakeholders to restore peace and stability within the rank and file of these political parties proved abortive (Awoyinfa, 2016; Moliki, 2019; Oluwole, 2018).

However, previous studies had devoted extensive discourse to party politics and intra-party crises in Nigeria but while most of these researches were theoretical, their linkages with turbulent elections and its effects on the 2019 general elections in Ogun State have not been previously explored. Moreso, the 2019 elections conducted in Nigeria are yet to receive significant scholarly attention. Against the backdrop of these gaps in literature, this study examined the effects of intra-party crises on the contest for the 2019 general elections in Ogun State. Hence, the following research questions guided the study:

1. Why does party politics often provoke intra-party crises?
2. Is there any nexus between elites, intra-party crisis and turbulent electoral contests?
3. What are the consequences of intra-party crises within the APC and PDP on the 2019 general elections?

This study is significant in that the challenges of intra-party crises constitute a major threat to free, fair and credible election in Nigeria. Previous election reports by local and foreign election observers have equally berated violence emanating from unsolvable intra-party crises as a means of disrupting peaceful election and manipulating its outcome. Therefore, the study helps in identifying ways through which party leaders could mitigate internal squabbles within their respective political parties and resolve such crises whenever they erupted.

Conceptual Clarification

Party Politics

Political party, as a democratic institution, plays a central role in a democracy. It serves as a unifying force, interest articulator and aggregator in a divided polity. However, political parties of the 21st century have failed to articulate, aggregate and resolve effectively internal disagreement among their members. This predisposes party politics to crises of varying proportions; a dangerous trend that is antagonistic to democratic virtues, principles and stability. Meanwhile, democracy presumes the legitimacy of the opposition voice, the right to challenge the incumbent, existence of inclusive and fair governance, and a consolidated party system (Omotola, 2010).

Ademola (2009) cited in Yusuf (2015) argued that party politics encapsulates a set of activities of political parties in a democratic environment with a view to seeking the control of political offices through elections. This implies that party politics exist when democracy is in existence and recognises the fact that election is the only method through which citizens are democratically elected into the public offices. In the words of Yusuf (2015, 23), party politics involves the struggle for political power leading to unhealthy competitions and conflicts by political parties. This suggests that party politics is what usually precipitates bitter and acrimonious struggles among members of political parties.

Party politics in contemporary Nigeria, according to Moliki and Dauda (2019), are bedeviled by poor internal democracy, ideological fluidity, inter and intra-party conflicts, defection, crises of party leadership and under-regulated party funding. Omilusi and Ajibola (2016) maintained that Nigeria's political parties have not been able to attain a reasonable degree of institutionalization especially in the areas of internal cohesion and discipline. This deficiency has also contributed to the decline in the conflict management capacity of political parties at both intra and inter-party levels.

In this context, party politics refers to political activities and decisions being exercised by members of political parties in a democratic state. It includes all the activities that are concerned with getting party tickets for elections, support for one political party and preferred candidates at both primaries and general elections, leadership of the party and/or nomination for appointment.

Intra-Party Crises

Pervasive internal crises within some political parties have been a significant feature of party politics in Nigeria since the 1920s. This shows that the problem of intra-party crises is not a new phenomenon. The level of crises within Nigeria's political parties in the current republic seems to have made Omotola (2009) to posit that none of the political parties has been able to hold itself together without conflict that mostly threatens the very heart of such political party and the Nigerian polity. In the opinion of Ayomola (2015), since 1999, virtually all the political parties in Nigeria find it very difficult to adopt an open system that restricts members of their political parties from participating in the decision-making process, including contesting during elections under the party's platform. This kind of restriction has increasingly resulted to intra-party wrangling, war of attrition, recrimination, acrimony, and defection among party members (Abimbola & Adesote, 2012).

Intra-party crises are often manifested in the political imbroglio during primary and general elections. Basiru (2019) examined intra-party conflicts in a democratising Nigeria. He averred that conflicts among party members arise due to crises over issues of internal leadership recruitment, selection of candidates for general elections, and sharing of posts for appointment. This situation often escalates into intense competition and by extension, violence,

thereby endangering party politics and democratic progression in Nigeria.

