

## **POLITICAL PARTIES AND DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA:**

### **CANDIDATE SELECTION, CAMPAIGN AND PARTY FINANCING IN PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the patterns and processes of candidate selection, party funding and campaign financing against the background of the institutional designs guiding such activities in the Nigeria's ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP). The paper argues that the internal and external rules are only used as window dressing in the conduct of PDP primaries, congresses and conventions. Often informal arrangements become the substantive rules of the process. Consequently, candidate selection processes are characterised by conflicts and violence and party funding and campaign financing conducted surreptitiously. The implication of this has been lack of internal democracy, transparency and accountability in the management of the PDP. It is therefore, arguably the power of clientelism, neopatrimonialism and excessiveness in the operation of presidential system that holds the party together, despite these seeming problems. This cumulatively is translated into the dialectics godfatherism. The paper suggests that these problems could only be addressed on the basis of a reconstruction of the party on a clearly define and articulate ideology. This would ensure a radical overhaul of the party structures at all levels. Ardent political will and determination are passionately needed to achieve these policy reforms.

**Keywords:** Democracy, Political parties, Candidate selection, Party Finance, Nigeria

#### **INTRODUCTION: THE CONCEPTS AND FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES**

Conceptual innovations in political and indeed social science generally are difficult to make. Little wonder, therefore, that simple and complex concepts elicit varying interpretations. This is the reason, why, it is important to review concepts and functions of political parties. For the latter, it helps in distinguishing between *ideal* and *substantive* functions of political parties so as to *appreciate* the performance of Nigeria's Fourth Republic parties. The important of this conceptual exploration and reviews of functions of political parties is that it placed one to better appreciate the performance and capabilities of Nigerian parties, as this would have significant implications for the quality of democracy *vis-à-vis* its sustainability in the country. What then is a political party and what are its main functions?

Conceptually, political parties are organisations whose members have values, ideals and aspirations in common and at least participate in the organised contest/struggles for political power. Coleman & Roseberg defined political parties as 'associations formally organised with the explicit and declared purpose of acquiring and to some extent maintaining legal control, either singly or in coalition or electoral competition with other associations over the personnel and the policy of the government of an actual or perspective sovereign state' (cited in Smith 1996: 199). This is similar to the views of

Henig & Pinda (1969: 11) who defines political parties in terms of a group of people acting together to achieve some political goals, which usually is control of government. Parties are simply organised or loosely organised groups under a recognised label with sole intent of controlling power through elections (Epstein, 1967). In addition to the above, Sartori (1976: 63) provides one of the widely cited definitions of political parties. For him, a political party is ‘any political group identified by an official label that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections (free or non-free), candidates for public office.’ Catto (2000: 59-74) conceives of parties in terms of their place in legislature, as membership of organisation, in the electorate, in government, in bureaucracy, and parties as systems. This has further complicated the idea of having a working definition(s) for the study of political parties, especially in emerging democracies, like Nigeria. For example, party as membership of organisation constitutes the ‘focal and rallying point for citizens actively interested in politics’ and ‘also a community taking care of many needs ranging from social protection to education, to leisure activities and even to personal relationships’ (Catto, 2000: 63).

The greatest problem in defining parties is whether it should be limited to explaining purely competitive parties, as found in stable advanced democracies, or provide a broader conception that embraces single party systems and anti-systems or subversive groups in autocratic democratic regimes (Janda, 1993:166). This problem is further informed by the dearth of research on political parties, especially in Africa. This is because of what Erdmann (2004:63) describes as sheer neglect of Western European bias of political party research and claims by Africanist scholars of ‘uniqueness of the subject.’ However, trying to minimise the problem of conceptualisation, Lawson (1976: 3-4) argues that ‘a political party is an organisation of individuals that seeks continuing electoral and non-electoral authorisation from the public (or a portion thereof) for specified representatives of that organisation to exercise the political power of particular government offices, claiming that such power would be exercised on behalf of that public.’ Despite, the theoretical and empirical utility of these definitions none seems to recognise the *officialness* of parties as political associations before qualifying as political parties.

On this note, political parties are defined here as *formally* recognised organisations whose members share certain common values, ideals and aspirations about how society should be politically, socio-culturally and economically organised for the common good and aspire to translate these ideals and values through the control of government by placing their representatives in a competitive *free, fair* and *honestly* conducted elections, without harassment, intimidation and threat of violence (Kura, 2005). This definition captures the broad understanding of political parties and can be applied to the study of developing democracies. In this respect, the definition also identifies the characteristics of parties and the nature of parties in both new and old democracies. In new democracies, such as Nigeria, parties are still at their *infancy* stage and many were formed along ethnic, tribal or even, in some cases, religious line. In short, parties reflect the seeming socio-cultural and political cleavages in the society. Since parties as organisations are formally recognised to participate in the political process, they are to a very significant extent identified as political parties. Non-party organisations no matter the laudability their objectives and administrative articulation, would not be termed as political parties until they are officially and formally recognised as such. That is perhaps, why political associations are required to be constitutionally registered by a relevant body before they are allowed to participate in political contestations of power. Participation in political contestations and establishing government essentialise the role of parties in democratic governance. Katz (1986: xi) argues that “... modern democracy is party democracy; the political institutions and practices that are the essence of democratic government... would be unthinkable without them.”

Thus far, all conceptualisations of parties, at least suggest their centrality in any democratic process. The centrality of parties in democratic process is informed by their unique functions. This is captured by Schattschneider's (1942: 3) classic observation that 'political parties created democracy ... [and] modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of political parties.' Political parties 'organise and rationalise politics' (Garrest, 2002:1). In politics, parties have been the 'main intermediaries between people and power' (Hilder, 2005). Political parties are a '*sine qua non* for the organisation of the modern democratic polity and for the expression of political pluralism' (van Bienen, 2004a: 1). Crotty (1993) submits that democratic system of government is 'unlikely and may not be possible in the absence of competitive political parties... orderly government, much less a democratic polity, cannot exist without some form of stabilised party representation.' Yanai (1999:7) reasons that modern political parties are special political institutions of representative democracy. These cases categorically underscore the unique and central function of political parties in democratic system. Overall, political parties are seen as inevitable in establishing the necessary link(s) between the state and civil society. They are the gatekeepers and the measuring political barometer for indicating the degree and effectiveness of the practice of democracy. Being the heart of democracy, they make and/or mar a stable political system.

Some of the functions/role of political parties include: governance, representation, policy making and execution, interest aggregation and articulation, peaceful change of government, making government effective and responsive (opposition parties function also as pressure group), accountability, social and integration functions. In sum, wherever a political party exists, it tends to perform common functions at different stages of economic, social, political and judicial development. Diamond (1997: xxiii) stresses that:

[P]olitical parties remain important if not essential instruments for representing political constituencies and interests, aggregating demands and preferences, recruiting and socialising new candidates for office, organising the electoral competition for power, crafting policy alternatives, setting the policy-making agenda, forming effective governments, and integrating groups and individuals into the democratic process.

LaPalombara and Weiner (1966) argue that be it in a democratically free society or under totalitarian regimes, political party is expected to organise public opinion and to communicate demands of the populace to the decision-making and executing powers of government. They maintain that 'the party must articulate to its followers the concept and meaning of the broader community even if the aim of the party leadership is to modify profoundly or even to destroy the broader community and replace it with something else' (LaPalombara and Weiner, 1966: 3). Parties' ability to perform many or all of these functions depends on their ability to win control of government or a share thereof. It means that public office is important for patronage that helps in recruitment and retainment of party activists and potential candidates for public office and indeed essential for party leadership development (Manning, 2005). More empirically, whether parties in a particular polity are able to effectively perform these functions is a matter of the degree of party and party system institutionalisation (Kura, 2008). By extension, party and party system institutionalisation is measured by the internal and external activities of parties. Internal refers to all those factors that are only internal to party organisation, such as internal democracy, complexities, finance, adaptability, etc, and external refers to the relationship of parties with their external environment.