Unfortunately, party leadership most times could not resolve these crises due, perhaps, to lack of conflict management mechanisms of political parties. For the purpose of this study, intra-party crises describes the internal wrangling between two or more members or caucuses of a political party due to clash of interest over party leadership positions on selection, recruitment and appointment. As documented in *The Point Editorial* (2016), the perennial wars of attrition within the political parties have undermined the belief, trust and confidence of the masses in Nigeria's electoral process and democracy.

Turbulent Election

Election remains the stabilising factor in a democracy. Elections are one of the core institutional arrangements in democracies to select candidates for political offices, to hold those in power accountable for their actions, and to provide politicians with a mandate to govern (Sudulich & van der Brug, 2018). Udeke and Okolie-Osemene (2014) defined election as a formal process through which citizens choose their representatives at any level of government. Election is an act and a process of choosing, selecting or electing political office holders to represent people in the executive and legislative arms of government (Ahile, 2014).

Past elections in Nigeria have been turbulent and violent. This is because, as Yusuf (2015) has observed, party politics in Nigeria has encouraged undemocratic elections that encourages undemocratic tenets, such as electoral fraud, electoral violence, and consequently produced corrupt, dictatorial, unresponsive and irresponsible leaders. Little wonder the outcomes of the past elections in the current republic are often disputed. In the view of Iorgbir (2019), widely accepted results tend to grant legitimacy to the entire electoral process, while disputed election results often lead to non-democratic consequences, such as armed conflict, military take-over of government, establishment of a single party regime.

Ojo (2014) contended that Nigeria's electoral politics since independence has been tumultuous. The elections conducted have been characterised by violence thus making free and fair elections a difficult task to achieve. Ojo further identified that the attractive nature of public office, weak regulatory framework in campaign finance, money politics, the ostentatious lifestyle of politicians, ineffective law enforcement, pervasive poverty, alarming rate of unemployment, election rigging, lack of trust in the electoral tribunal, the use of political thugs by politicians, and the media's indulgence in campaign of calumny, mudslinging and defamation or slanderous attacks on the opponents, are precipitating factors responsible for turbulent transfer of political power from one regime to the other.

Party Politics and Intra-Party Crises in Nigeria

Scholars (Okonkwo & Unaji, 2016; Olaniyan, 2009; Olorungbemi, 2014) have argued that the patterns and dynamics of post-independent party politics in Nigeria have been crises-ridden and violent. After political independence, political parties have assumed dangerous trends which, inevitably, have largely contributed to the termination of the previous three democratic experiments. Hence, party politics since then have been characterised by intra and inter-party crises and electoral violence.

One of the major crises that led to the collapse of the First Republic, for instance was the political crises that engulfed the defunct Action Group (AG) precipitated by personality clashes between party leaders, opinion differences on party's ideological leaning, intra-party opposition and division. The crises culminated in tension, intra and inter-ethnic clashes, instability and violence associated with the Federal and Western Regional elections of 1964 and 1965, respectively and worst of all, military takeover in January 1966.

Party politics in the Second Republic followed a similar trend to that of the previous republic and suffered similar consequences. Parties during this period also experienced intra-party crises. The dissatisfactions with the autocratic tendencies of some party chairmen who doubled as the presidential and gubernatorial candidates led to palpable division, as witnessed for instance, in the People's Redemption Party (PRP) between Aminu Kano and Imodu factions (Tyoden, 2002). Thus, the restoration of democracy over two decades ago, has witnessed the manifestation of deadly intra-party crises that have negatively hindered cordial intra-party relations and interactions in the governing and opposition political parties. This suggests that what is obtainable in these parties are phenomenon of intra-party oppositions which by and large are exacerbated by poor internal democracy, ideological bankruptcy of political parties, and normless character of politicians as well as zero-sum nature of Nigerian politics (Ayomola, 2015; Okoli & Ali, 2014; Okonkwo & Unaji, 2016; Olaniyan, 2009; Olorungbemi, 2014).