This paper, however, is limited to two political processes crucial to both internal and external dimensions of party institutionalisation *vis-à-vis* their performance either in or out of government. The two processes are equally influenced

by patronage as important incentive fuelling party activities and functions. These are (i) candidate selection/nomination, and (ii) party and electoral campaigns financing. The aim of the study is to examine the 'real empirical' process of candidate selection across all governmental levels and processes of financing political parties and electoral campaigns in comparison with or against the background of laws and regulations governing these activities. These issues determine the location of power and locus of decision-making within and outside the parties. The idea is that effective functioning of Nigeria's Fourth Republic political parties hinges radically on the effectiveness of the processes of candidates' selections and sources of finance and financing of electoral campaigns.

Within the broad spectrum of this analysis, the implications of these issues in light of Nigeria's political development and the quest to implement realistic, coherent and sustainable policies, regarding for example, oil revenues, industrial development and poverty reduction are examined. This suffices to argue that realistic policy recommendations are proffered for transforming political parties that would contribute towards the development of sustainable and stable democratic governance in Nigeria. The study is limited to the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) for some obvious reasons. It is the ruling party since 1999; the only party with largest membership relative to others; with largest percentage of membership in the Nigeria's bicameral legislature; the only party with largest elected governors and highest members of state legislature; has the largest elected local government chairmen, and the only party which enjoys Incumbent Resource Advantage.

The study is structured thus: following this introduction-theoretical conceptualisations, the second section briefly provides the methodology for this research. Section three examines the origin and formation of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in light of the forces that shaped its creation and dominance. Section four analyses the process of selecting/nominating candidates within the context of the internal and external laws and regulations governing these activities. Section five identifies various sources of party funding and electoral campaign financing against the background of the laws regulating them. The last section concludes the paper with relevant and realistic policy recommendations.

#### **DEFINING PARTY FUNDING AND CANDIDATES' SELECTION**

Party funding and candidate selection are the two most important activities of party organisation through which clientelistic networks are strengthened. They are also important areas, which if handle well can aid party institutionalisation. In particular, research on the issues of party funding is grossly limited. Fisher and Eisenstadt (2004) argue that ironically, despite extensive studies on virtually all aspects of parties, financial issues seem to have eluded and escape the attention of academic researchers. In fact, such studies rarely exist on the nexus between party finance and candidate selection as potentially relevant areas that undermine and/or strengthen party organisation. The importance of party funding is underscored by the contribution money can make in democracy and especially in developing economies where few elites control both the sources and distribution of money. By implication, money more than anything, is a source of political power and political power in turn is a source of economic power.

Moreover, the centrality of party funding is underlined by how even in Western democracies it contributes to general crises affecting political party institutions. For example, Hopkin (2004) argues that the manner in which parties fund their activities has been quite embarrassing. For example, series of corruption scandals have affected Western European

parties and their leaders. He stresses that in Italy, France, Belgium, and Spain and even in Germany and the UK, parties have been involved in funding scandals related to corruption and violation of funding regulations. Similarly, studies have evidently documented the growing increase in corruption through political party funding (Bryan and Baer, 2005; Williams, 2000a & b; Pujas and Rhodes, 2001; Philip, 2001). The diversities of democracies as well as different typologies of parties suggest that party financing activities differ from one democracy to another and from one types of party to another.

In new democracies, party membership could be created through the use of state resources to distribute to clients and other citizens as incentives. Individuals are easily enticed to become party members and supporters in anticipation of patronage and largesse from prospective party candidates. According to Hopkin (2004) these favours can include but not restricted to provisions of government jobs to party members or their relatives, allocation of public contracts or preferential consideration in the allocation of welfare benefits, such as housing, disability allowances, and other discretionary benefits. This method helps parties to develop mass membership organisation and strengthen their grassroots penetration. In contemporary clientele democracies, poverty, low level of education and general economic underdevelopment as well as the socio-cultural nature of such societies contribute to the “success” of clientelistic strategies of party funding. Perhaps, because of its complexities and susceptibility to corruption and absolute abuse, certain mechanisms are designed to regulate party funding. The importance of institutions as rules and regulations and as organisations has drawn the attention of political science and comparativist scholars.

Just like party funding, candidate selection and nomination procedures differ among democracies and among typologies of parties. There are two categories of candidates selected and/or nominated by political parties. Candidates are selected for manning party offices across all the branches and chapters of political parties. Candidates are nominated also to contest general elections. Unlike for party leadership positions, in the latter, candidates are selected by different political parties to compete in national or local elections. In any case, candidate nomination, which in broader terms is synonymous with recruitment, is one of the important functions of political parties across democracies. In fact, many party scholars define a political party in terms of this function (See Schlesinger, 1991; Sartori, 1976). Katz (2001:277) notes that candidate selection “is a vital activity in the life of any political party. It is the primary screening device in the process through which the party in office is reproduced. As such, it raises central questions about the ideological and sociological identities of the party as a whole”. The method(s) which a party(s) employs in candidate selections and nominations has incontrovertible 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). Importantly, Katz and Mair (1995) argue that the technique of a party’s candidate selection explains and provides adequate information on (i) how the party functions internally and (ii) the location of political power in a particular country.

Methods of candidate selection include primaries (either restricted to party caucuses only or extended to ordinary party members), internal party elections, centralisation, consensus, etc. The differences in candidate selection procedures among parties is explained partly by the nature of a political party, and partly by “national laws, intra-party decision-making and the electoral fortunes of parties” (Pennings and Hazan, 2001:269). However, the extent to which parties democratise 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 these laws.

From the foregoing theoretical overview, it is clear that party funding and candidate selection are important activities of political parties. Not only they are part of the general crises and challenges affecting contemporary parties, but they are also significant as they could strengthen and/or undermined the capacity and capability of any political party. Nevertheless, in developing democracies, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa these activities are interwoven. They are virtually two sides of the same coin. The major actors of party funding wield enormous influence in candidate selection. Nigeria's ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) provides relevant empirical example.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

There is of course no single accepted way of conducting research. The ways researchers carry out their research depend upon a variety of factors. These factors, according to Snape and Spencer (2003: 1), include: researchers' beliefs about the nature of the social world and what can be known about it (ontology), the nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired (epistemology), the purposes and goals of the research, the characteristics of the research participants, the audience for the research, the financiers of the research, and the position and environment of the researchers themselves. Based on these reasons, qualitative method is employed in this research. This is because it is suitable in capturing the "fabric of global phenomena that include complex interactions of culture, institutions, societal norms and government regulations, among a few concerns" (Kiessling and Harvey, 2005:22).

Bryman (2004: 46) maintains that a qualitative approach to research delineates "an approach to the study of the social world which seeks to describe and analyse the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being studied." Strauss and Corbin (1990: 17) conceive it as "any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification." In other words, in investigating the issue of candidates' selections, party and campaign financing, one must delve into the context and interact with party functionaries and other political architects of party creation and management to critically understand their views, attitudes and experiences on specific issues regarding political parties. Rules, norms, regulations, values, views and behaviours are the institutional issues that are largely non-statistical constructs, hence not easily amenable to quantification. Also, in this kind of research, defining a statistical sample is very difficult if not impossible. The process of party organisation and the nature of its administrative process and functionaries differ from one party to another. This dynamism and difference can only be adequately captured by qualitative techniques.

Moreover, socio-cultural issues, norms, economy, politics and other idiosyncratic variables and internal party dynamics can only be captured and investigated through qualitative methods because of its flexibility and depth in capturing these complexities. Importantly, employing this approach provides the benefits of complementarities various instruments of data collection and analysis and especially in ensuring "methodological rigour as well as measures for reliability and validity" (Kiessling and Harvey, 2005). Moreover, qualitative techniques are suitable for their taking onboard people's experiences and the meaning they individually or collectively attach to the dynamism of party activities and electoral system. This approach, with its characteristics of profundity and thoroughness, is more particularistic about contextual issues (Devine, 2002: 199), such as political party organisation, administrative arrangement, values, adaptability and electoral system. This is done by placing informants' attitudes and behaviour in the context of their individual experiences and the wider social, economic and political settings under which political parties operate. This is a holistic approach that captures the meanings, divergent views, process and context (Bryman, 1988: 62; Devine, 2002: 199), that

are the defining elements of the study of democracy and Nigeria's political parties with particular reference to the ruling PDP.