Party Politics, Intra-Party Crises and Turbulent Elections in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Most often, parties are bewildered by the spate of wrangling among party leaders, financiers and members. In the Fourth Republic, party politics with failure to give party members the opportunity to articulate their common or divergent interests has consequently created factions within the parties which has eventually led to intra-party crises. In other words, Nigeria's Fourth Republic has been more characterised by recurring intra-party crises resulting in factionalisation of major political parties at all levels of government (Momodu & Matudi, 2013).

The PDP, for instance, as the ruling party from 1999 to 2015, had the most threatening spates of internal crises both at the state and national levels. In fact, the current main opposition party is yet to resolve some of its factional crises in most of the states of the federation. The APC since its emergence was not exempted from crises and fragmentation. APC, for instance, battled to resolve crises in 12 state chapters in 2017. And till recent time, most state chapters of APC are still entwined in imbroglio over who controls the soul of the party (Alechenu, 2017; Basiru, 2019).

Okonkwo & Unaji (2016) citing Ntalaja (2000), concurred that the current democratic experience has been bedeviled by intra-party crises as a result of ethnicisation of politics, poor party leadership, party indiscipline, lack of clear-cut party ideologies, and worrisomely, lack of internal democracy. In a similar submission, Ali & Okoli (2014) stressed that the contextual pathologies of party politics which invariably have created a veritable pretext for the rise of intra-party crises in Nigeria, are the Hobbesian character of politics ('do or die' affair of state actors), organisational and operational defects, poor sense of party discipline and loyalty, lax party supremacy, gross ideological deficits, influence of money politics, incumbency factor and intra-party wrangling. Olaifa (2011) cited in Momodu & Matudi (2013) identified candidate selection, party funding, zoning formula, primaries, and party executive arrogance.

Olorungbemi (2014) asserted that political parties since inception of the present republic have been transformed into battle fields characterised by hatred, enmity, victimisation and suspicion resulting from bitter struggles among members, and inordinate ambition of some party stalwarts, in their quest to achieve public and/or personal interests. Paradoxically, the struggle for power by factional elite groups is encapsulated within the motive of representing ethno-religious and regional interests as against national interest. This is so because political power enables them gain unhindered access to primitive accumulation of public wealth for their selfish gains (Olaniyan, 2009).

Intra-party crises, as Landman (2005) has pointed out, are manifested through the

notion of contestation, and unnecessary competition and rivalry among political elite. Unresolved intra-party crises have remained a significant feature of party politics in Nigeria since independence. A considerable number of post-independent elections have been tremendously characterised by violence and irregularities (Ashindorbe, 2018). Yusuf (2015) maintained that intra-party crises had led to series of electoral crises and violence, especially since the 1999 elections.

Moreover, Olorungbemi contended that party disagreements had resulted in election-motivated violence employed to change or influence the electoral behaviour of electorate or possibly alter the electoral outcomes. He further stated that unhealthy party feuds and the monumental level of destruction which party crises had caused in Nigeria have constituted grave consequences such as political intolerance, electoral violence, political apathy, proliferation of weak parties, legitimacy crises, retardation of growth and development, violation of rule of law and military intervention.

Ogun State Politics and Intra-Party Crises: An Appraisal

Intra-party crises in the APC and PDP among other political parties since inception are usually played out during and after the congresses, party primaries, political campaigns, and election days (Ayomola, 2016). The PDP in Ogun State was faced with the challenge of a divided house coupled with poor resolution of intra-party wrangling in the run-up to the 2019 general elections. The party is wallowing in protracted crises that emanated from the "rested titanic clash between the Ahmed Makarfi and Ali Modu Sheriff's factions of the party" (Oluwole, 2018). While most state chapters successfully dissolved into single entities following the Supreme Court's judgment, the Ogun chapter is yet to resolve from the battle for the soul of the party.