The study adopted an inductive approach in which "theory and evidence are interwoven to create a unified whole; and the concepts and generalisations are wedded to their context" (Neuman, 2003:79). Contrastingly, quantitative methods are relevant for theory testing or verification and hypothesis testing (Cresswell, 2003; Montiel, 1998). Moreover, quantitative techniques assume a "universal paradigm" that "uses evidence to test generalisations of an abstract and law-like character and tends towards acceptance of convergence" (Kiesling and Harvey, 2005:30). Quantitative approach is positivist and deductive in nature. Positivist approach is limited compared to interpretivist, as the later is more "sensitive to context" (Neuman, 2003:80). Due to its sensitivity to context, interpretive approach has "limited generalisations", which are context specific. Generally, quantitative data and analysis are suitable to case studies only when they are "not too complex" (Gillham, 2000:80). Nevertheless, qualitative method, as explained earlier adds value to the data and findings by its ability to capture complex socio-cultural issues, "people's experiences and gives meaning to events, processes and the environment of their normal setting" (Kiesling and Harvey, 2005:30).

For the qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with relevant party officials and officials of the Nigeria's electoral commission. Included in the interview were key political figures, such as chairmen of local governments, governors and members of the legislature. Similarly, as part of the qualitative approach to the study, documentary analysis was employed. This is a situation where relevant documents, such as newspapers, books, journals, party documents and election results, electoral acts, etc were critically analysed in relation to the major objectives of the study. While, discourse analysis is employed in analysing documentary information, transcription and coding method was employed in the analysis of primary data generated from interviews and observations.

### **INSTITUTIONAL DESIGNS FOR THE OPERATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA**

Institutions defined as organisations or rules governing the structure and activities of organisations are important. They matter (Norris, 2004; Peters, 2000), because they define operational structure, influence, regulate and change behaviours and outcome. This is the perspective of the rational choice institutionalism. That political actors have a "fixed set of preferences or taste ... behave entirely instrumentally so as to maximise the attainment of these preferences, and do so in a highly strategic manner that presumes extensive calculation" (Hall and Taylor, 1996:12). It is, however, important to caution that not all institutions produce desired outcomes. Political actors could manipulate institutions to achieve their goals. In extreme circumstances, institutions are even jettisoned for personal aggrandisements. In such situations, conflicts and misunderstandings could lead to organisational incapacity or even the most debilitating outcomes. In analysing the issues of candidates' selection process, campaign and party financing in the PDP, reference is given to the operation of the party within the contexts of the relevant institutional designs.

Accordingly, there are five categories of institutional designs governing the formation, operations and activities of political parties in Nigeria. These are:

1. The 1999 Constitution;
2. The Constitution of Individual political parties;
3. Electoral Acts (2002 and 2006);

4. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) statutory rules; and
5. Other informal rules.

Sections 221-29 of the 1999 Constitution stipulate criteria for the creation of political parties. This is where our definition (of parties) becomes relevant to understanding the formation and operation of political parties in Nigeria. Importantly, for any political association to qualify as a political party, it must fulfil the following criteria:

- a) its names and addresses of its national officers are registered with INEC;
- b) its membership is open to all Nigerians;
- c) its constitution is accepted and registered with INEC;
- d) its name, symbols or logo does not contained any ethnic or religious or regional connotation;
- e) Its headquarters is located in Abuja (Section 222).

Similarly, the constitution and other statutory rules of the political parties must accordingly provide:

- a) for the conduct of a periodic election on a democratic basis for the election of its principal officers, executive members and members of its governing body, at regular intervals not exceeding four years;
- b) members of its executive committee and other principal officers must reflect the federal character of Nigeria, and these officers must belong to different states not being less than  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the 36 states and FCT (Section 223, Sub-sections 1-2).

Individual political parties' constitutions provide detailed rules and regulations governing the internal operations of the party. It also provides the statutory laws establishing all relevant structures and organs of the party as well as their functions. The constitution provides procedures for the establishment of ad hoc committees, such as disciplinary and inquiry committees. It also, as well, provides procedures for amendments. Importantly, party constitution provides the *modus operandi* for the appointment, selection, nomination and/or election of the principal officers and nomination of candidates for public office. The constitution also provides detail sources of party funding and financing and mechanism for managing such funds. The procedure for election/selection or appointment is *prima-facie* for engendering internal democracy within the party. There are two categories of party candidates that are elected: the principal officers that are selected or elected through congresses and conventions and candidates fielded to contest elections against other parties' candidates across all levels of government. In addition to constitution, guidelines are also periodically formulated to regulate party conventions and congresses.

Electoral Act is another category of statutory rules governing the activities of parties. It is usually provided by INEC subject to enactment by the legislature (National Assembly). It is provided prior to general elections. Nigeria had 2002 and 2006 Electoral Acts for 2003 and 2007 general elections, respectively. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is the second most important source of institutional designs governing the activities of political parties in Nigeria. The 1999 Constitution empowers it to register and monitor all the operations and activities of political parties. No wonder therefore, often times, INEC is at logger heads with most of the parties. The conflicts range from that of funding to complying with constitutional provisions on internal and external audit to congresses and conventions. The last category of the source of institutional designs is the informal rules. These rules are not usually statutory or coded.

They are generated from socio-cultural norms and values governing people's behaviours and activities. For example, the issue of rotational presidency seems to be accepted within the PDP and political elites, even though is not constitutionally enshrined. The informal rules also work in the *guise* of clientelism and neopatrimonialism. To a large extent, it is a universal norm that patronage is provided to party loyalists. In advance democracies, there are internal party rules guiding the distribution of patronage, whereas in developing new democracies, such as Nigeria, the highest donor and strong political party architects determine who gets what, when, why and how. In some cases, personal, family, business relations and even *ritual* interaction strongly influence how patronage is distributed. It is this chain of patronage distribution that holds the PDP together.

Rules and regulations are essential in creating institutions, regulating and changing actors' behaviours and in achieving organisational objectives. The extent to which those institutional designs achieve the expected outcomes is a function of the socio-cultural context under which organisations operate and the actors' behaviours. Institutional designs are not end in themselves but means of achieving outcomes. That is perhaps why institutions are not fixed and static. They change in accordance with circumstances and changing objectives of organisations driven again by changing human needs and desires. Ironically, even though the PDP has been jettisoning the rules, regulations and guidelines governing its operations and activities, it is able to withstand internal conflicts and crises. It can be argued, therefore, that institutional designs provide marginal contribution to the stability of the party. What seems to work perfectly for the party is the power of clientelism and neopatrimonialism, of course, superintended and/or supplemented by the (abuse of) powers of presidential democracy.

### **PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY: HISTORY OF FOUNDATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

People's Democratic Party (PDP) has a longer history. It is argued that the genesis of the party was the Institute of Civil Society (ICS) established in 1997 purposely to enlighten Nigerians about their "rights and obligations in a militarised political atmosphere" (Maja-Pearce, 1999: 79). This was the period when military rule reached its peak in Nigeria, characterised by political assassination, murder, kidnappings, and intimidation. The ICS later transformed into G18 (Group of 18), mostly Northern politicians and academics that vehemently opposed General Abacha's planned self-succession. The G18 was later enlarged to G34 to include people from other regions equally opposed to Abacha military rule and particularly his self-succession political designs. Thus the association was popularly known as G34. The G18 wrote and circulated a letter rejecting the self-succession of Abacha. This action earned many of them arbitrary arrest and intimidation.

Following the death of Abacha in June 1998 and the unveiling of the transition programme under his successor, General Abubakar, the G34, along with other political association, such as People's Democratic Movement (PDM) headed by Atiku Abubakar, All Nigeria Congress (ANC), Social Progressive Party (SPP), South-South Group (SSG), New Era Alliance (NERA), National Centre Party (NCP), National League for Good Governance (NLGG), People's National Forum (PNF), National Summit and Hope '99, came together to form the People's Democratic Party (PDP). Accordingly, on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1998, over 125 political associations endorsed the formation of PDP. The party was formally inaugurated on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 (OM, Interview; IG, Interview; IS, Interview; *The Guardian*, 1998; *The Umbrella*, 2000).

In summary, what is interesting about the formation of the PDP was how various political associations that had been at the centre of politics in Nigeria since 1983 came together to form the party. For example, the PDM was established by General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua in order to transform politics from that influenced by ethnic and religious cleavages to one transcending parochial interests. Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was the Chief of Army Staff for General Obasanjo's Military Government from 1976 – 1979, and of course elder brother to the current President, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. Following Shehu Yar'Adua's death, his political lieutenant, Atiku Abubakar took over the leadership of the PDM. According to Agbaje *et al* (2007), PDM was a radical political association meant to change the political status quo, of especially, the North. This was because most political elites from the North seem not actually to represent the true interests of the region and thus did not have grassroots support and mobilisation. Prominent members of the PDM transformed into People's Front (PF) and sought registration during Babangida's and Abacha's transition to civil rule programmes. In both cases, however, its application was rejected. PF was actually the dominant political group in the Social Democratic Party (PDP) of the aborted Third Republic (Agbaje *et al.*, 2007).

All Nigeria Congress (ANC) led by Solomon Lar, Sunday Awoniyi and so on was the second dominant group in the formation of PDP. Many of its members were former political stalwarts in the NPN and NRC during Babangida. It was also denied registration by both Babangida and Abacha transitions. The SPP and PSP led by Abubakar Rimi and Bola Ige also played key roles in the formation of the PDP. As for the PSP, the marriage did not last long, as it breaks away during inauguration to form Alliance for Democracy. The retired military officers both loyal to Babangida and Abacha played fundamental role in the formation of the party. PDP was therefore, a conglomeration of differing political interests necessitated by the need to throw the military out of power (Kura, 2008b). As can be discerned from the various interests represented in the PDP, it is only a matter of time that their sharp, albeit, irreconcilable differences would manifest. Conversely, this conglomeration of interests presented the party as having national spread. The 1999 local government, state and national elections provide a good illustration. The party faced its serious threat when the conflict between President Obasanjo and his VP, Atiku Abubakar led to the break way of the former's apologists to form Action Congress.

#### **CANDIDATES' SELECTION PROCESS IN THE PDP: TALES OF CONFLICTS AND LITIGATIONS**

Structurally, the PDP is organised and administered at Ward, Local Government, Senatorial District, State, Zonal and National levels. At each of these organisational levels, there are relevant organs responsible for managing the party affairs. For example, at the National level, there are five organs, *viz*: the National Convention (NC), National Executive Committee (NEC), National Working Committee (NWC), Board of Trustees (BOT), and the National Caucus. There are also similar organs at all other levels of the party structure.

The duties and functions of each of these organs are clearly stated in the 2006 PDP Constitution (as amended). What seems crucial here is not actually the organ of the party but the process of selecting, nominating or electing officers to man these organs effectively. Already the 1999 Constitution and INEC statutory rules mandated parties to conduct periodic democratic congresses and conventions to select these officers. In doing so, parties must inform INEC about such exercises for it to supervise the process.

Article 16, Section 16.1-4 of the PDP constitution unambiguously stated the mode of election of these officers. It states that:

The National Convention, the Zonal, State, Local Government Area and Ward Congresses shall meet to elect the officers of the party at the various levels of the party structure as specified in this constitution except in the Federal Capital Territory where officers of the party shall be elected based on geopolitical zones.

Every registered member of the party who has satisfied the requirements for nomination and election under this Constitution, the Constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria or any other law, rules or regulations in force shall be eligible to contest for any of the offices of the party:

Provided that officers of the party shall also be eligible to re-contest for any office as long as they conform with (sic) the provision of the party guidelines.

The guidelines for elections to any office of the party shall be approved by the National Executive Committee of the party in accordance with the provision of this Constitution;

No member of the party shall be qualified for nomination or election or appointment into any of the offices of the party, unless he or she has been a registered member for at least 18 months, and is of *good financial standing in the party*, except there is a waiver by the appropriate executive committee (emphasis added, Article 16, Section 16.1-4).

Apart from the selecting and/or electing of officers to manage party organs, the party also conducts congresses and primaries to nominate candidates for national elections into public offices as defined in the 1999 Constitution. Depending on when national elections are to be conducted, the process of electing party officers and the period of such are different from primaries for nominating candidates for general election. In selecting party officers, members of the PDP contest against one another, while in the general election PDP candidates contest against other party candidates. However, where party congresses coincide with the period of national elections, the two processes are simultaneously conducted. This was the case in 2007 when PDP conducted congresses and primaries simultaneously to elect party officers and nominate candidates for general elections. The guidelines for nomination of candidates into public offices are stated clearly in Article 17, Section 17.1-17.2a-i. For example, the Constitution states that:

The National Executive Committee shall, subject to the provision of this Constitution, formulate guidelines and regulations for the nomination of candidates for election into public offices at all levels and shall be the final authority for resolving all disputes relating to the choice of candidates for the party for any elections and for confirming the names or list of names of candidates for the party for any elective public office in the federation (Section 17.1).

In addition, to the above, section 17.2a-i in particular, states that the National Executive Committee shall regulate the procedure for selecting the party's candidates for elective offices. For example, NEC is to regulate National Convention

where the party's presidential candidate is to be nominated. Similarly, primaries for governorship candidate should be held at state congress, at local government constituency headquarters for council chairman and House of Assembly, at constituency headquarters for House of Representatives and at Senatorial constituency headquarters for senators. At ward level, councillorship candidates and 25 delegates by direct primaries in which all registered party members participate, are to be elected. As required by the PDP Constitution, NEC does formulate additional guidelines to regulate congresses and National Conventions.

Evidently, despite these rather laudable institutional designs guiding candidates' selection and nomination, why often the process turned out chaotic and quarrelsome. In some instances, the exercise results into violent conflict with attendant consequences of participants sustaining fatal injuries and even lost of lives? The simple answer might be that these rules and regulations are sent to the dogs. It is worthy to note that the institutional designs in the PDP are meant to stabilise the party and ensure internal democracy in its organisation. Students of party democracy believe that institutional designs strengthen internal and external democratic practice of political parties and democracy in general (Ballington, 2004; Scarrow, 2005).

As stated earlier, the PDP constitutionally adopts primaries as mechanism for selecting party officers and nomination of candidates for public office. The constitution is very clear as to who is qualified to participate and contest election. However, even though the constitution states that all registered members of the party are qualified to contest any party office and/or be nominated, controversially, the same constitution clearly states that any member of the party contesting election must be of *good financial standing in the party* (Section 16.4). By implication the same provision seems to favour only individuals with strong financial-base or must obtain the approval of some wealthy political moguls, popularly known in Nigeria as godfathers. It is therefore, not an exaggeration to say that since the formation of the party in 1999, it has been radically hijacked by notorious wealthy political elites. Thus all its congresses and conventions always turn out to be chaotic. The reality of the situation is demonstrated when even ardent party members pray for the break up of the party:

My prayer is that PDP should break into pieces. This party is made up of strange bed fellows. They are people with different ideologies coming together to share the national cake. Our prayer is that it chokes them to death (Abdullateef, 2005).

The internal crisis in the PDP accentuated by the nature of its congresses and convention reached its peak when both the President and his VP were engaged in serious political battle. Expressing his dissatisfaction with the internal problems rocking the party, the Vice President, while delivering a keynote address to the National Conference on 'Election 2007: Protecting the People's Mandate' states that:

Most elections are "rigged" before they occur because candidates are eliminated through various methods. These include subverting party constitution and rules, the use of thugs, corrupting officials to disqualify or annul the nominations of some candidates and other illegal methods of distorting the wishes of the electorate.... In a recent interview with the Board of Editors of *Thisday*, I stated that I was worried about the undemocratic tendencies in Nigerian political parties.... [He further stressed that] political elites have become used to the *centralisation*,

*concentration and personalisation* of political power which are the central elements of modern despotism (emphasis in the original. Abubakar Atiku, 2005: 13-7).