However, the crises rocking the party are also traceable to April 2016 after the ward congresses, which saw the factionalisation of then state working committee. The committee was divided into two factions with one led by Adebayo Dayo, then committee chairman and Sikirullahi Ogundele, with none of them ready to sheathe his sword. The Ogundele-led faction was being backed by the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party while the Dayo-led faction had the support of Ogun East Senator, Buruji Kashamu, both claiming to be the authentic PDP in Ogun State. The bone of contention between these two groups was the controls the party machinery in the state with the right to conduct congresses or primaries and produce candidates for the 2019 general elections (Oluwole, 2018).

Expectedly, two parallel primaries were conducted by the separate factions in September 2018 and produced two governorship candidates. The NWC-backed Ogundele faction produced Ladi Adebutu, as the PDP candidate for Ogun State in the 2019 governorship election, while the Dayo-led group produced Adeleke Shittu as its candidate. Shittu later stepped aside for Buruji Kashamu (Oluwole, 2018). Despite the recognition accorded to the Dayo-led executive and its list of candidates, which included Buruji Kashamu by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Ogundele-led factional candidates did not stop parading themselves as the authentic candidates until the eve of the 2019 governorship election, when they aligned with other political parties. The Ogundele-led faction with its governorship candidate, Oladipo Adebutu, adopted the governorship candidate of the APM, Adekunle Akinlade, as its candidate. In another dimension, the former governor of Ogun State and the Director-General of the Atiku Campaign Organisation, South, Otunba Gbenga Daniel, endorsed Dapo Abiodun of APC (Adesomoju, Folarin Lambo & Bosun, 2019). Few months after the 2019 elections, the party experienced exodus of defection to APC.

The APC in Ogun State has been tottering from one crisis to the other. All

efforts to reconcile the warring factions have been to no avail (Salaudeen, 2018). The party in the state before the 2015 general elections was split into two, with a faction was led by then Governor, Senator Ibikunle Amosun and the other by the party National Leader, Chief Olusegun Osoba. The face-off between the duo dragged on till 2015 when Osoba and his supporters dumped APC to Social Democratic Party (SDP), due to the allegations that Amosun was running a one-man government and sidelined Osoba with his camp, who worked for his (Amosun) enthronement in 2011, in the scheme of things. The Osoba-led faction, however, returned to APC in 2016 but the party remained divided while both camps continued to "oil their political machinery" towards the 2019 general elections (Awoyinfa, 2016).

In the build-up to the 2019 general elections and what appeared as the last straw that broke the camel's back were tussles that surrounded the adoption of a consensus candidate for governorship election and conduct of primary elections in the state. The APC state chapter led by Amosun decided to go for indirect primaries. The decision was vehemently opposed by Osoba's faction which rejected the mode of election and insisted on embracing direct primaries for all the elective positions ahead of 2019 general elections (Kayode-Adedeji, 2018). While this was raging, the issue of endorsing Adekunle Akinlade (Amosun's anointed candidate) as a consensus governorship candidate ahead of the primary election came up. The decision was rejected by most notable party leaders and aspirants. Both the indirect mode of election and consensus candidate were also kicked against by the NWC of the party (Aborisade, 2018).

Consequently, two parallel primaries were held in the state. The first was conducted on October 2, 2018, by the Derin Adebiyi-led APC Ogun chapter, which declared Adekunle Akinlade, as the winner of the indirect election having polled 190,987 votes out of 201,620 valid votes cast across the 236 wards in the state, and the other was held on October 3, 2018, by the Muhammad Ndabawa-led electoral committee backed by NWC and declared Dapo Abiodun, the winner of the direct primary. The results showed that Abiodun polled 102,305 to emerge winner followed by Akinlade who scored 23,443 votes; Jimi Lawal scored 51,153 votes, Abimbola Ashiru polled 29,764 votes, while Senator Gbenga Kaka got 17,771 votes and Abayomi Hunye got 9,110 votes (Omilana, 2018). The results were contested by the Amosun-led faction to the extent that the then Secretary to the State Government, Taiwo Adeoluwa, asked President Muhammadu Buhari to sack the National Party Chairman, Adams Oshiomole (Obogo & Raheem, 2018).