The internal problem in the PDP reared its ugly head after the dissolution of the NWC and the expiration of the tenure of all national and local executives of the party, at its NEC meeting of September 9<sup>th</sup> 2005, PDP approved the conduct of a non-elective congress and national convention. This meant that the then executives of the party would merely retain their positions. The congress and convention would simply be for affirmation and endorsement (Ajayi, 2005). Thus, a few days later, four members of the party, Godies Ikechi, Abubakar Gomia, Salisu Abba and Yemi Ajayi went to Abuja High Court seeking an order to stop PDP from implementing the NEC decision and conducting a non-elective congress and convention. In its judgement of 10<sup>th</sup> October 2005, the Abuja High Court, presided by Justice Sunday Aladetoyinbo declared the non-elective congress and convention illegal, contravening Article 16 of the PDP Constitution (Oji and Onyekamuo, 2005).

The party leadership announced its acceptance of the court judgement and promised to obey the court. The party conducted the Ward and LGA congresses on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2005, but though it promised to adhere to the Court judgement, it adopted affirmation for its congresses at the local levels. The congresses took place in such a way that lists of executives were drawn up from Abuja and submitted to the various local chapters for affirmation. By this method, according to Adebisi and Epia (2005), PDP disenfranchised grassroots members of the party as they could not exercise their right to vote. They further noted that the wider interpretation of the decision is that it was targeted at curtailing the influence of some notable members of the party, especially the Vice President and his loyalists. Furthermore, the pattern of the conduct of the exercise revealed that guidelines for the congress were not even approved by NEC as provided for in the Constitution and voice-vote method was adopted instead of balloting.

This has led to outbreak of violence in several areas, for example, Adamawa, Taraba, Plateau, Kano, Edo, Rivers, Anambra, Lagos and Oyo states. In Ogun state, the congress was dominated by violence. In fact, Oji and Onyekamuo (2005) reported that the trouble started when about one hundred thugs stormed the congress brandishing dangerous weapons, including guns, machetes and cutlasses. Their grievance was that the list of members of executives that emerged at the ward congress was selected by some of the party leaders. Similar stories were reported in almost all states, especially Delta, Bayelsa, Oyo, Nasarawa, and so on, where the congresses were conducted. In fact, in Delta State the congress did not even take place, but results were still presented. Not only were the results of the congress contentious, but at least three people were reported dead in Taraba state, and six in Degema LGA of Rivers State over disagreement of who controlled certain wards in the area (see Adebisi & Epia, 2005; Amaize, 2005; Ebireri, *et al*, 2005).

Figure 1: Examples of conflict during the October 2005 PDP Congress of Selected states

Oyo State:	Parallel congresses by supporters of Governor Ladoja & Godfather Adedibu
Rivers State:	Six people died during the congress
Ogun State:	Violence and the Speaker of House of Assembly and a Commissioner were held hostage by aggrieved youths
Bayelsa:	Congresses postponed by the Governor due to security threats, but the leader of the coordinating committee of the congress Chief Adewale Omojuwa reported peaceful conduct of the exercise and results presented
Plateau:	Circulation of court order halted the exercise and created confusion
Delta:	Coordinators from Abuja were manhandled by youth for alleged imposition of lists of candidates.
Nasarawa:	No congresses held
FCT Abuja:	Sporadic shootings by security forces to prevent violence characterise in exercise
Edo:	Parallel congresses were conducted

The congresses were undemocratic and non-transparent. This has affected the party's grassroots mobilisation and membership identification and attachment to the party. The party made spirited efforts to resolve the crisis caused by the congresses through the formation of six Review Panels by the National Congresses and Convention Planning Committee (NCCPC) to address, primarily, the wide spread complaints of irregularities. However, despite this effort, as far as the research has uncovered the disputes and irregularities associated with revalidation of membership have not even been resolved, let alone that of the congresses that followed.

The seeming intractable crisis in the PDP led many aggrieved members in collaboration with some members of AD, to form another political party – the Advanced Congress of Democrats (ACD). Sklar *et al* (2006) argue that ACD launched on 20 April 2006, consisting mainly of former PDP members who oppose the President and others from AD. ACD went into alliance with factions of other parties like AD, APGA and others to transform into Action Congress (AC) (Suleiman, 2006; Shariff, 2006). The PDP and Obasanjo sacked Atiku Abubakar as a member of the party and as Vice President, respectively, a decision which the VP contested in court challenging the powers of the President to sack him from his job. The deepness of the crisis in the ruling party took yet another dimension when some members of the party, under the leadership of Chief Solomon Lar, the pioneer National Chairman of PDP, announced the formation of a parallel PDP. Announcing the formation of the parallel PDP on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2006, the former Deputy National Chairman (South), Shu'aibu Oyedokun stated that following an emergency NEC meeting, a decision was reached for the formation of a parallel executive to that of Senator Ahmadu Ali, the National Chairman of the party. Furthermore, the contention of the parallel PDP was that the leadership of the party was not elected in accordance with the party constitution and that the party was "being run by persons not recognised by the party's constitution or the laws of the land.... Pursuant to the above situation and in order to give a sense of direction for the party and to ensure that our party does not continue to die into oblivion and [...] to ensure that the leadership vacuum existing today is filled up, we held a meeting to take action and convey same to the larger group of our party members nation-wide" (cited in Ajayi, 2006). He further argued that "PDP, as far as

the law is concerned, has no persons legally piloting its affairs. The situation is not contemplated by the constitution of the party” (cited in Ologbondiyan and Andoor, 2006).

The creation of a parallel PDP was the consequence of the problematic nature of its congresses and conventions. However, despite this, the party was able to withstand the internal crises. It can be argued that the power of clientelism, neo-patrimonialism, the use of force and intimidation, it can be rocked by struggle for power to satisfy personal political aggrandisement. However, the power of largesse distribution and the nature of the presidential system (in which the president is the most powerful institution) have so far combined to keep the party going.

Just like the preceding ones, the 2006 congresses and convention ended in chaos, confusion and defections. In fact, the PDP gubernatorial primaries led to a series of litigations and threw the party into further turmoil. What distinguished the 2006 exercise is that many candidates that had been elected at the congresses were later changed by the party. For example, in Lagos State, Mrs Hilder Williams won the primary election, but Senator Musliu Obanikoro was officially declared the candidate. In Rivers State, Speaker Rotimi Amaechi won the primaries only to be expelled out of the party. In Imo State Senator Ifeanyi Ararume won the primary election, but the party replaced him with Charles Ugwu who came last at the election. However, Ararume took his case to the Supreme Court, which overturned the decision of PDP and ruled that the party did not follow democratic processes and violated its constitution in replacing Ararume, declaring that he remained the candidate of the party. Dissatisfied with Ararume’s action, the NWC expelled him just two days to election (Okocha, 2007; Ogbodo *et al*, 2007; Ajayi and Nkwopara, 2007; *Leadership*, 2007). Whilst this represents a brazen disregard of the rule of law, undermining the right of party members to seek redress at a court of law, it left the party without gubernatorial candidates in Imo and Rivers States. The situation was similar in Oyo, Sokoto, Kebbi, and Katsina, among others. The 2006 congresses left the party with even deeper divisions and acrimony.