Following the above revelations, Amosun insisted that Akinlade was the officially-recognised governorship candidate that would succeed him. Olaniyi *et al.* of *Daily Trust* (October 27, 2018) reported that Amosun stood his ground on his anointed candidate by saying: "I hand over the reins of governance of our great state to the popular choice of majority of our people, Hon. Abdulkabir Adekunle Akinlade" (p. 18). On December 3, 2018, Akinlade and 26 APC members who contested for the House of Assembly tickets in Ogun State during the party primary and lost defected to Allied People's Movement (APM), while Amosun stayed back in APC, but supported the candidature of Akinlade (Johnson & Olatunji, 2018).

The implication of the above scenario is that the period preceding the 2019 general elections witnessed heightened tension, fear and intimidation in the state. During one of the political campaigns, the supporters of APC and APM of not less than 12 persons sustained various degrees of injuries and properties, such as vehicles and building were vandalised (Bosun, 2019). Also, the presidential campaign rally of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Abeokuta was marred by protests, violence and attacks by APM supporters. During the campaign, the APC National Chairman, Adams Oshiomole, director-general of the APC Presidential campaign, Rotimi

Amaechi, and former governor of Osun, Rauf Aregbesola, were booed (*Punch*, February 12 2019). Months after the 2019 elections, and the new government led by Dapo Abiodun emerged, supremacy battle still rocks Ogun APC (Adeyemi, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted elitist theory of politics as its theoretical framework to analyse the power relationship between political godfathers and factionalisation of political parties which often precipitate intra-party crisis, unrest and violence in the polity, especially during elections. The basic tenets of the elite theory can be found in Pareto's (1915) *The Mind and Society,* Mosca's (1939) *The Ruling Class* and Mitchels' (1915) *Iron Law of Oligarchy,* and was elaborated in Mills' (1956) *The Power Elite*. Elitist theory of politics argues that in politics or every political organisation or institution of government, there exists two categories of people: the minority decision makers, who is otherwise referred to, as the *Oligarch* (chosen few), and the majority who are the governed.

Political elites, as Higley (2016) has argued, are a small group of persons in powerful institutions, organisations and movements who exercise disproportionate power and influence political outcomes in order to perpetuate their hold on power. They consist of the powerful and superior set of governing class who usually dominates the affairs of the political organisation. In a political party, minority constitutes the party leaders, elected political leaders, such as president, vice-president, senators, honourable members, governors, deputy-governors, state legislators, ministers, commissioners and other members in elective or appointive positions; retired politicians, business moguls, and serving and retired military personnel. This implies, as Pareto suggests, that *elite* is broad enough to include the "rival leaderships of the political parties" (Duru, *n.d.*: 6).

Political parties in Nigeria have become deeply involved in all sorts of crises arising from unhealthy rivalry among political elites (party leaders and financiers) in an attempt to protect their political interests. Dike (2003) cited in Awofeso, Obah-Akpowoghaha and Ogunmilade (2017) explained that party politics is characterised by electoral manipulations by political elites during the primaries and general elections, coupled with thuggery, hooliganism, assassination of political opponents, opaque methods of selecting candidates and flag bearers, and the general lack of internal democracy. These have degenerated into uncontrollable crises and have led to decampment and party's alignment. This is so because genuine party politics is impossible in Nigeria as in other developing democracies due to the fact that there are always self-interested elites who out-organises and out-wits other elites or non-elites in a bid to gaining control of political power and state resources. Therefore, party politics in Nigeria will continue to involve fierce power struggles between *ambitious elites* capable of distorting the electioneering process and election outcomes, if the character of Nigerian politics persists.