Another situation which affected the organisational stability of the party was the National Convention for the 2007 presidential election in which Governor Umaru Yar’Adua was elected the party’s flag bearer. Prior to the convention, twelve Governors had indicated their interest on the basis of Obasanjo’s directive to choose one amongst them to succeed him. However, after intensive campaigns all the Governors withdrew their candidatures. Their withdrawal was said to be connected with the use of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission EFCC), which had compiled ‘damaging dossiers’ against many of them (NDI, 2006/7:1). In fact, informal sources stated that some Governors that appeared unwilling to comply were shown their EFCC files and coerced to either accept or face impeachment and subsequent prosecution. The choice of Yar’Adua, in the views of National Democratic Institute (2006/7), was to break the formidable influence of Abubakar Atiku over the political machinery of General Shehu Musa Yar’ Adua (who was the elder brother of Umar Ya’ Adua). In addition, knowing that Muhammadu Buhari would emerge as the ANPP candidate The choice of Yar’ Adua seems to have been a well designed political strategy by Obasanjo, to have someone that could be manipulated, so that he could continue to pull the strings despite failing to win the third term amendment (Bloomfield, 2006). This is perhaps why at the convention, PDP delegates were made to ratify a new clause in the constitution that makes the President the father of PDP and Chairman Board of Trustees after May 2007. According to Irem (2006), the process leading to the emergence of Yar’ Adua “was not truly democratic because there seemed to be an undemocratic consensus by leaders of the party prior to the convention in favour of Yar’ Adua.” Indeed, if there was a democratic process Yar’ Adua, who is unpopular and perceived as incompetent, would be unlikely to get elected. The

exercise that led to his election was seen “as a charade, a mockery of democracy” (Bloomfield, 2006). Despite the crises that followed after the congresses and convention, the party remains the most formidable among all the political parties in the country. This is the power of a ruling party!

### **GODFATHERING PARTY FUNDING AND CANDIDATE SELECTION IN NIGERIA**

As stated earlier, funding is one of the most crucial issues for political parties in Africa and indeed for the PDP in Nigeria. In fact, when democracy is labelled as an expensive political system, it was not unconnected with huge sum of money needed by parties to provide offices, equipment, staffing, campaigning, organising congresses and conventions and payment of litigation fees and so on. Perhaps, in view of the challenging nature of party funding and finance, Section 228(c) obliged government to provide grants to registered political parties. The procedure for sharing annual grants is that: 10 per cent of the amount will be shared equally to all registered parties, while 90 per cent is shared in proportion to each party’s number of seats in the National Assembly (Senate and House of Representatives). Similarly, Section 90 of 2006 Electoral Act clearly states the regulations of party finances. Specifically, it requires the National Assembly to approve a grant for disbursement to all political parties contesting elections. In addition, Sections 92-3 of the 2006 Electoral Act allow parties to source funds from private individuals.

Accordingly, the PDP sources of funding have clearly been stated in its Constitution. Article 18, Sections 18.1(a-f) and 18.2 state that:

There shall be established and maintained for the party a fund into which shall be paid all:

- (a) subscriptions, fees and levies from membership of the party;
- (b) proceeds from investments made by the party;
- (c) subventions and donations
- (d) gifts and grants by individuals or groups of individuals as authorised by law;
- (e) loans approved by the National Executive Committee;
- (f) such other moneys as may be lawfully received by the party (Section 18.1).

Similarly, Article 18.2(a) peg annual subscription fee to ₦200 only. The party also levies its elected public officers as follows: elected public officers in various legislatures, appointed public officers at all levels, such as ministers, commissioners, special advisers, etc, and ambassadors 5% of basic annual salary, while Board chairmen at federal level are to pay 5% of their remunerations and allowances. Other sources of fund for the party include subventions and donations from individual and friends that enjoy patronage from the party at all levels of government. Donations are also provided to the party in anticipation of patronage. It is also provided in the form of sponsoring candidates to contest elections.

Proceeds from the sales of nomination forms is another source of funding for the party, especially because it is capable of presenting candidates for all electable public office and across all levels of government. For example, in the 2006 primaries (for 2007 general elections) 31 presidential aspirants obtained nomination forms at ₦5million each (giving the total of ₦155million), while three female aspirants were exempted as a way of encouraging women participation. Each of these aspirants, including females paid compulsory ₦10,000 each for expression of interest (giving a total of ₦310,000). The expression of interest fee was also applied to all electable positions at all levels of government. The nomination form

for gubernatorial aspirants was pegged at ₦3million, ₦1million and ₦500, 000 for senatorial and House of Representative aspirants, respectively. Aspirants to the State House of assembly paid ₦100, 000 each. This shows that sales of nomination forms contribute hugely to the PDP purse (Ojo, 2008).

National chairman’s annual fund raising dinners, business ventures, proceeds from investments and borrowing are other constitutionally enshrined sources of PDP funding (Section 18.2e-h). Of these, the national chairman’s annual and presidential campaign fund raising dinners are the most important. Entrance to these dinners is strictly on special invitation and conducted secretly under tight security. Journalists are not usually invited. In any case attendees may be known but their donations are classified. However, the party hardly has any business venture or investment which generates funds. Recently, the party has organised a fund raising event for the building of a ₦10billion national headquarters in Abuja. The event turns out to be simply a gathering of ‘who is who’ in the party. At the organisation, the Vice President explained that governors were not expected to donate their state fund but would collate monies from members and friends. Thus each office holder was to contribute 15% of his/her salary. The VP maintained that from these donations, the least expected would be ₦46million from 105 wards of Bayelsa state, while states with more wards, such as Sokoto could generate up to ₦333,555 (*Thisday*, 20 November, 2008; Okocha and Taiwo, 2008). The following Table 1 provides a list of selected donations at the occasion.

Table 1: Selected Donations to PDP Fund Raising for Building of ₦10 billion National Secretariat

S/N	Name	Amount of Donation
1	Mr Femi Otedola (Chief Launcher)	₦25 million
2	Chief Michael Otedola (former governor of Lagos State)	₦1 billion (also pledged anonymous donation of N802 million)
3	Bola Shagaya	₦25million
4	Princess Stella Oduah O. (Sea Petroleum)	₦20million
5	Anonymous donation	₦400million
6	Alhaji Aliko Dangote	To supply all cement for construction estimated at ₦3billion
7	Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu (former governor of Nassarawa State)	₦100million on behalf of BOT members
8	Chairman Trabag Construction Company	₦100million
9	Ogun state	₦10million
10	Umaru Musa Yar Adua (President)	₦527, 205 (15% of basic Salary)
11	Goodluck Jonathan (VP)	₦454, 735 (15% of basic Salary)

Source: *Thisday*, 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2008

A cursory observation of these figures suggests that the basic rules guiding party funding have been contravened. Little wonder therefore, that many individuals, especially from the opposition parties raise alarm. Aside other constitutional and statutory laws governing party funding and candidate selections, Section 225(1-5) of 1999 Constitution require political parties to submit to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) their statements of assets and

liabilities, annual statements and analysis of their sources of funds and expenditure. Parties are also prohibited from receiving and using funds from outside Nigeria. INEC was also empowered to audit the account of all parties and submit financial account report to the National Assembly.

Nevertheless, Section 93(1-12) of 2006 Electoral Act stipulates the limitations of election expenses. This is in order to limit the influence of money during electioneering activities. For example, the election expenses are restricted as follows (and any violation is punished by prescribed fees): Presidential candidate (₦500 million), Governorship candidate (₦100 million), Senatorial candidate (₦20 million), House of Representative Candidate (₦10 million), House of Assembly candidate (₦5 million), LGA Chairmanship candidate (₦5 million), and LGA Councillorship candidate (₦500, 000 thousand) (Okocha, 2009).

Moreover, Section 93(9) limits individual and corporate donation to any contesting candidate to ₦1 million. In addition to this, both the Constitution and Electoral Act contain clauses that aim to make party funding and candidate selection relatively transparent (CDD, 2007). As shown above, PDP is always guilty of contravening these rules and regulations.

Party membership is the most reliable and major source of party funding. Empirical research has shown that there is higher rate of party membership for PDP relative to other parties in Nigeria (Kura, 2008). This trend was explained by clientelistic methods being adopted by the party to expand its membership. It is claimed that parties distribute their membership cards free-of-charge to prospective members. In some areas, powerful party patrons would buy or get large bulk of the cards and distribute free-of-charge to members of his/her constituency (Adamu, FGD, 2006).

Accordingly, there are two principal sources of party funding in Nigeria: (i) external and (ii) internal. The external source is insignificant compared to the activities of political parties. This is especially, because the sharing formula seems to favour the major parties, which have representation in the National Assembly. This means that the PDP would approximately takes more than half of any allocation. The external source is as problematic as the internal. For instance, Musa (Interview, 2006) contends that:

[...] Even in the case of government funding, there is serious disparity. For example, between 2003 and 2006, when the PRP got ₦11 million (\$80.835), The PDP got over ₦1 billion (\$7.3m). This is because the payment was based on the strength of representation at the National Assembly. The PDP has over 400 members, while PRP has only one member. As a result of this disparity, the financial strengths of the parties is that out of 30 [50] registered parties, only 7 are represented at the National level, including the PRP. Initially, there was a time when the government granted equal nominal amount. That was very small. [...] Those parties that controlled government at the national level, state or local government level are stealing a lot of money from public funds to finance the parties. This is being done either directly or indirectly. That is either through withdrawal of money from Central Bank in the case of party controlling the Federal Government or through award of contracts, which is never performed or through programmes waivers, such as waivers of import duties. Such parties which have big and powerful members who are contractors, Commission agents or appointees in the public service also contribute from what they have been able to steal through the waivers [and favours]. Now for parties that have no control of government at any level, they get funds from the contributions

of those leading members of the parties. This amount is never enough to run and organise a political party (Musa, Interview, 2006).

Suberu (Interview, 2006) argues that even the contribution from individual party members are from those who are privileged to have access to parties that are in government, and who enjoy patronages from the governments. Hence lots of resources are then channelled back to support the party. This means therefore that patronage and clientelistic networks are the major channels of PDP funding. Tables 3-6 below provide examples of donations from individuals to contesting candidates and by extension for the PDP.

Table 2: Examples of selected donations to individual party candidates

Individual candidates/group		Amount (₦)
1	Obasanjo/Atiku	Over 5.5b
2	Governor James Ibori	2.3 billion
3	Governor Bola Tinubu	1.3 billion
4	Ghali Na'Abba	150 million
5	Bukola Saraki	160 million
6	Lucky Igbenedion	500 million
7	Great Ogboru	200 million
8	Chibodom Nwuche	500 million

Source: see end of table 5.

Table 3: List of Contributions to Bola Tinubu

Contributors		Amount (₦)
1	Mr. Wale Tinubu	100 million
2	The gov's friend	150 million
3	The dep. Gov's friends	76 million
4	Femi Otedola, M.D of Zenon Oil & Gas	10 million
4	Prince Albert Awofisayo, chairman of Continental Pharmaceutical Ltd	10 million
5	Chief Remi Adiakwu Bakare	10 million
6	Chief Ayoku, the Babalaje of Lagos	10 million
7	Alhaji & Alhaja K.O. Tinubu & children	10 million
8	Friends of the Lagos State executive secretaries	10 million
9	Senator Tokunbo Afikuyomi	5 million
10	Mrs. Stella Okoli	5 million
11	Lady Joy Udensi	10 million
12	Friends of Lagos State permanent secretaries	2 million
13	The Tinubu family	1 million
14	Chief Abiodun Kasumu	1 million

Table 4: Obasanjo/Atiku

Contributors		Amount (₦)
1	Friends of Atiku	1billion
2	Aliko Dangote	250 million
3	Emeka Offor	200 million
4	21 PDP Governors	210 million
5	Group from Europe	144 million
6	Rivers friends of Obasanjo/Atiku	150 million
7	Grand Alliance	Boeing 727 and 2 luxury buses for campaign
8	Another Group	Two luxury buses
9	Construction companies in the country	200 million
10	Dr. Samson Uche (businessman)	50 million
11	PDP caucus in Senate	12 million
12	Principal Staff of the Villa (Aso Rock)	10.6 million
13	AVM Shekari	10 million
14	First Atlantic Bank	10 million
15	Ministers	10 million
16	Otunba Fasawe	6.5 million
17	PDP National Working Committee	3.6 million
18	Dr. Ngozi Anyaegbunam	500,000 thousand
19	Dr. Gamaliel Onosode	100,000 thousand
20	Corporate Nigeria (pledges)	2 billion

Table 5: List of Contributions to James Ibori

Contributors		Amount (₦)
1	Vice President Atiku Abubakar	34 million
2	Olorogun Michael Ibru (on behalf of Ibru family and friends	250 million
3	Mr. Peter Okocha (on behalf of Delta North Professionals)	200 million
4	Chief Willy Oki	200 million
5	Olorogun John Oguma	120 million
6	Chief Mike Omeruah	120 million
7	Chief Newton Jibunor	100 million
8	Chief Nam Okechukwu	100 million
9	Alhaji Inuwa Umoru	100 million
10	Bube Okorodudu	10 million
11	Mr. Tony Anenih (Jnr) (on behalf of friends of Ibori	50 million
12	Anonymous donor	35 million
13	Mr. Terry Wayas	35 million
14	Austin Odili	30 million
15	Chief Tony Anenih, Chief Lucky Igbinedion and others	26 million
16	Zenith Bank	25 million
17	Mr. Wale Tinubu	20 million
18	Alhaji Abdulrazaq Abdulraham	10 million
19	Chief Diepreye Alamieyesiegha	10 million
20	Akintola Williams	10 million
21	Core Group	10 million
22	Chief tom Ikimi boat worth	7 million
23	Chief Edwin Clark on behalf of Ijaws of Delta State	5 million
24	Delta State House of Assembly	6 million
25	Chief Emeka Offor	5 million

Source: Okoro (2003).

Most of these donations are coming from individuals who enjoy or potentially want to enjoy patronage from government. These examples represent only those donations/contributions that were declared publicly. Presumably, more of these kinds of contributions have gone unrecorded. It was against this startling funding scenarios that the 2006 Electoral Acts pegs individual donations to only ₦100 thousand. The implication of this is that huge donations directly to parties or indirectly to individuals are not even reported. This is partly the reason why all the parties, especially the PDP disallowed INEC to neither audit its account nor send annual account report to the commission.

Apart from this system of funding exacerbating corruption, it also undermines transparency, accountability and responsiveness of party governments. Party organisations become personalised by powerful patrons. The personalisation of party organisation is arguably visible in candidate selection processes. Those patrons who contribute hugely to PDP funding and fully control their political terrain tend to crudely manipulate the selection processes to the extent that only

their anointed candidates are selected both for party offices and national election candidates. These powerful political patrons or their agents, perhaps because of the magnitude of their influence on the parties and party candidates are popularly called *godfathers*. Thus, today, godfatherism has become a household name. The influence of the godfathers in candidate selection is captured eloquently:

In almost all the states of the [Nigerian] federation, only candidates anointed by political godfathers in Abuja or in the state won [gubernatorial primaries and congress and conventions] (*Newswatch*, 2006).

Evidences have shown that internal and external party rules are only used as window-dressing. Often informal arrangements become the substantive rules of the processes. Empirical studies have shown that lack of internal democracy has largely contributed to factions, crises and conflicts that besieged the party since 1999 (Kura, 2008). In contrast to democratic procedures, PDP employs “dubious” tactics in their candidate selections and nomination process. Hence, the so-called conventions, primaries and congresses are mere pretexts to celebrate the appointment of “anointed” candidates. Often, because of the relationship between party funding and candidate selection/nominations, the boundary between the two is arguably controversial and unclear. Financial “donors” (godfathers) of the PDP take over and/or hijack its control. They manipulate all its major activities. They determined who is selected, nominated or appointed to occupy which party or public office. Godfathers have become the *owners* of the PDP. Abubakar (2006) while expressing dismay over the influence of godfathers states that:

I am particularly concerned about the emergence of godfathers as a directing principle in our political affairs. The concept of godfathers as ‘owners’ of political parties or section thereof is a threat to the development of democracy. Godfathers must not be allowed to substitute themselves for members of political parties or indeed for the voting citizenry during elections by determining who gets nominated to contest and who wins elections.

Godfatherism is therefore, the main defining character of party politics in Nigeria. ‘Godfather politics’ explains the power of an individual over the machinery of a political party, its constitution, statutory laws, and the Nigerian constitution.