Materials and Methods

Descriptive survey research method was employed for the study. The study population constituted 1,200 registered voters who were also registered members of PDP and APC in Ogun State. A multi-stage sampling technique was used in this study. At the first stage, primary data were obtained from a cross-sectional survey of 1,200 respondents drawn from a purposive selection of voters from the three existing Senatorial districts of Ogun Central, Ogun East and Ogun West. The second stage involved the proportionate selection of 12 local government areas from the three districts through purposive sampling technique. At the third stage, 10 political wards each were randomly selected per local government using stratified sampling technique. Questionnaire was adopted as research instrument and administered to 1,200 respondents in the selected political wards. However, only 1,185 respondents

who completed all the questionnaire items were used for data analysis. The generated data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Secondary data were utilised to complement the obtained primary data. Secondary data gathered from online newspapers, journals, articles, textbooks and other relevant documents were content analysed.

Results and Discussions

The result of the questionnaire items shows that 1,023 (86.3%) of the total respondents agreed that party politics in Ogun State between 2016 and 2019 encouraged intra-party crises, 125 (10.6%) respondents disagreed, and 37 (3.1%) were undecided. This implies that party politics in Ogun State during the period encouraged intra-party crises. Also, the result depicted that 1120 (94.5%) of the total respondents believed that party politics often provoked intra-party crises. The result further revealed that the major reason was the nature and character of Nigerian politics and zero-sum syndrome of the political elites, while 1,088 (91.8%) chose poor selection of candidates during party primaries, 1,041 (87.8%) chose battle for supremacy, 1,012 (85.4%), 986 (83.2%) and 844 (71.2%) agreed on succession politics, lack of intra-party crises management mechanisms and lack of internal democracy, respectively.

In line with the second research question, the result showed that 1,069 (90.2%) of the total respondents concurred that intra-party crises between 2016 and 2019 encouraged turbulent electoral contests in Ogun State, 89 (7.5%) thought otherwise, while 27 (2.3%) were undecided. It also reveals that 1,114 (94%) of the respondents believed that poorly managed intra-party crises was responsible for turbulent electoral contests in Ogun State, 47 (4%) thought otherwise, and 24 (2%) were indifferent. This implies that poorly managed intra-party crises in the state significantly precipitated turbulent electoral contests during the period under investigation.

The results of the third research question indicated that 1,095 (92.5%) of the total respondents agreed that intra-party crises within the APC and PDP affected the outcomes of the 2019 general elections, 61 (5.1%) disagreed, and 29 (2.4%) undecided. This implies that that intra-party crises within the APC and PDP affected the outcomes of the 2019 general elections. On the consequences of intra-party crises within the APC and PDP on the 2019 general elections, the result also showed that 1146 (96.7%) of the total respondents believed that the party switching was the major consequence of the crises, followed by low voter's turnout with 1,124 (94.9%). Others include fear and intimidation – 1,108 (93.5%), election fraud – 1,006 (84.9%), excessive vote-buying - 992 (83.7%), disruptive electoral campaigns - 961(81.1%) and post-election disputes - 873 (73.7%).

Findings from the analysis of the first research question revealed that party politics provoked intra-party crises in Ogun State between 2016 and 2019, due to the nature and character of Nigerian politics, poor selection of candidates, battle for supremacy, and succession politics, lack of intra-party crises management mechanism, and lack of internal democracy. The above findings are in line with the submissions of previous scholars (such as Olaniyi, *et al.,* 2018; Salaudeen, 2018). Olaniyi, *et al.* (2018) stated that the nature of Nigerian politics has been winner-takes-all syndrome and zero-sums game, which determines the character of Nigerian politicians. The aggrieved APC aspirants, for instance, decried imposition of candidates, automatic tickets, as well as lack of justice and internal democracy in the primaries held in most states of the federation including Ogun State.

Salaudeen (2018) opined that the intrigues surrounding the Ogun APC crises were all about succession crisis. Previous studies of Momodu & Matudi (2013), Olorungbemi (2014), Yusuf (2015), Okonkwo & Unaji (2016), Awofeso *et al.* (2017), and Moliki (2019), have demonstrated that absence of internal

democracy, personalisation of party structure, fierce competition to control governmental power, regarding politics as a form of investment by politicians, monopolisation of nomination process, interests of the party stalwarts and poor selection of candidates/unfair conduct of party primaries, among others, have created rift and serves as the basis for incessant intra-party crises in most of the political parties.

Moreso, findings from the analysis of the second research question established that there was significant nexus between intra-party crises and turbulent electoral contests in Ogun State between 2016 and 2019. This finding corroborates the earlier studies of Momodu & Matudi (2013), Olorungbemi (2014), Yusuf (2015), Ashindorbe (2018), and Moliki (2019), that intra-party crises have hindered free and fair elections and engineered electoral violence. Olorungbemi (2014) submitted that intra-party crises had resulted in election-motivated violence employed to influence voters' behaviour and electoral outcomes.

Furthermore, findings from the analysis of the third research question indicated that party switching, low voter's turnout, fear and intimidation, and election fraud, excessive vote-buying, disruptive electoral campaigns, and post-election disputes, were the consequences of intra-party crises within the APC and PDP on the 2019 general elections. The two dominant political parties during the period investigated experienced decamping of members to other political parties. Osoba and his supporters, for instance, defected to SDP and later returned to APC. Johnson and Olatunji (2018) reported that Amosun's faction and their supporters defected to APM, the platform under which Hon. Abdulkabir Akinlade contested for the 2019 governorship election.

No doubt, the 2019 general elections recorded violent clashes, fear and intimidation, election rigging and election fraud, while the electoral campaign was disrupted by political thugs engaged by opposition party (Onimisi & Omolegbe, 2019). Moreso, excessive vote-buying was a significant factor that determined the outcome of the elections in the state. It was also established that the two dominant political parties tried to outspend one another in a bid to influence and gain support of the electorate (Imosemi, Taiwo & Nzeribe, 2019). In addition, post-election disputes which led to legal tussles between Akinlade of APM and Dapo Abiodun of APC from the Election Tribunals to the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court, also drives home the point that the election results were questioned (Olatunji, 2019).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that party politics in Ogun State between 2016 and 2019 provoked intra-party crises towards the 2019 general elections. Moreover, there was a significant nexus between intra-party crises and turbulent electoral contests in Ogun State between 2016 and 2019. Equally, poorly managed intra-party crises in the state significantly precipitated turbulent electoral contests. The consequences of intra-party crises within the two dominant political parties (APC & PDP) during the 2019 general elections include party switching, low voters turnout, fear and intimidation, election fraud, excessive vote-buying, disruptive electoral campaigns, and post-election disputes, which led to cancellation of votes in some parts of the state. Hence, intra-party crises in Ogun State between 2016 and 2019 contributed largely to the turbulent electoral process recorded during the 2019 general elections.

Therefore, to achieve a virile and institutionalised intra-party politics, as well as guaranteeing peaceful and credible electioneering process in Nigeria, as a whole and Ogun State in particular, the study recommends the following:

i. Party internal democracy and institutionalisation should be strengthened. This is very paramount for both major and minor parties in the country towards

limiting the disagreements and crises being experienced in these political parties.

ii. There is the need for timely engagement of aggrieved party members and political leaders by the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party before it gets out of internal management and within the control of the party leaders.

iii. There should be proper management and aggregation of party membership interests. Perhaps, party leadership should take articulation and aggregation of every interest of individual members very serious with a view to repositioning political parties onto the path of excellence, stability and consolidation.

iv. is the study revealed that poor management and particularly lack of effective intra-party crises mechanism is one of the reasons internal crises of political parties could not be curtailed in due time. Therefore, there is the dire need to strengthen the intra-party crises management mechanism of Nigerian political parties in order to strengthen intra-party relations.

v. The regulatory bodies such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the National Assembly, Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC), and the National Orientation Agency (NOA), should take effective regulations of political party activities as a matter of priority, so as to avert further violent clashes as a result of intra-party crises and violence during elections.

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