In Nigeria, information from personal observation revealed that majority of the people regard the godfather phenomenon as a huge challenge to democracy and to organisational development of the PDP (Fieldwork Diary, 2006; Gambo, 2007a and b). In fact, godfathers are a major “plague of party politics in the country” and are specifically responsible for factionalism, acrimony and conflict (International IDEA, 2006) within the ruling PDP.

Moreover, in an interview, a former chairman of a Local Government Council in Nigeria stressed that one of the ways through which most politicians finance their political activities (campaign rallies and political mobilisation) is through “getting *ubangida* (godfather).” He maintained that in politics in Nigeria, there is a need for *ubangida* (godfather).

So your *ubangida* would be supplying campaign monies and even pocket monies for your daily political spending. This is because the *ubangida* believes that he is investing. So, immediately you win the election, he [the godfather] would be coming to you to reap his investment (Nuru, Interview 2006).

The problem with this undemocratic arrangement between the godfathers and godsons is that when an election is won, the godfather either becomes the *de facto* chairman, or governor or uses carefully calculated tactics of siphoning the resources of the local government or the state to himself or his cronies (Nuru, interview, 2006). From this evidence, godfathers rather than the PDP are the driving forces of the ruling party. By extension, this means that the godfather controls the party, its machineries, as well as the chairman or the governor. According to Gambo (2007a), godfathers are the major financiers of the PDP and its electoral candidates, and use the party as an “astutely thought out investment outlet to be recovered through frivolous and bloated government contracts, appointments of cronies into chosen public offices and other prebendal returns by the beneficiaries”. Godfatherism has led to the personalisation of the party, siphoning of public resources, embezzlement, mismanagement and outright theft. The magnitude of the mafia-style phenomenon of godfathers also is demonstrated by how the godfathers decide party nominations and campaign outcomes and, according to Ibrahim (2007), when candidates resist, the godfathers use violence to deal with the situation. This makes free and fair elections extremely difficult and raises the potentials of violence in primaries and general elections. The examples of Anambra and Oyo States during Governor Chris Ngige and Rashid Ladoja, respectively, provide prime illustrations.

Though the PDP has procedures for funding and campaign financial activities, they are often jettisoned by godfathers and political barons. In other words, the political significance of the party has become no longer determined by popular support but by administrative manipulation by the godfathers through all necessary means. For example, Ibrahim (2007) argues that these godfathers are mainly interested in controlling the party machines instead of presenting popular candidates for healthy electoral competition. Indeed, owing to the control of the party organisation, godfathers cum the PDP has various ways of eliminating popular candidates from the so-called party primaries. These include:

A declaration by powerful political barons, state governors, godfathers, and others that those entitled to vote must support one candidate and other aspirants must withdraw. Since these people are very powerful and feared in their communities, their declarations carry much weight. (ii) Zoning and other procedures exclude unwanted candidates by moving the party zone out of the seat or position in question to an area where the excluded candidate is not local. (iii) Candidates who oppose the godfathers’ protégés are often subject to violence by thugs or security personnel. (iv) Money, a significant factor in party primaries, is used to bribe officials and induce voters to support particular candidates. Since the godfather generally has more money than the “independent” candidates, many of the latter are eliminated because they cannot match his spending. (v) What Nigerians call “results by declaration”: An aspirant wins a nomination or election, but polling officials disregard the results and declare the loser the winner (Ibrahim, 2006b; 2007:5; Mamah, 2006).

In addition to the above, the financial supports from godfathers are not directly channelled to the PDP. They are directly given to ‘potentially’ winning candidates, with the hope of enjoying political patronage. This helps in furthering clientelistic alliances completely outside the party organisation, but which are detrimental to the development of the party. These external alliances proved to be stronger than the party organisations.

The exclusive control of PDP funding and campaign financing by godfathers through clientelistic networks and political alliances was made 'easier' by the failure of the PDP to source a substantial part of their income from membership dues and other statutory fees from elected party members, such as legislators, Governors, Chairmen, Councillors and party members holding political appointments.

Figure 2: The Process of Consensus in party candidate selection in the PDP

'Consensus' has become a household name in Nigerian political system since 1999. It is a political vocabulary introduced to convince someone sometime forcibly - to step aside in their political ambition for their opponents. In fact, most of the local and national primary elections organised by political parties were simply seen as window-dressing. This is perhaps why at most party primaries more problems were created than solved. Ironically, this is where godfathers play a significant role in making sure the candidates they are supporting win the party primaries. The consensus process is usually done in stages: the first stage is the lobby and pursuit of the opponent candidate (irrespective of his leadership credentials and popularity), who has no 'strong' godfather to support him, to step down in the contest for his opponent. If the candidate appears difficult to convince, the second stage is to promise him official position if election is won and all expenses already committed in the course of campaign and rallies, would be settled by the godfathers. The third stage would be to contact his parent depending on the level of opposition under contention. The fourth stage is to contact the traditional ruler of his area to intervene to convince him to step down. The traditional ruler in the discharge of this duty would either be paid or do it as the father of the area, or even for both reasons. The fifth and final stage, if all previous stages appear unsuccessful would be to go for the primaries. The political manoeuvres would start at the preparation of the primaries, especially in deciding or electing the delegates. The majority of the participants that made it into the party delegates list would be paid all their financial expenses, and a substantial amount would be given to each delegate to vote for a prepared and predetermined choice. Based on this seemingly undemocratic arrangement in the conduct of party primaries, it is therefore not unexpected that most party primaries and conventions create more problems that they solve, leaving parties divided and factionalised (Fieldwork Notes, 2006).

As indicated in the above discussion, given the enormous power of the godfathers, in some states, they appoint or at least claim to appoint all electoral candidates of the state and made them to win their elections. For instance, in the aftermath of the 2003 elections in Anambra state, Chief Chris Uba in an interview proudly stated that:

I am the greatest godfather in Nigeria because this is the first time an individual single-handedly put in position every politician in the State.... It is not just the Governor [that I sponsored]; there are also three senators, 10 members of the House of Representatives and 30 members of the House of Assembly... I sponsored them...and this is the first time in the history of Anambra state that one single individual would be putting every public officer in the state in power (Interview, *Sunday Champion*, June 8, 2003).

Similarly, at his 79<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, Chief Lamidi Adedibu who is the godfather of Oyo politics (Kura and Marquette, 2007; Omobowale and Olutayo, 2007) arrogantly stated that:

I am employing this occasion of my 79<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary to announce on behalf of the Deputy Governor of Oyo state, Executive members of the PDP in Oyo state, wards, local and state executives, the two PDP senators in the Senate, 9 federal honourable members, 20 operating members of the Oyo state House of Assembly, 351 PDP councillors and 33 council

chairmen and all eligible voters at the primary election, that we are in favour of continuity of Bayo-Akala come 2007 (*Thisday*, 2006).

This sums up the power of the godfather of Ibadan politics, and represents a typical example of how a godfather behaves in Nigerian politics. In sum, irrespective of whichever candidate selection methods employed by the PDP, godfathers have other crude (informal) methods of counteracting them. Whether acclimation, affirmation, zoning, endorsement, consensus, declaration or even election, the outcome would be that only candidates anointed by godfathers 'will see the light of the day.' The power of the godfathers is directly linked to their financial strength to dictate the tune.

### **CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This paper critically examined two crucial issues concerning the activities of the ruling PDP, which have serious implications for party democracy in Nigeria. These are candidates' selection and nominations and funding and campaign financing. Not only these issues are crucial, however, their interwoven relationships are fundamental in appreciating the *problematiques* of the party and democratisation in the country. Evidently, the research shows that there is serious lack of internal democracy in the process of candidates' selection and nominations in the PDP. This situation has engulfed the party into grave and persistent conflicts and crises. By extension, the whole structures of the party lacked internal democracy. Its external democracy (in terms of interactions with other parties) was severely jeopardised. The simply simple for lack of internal democracy was the brazen jettisoning of its constitution and other statutory regulations guiding its operations, particularly candidates' selections and nominations process. The consequence of this, in addition to lack of internal democracy, has been the hijacking of the party by what is commonly called 'godfathers.' Lack of internal democracy has made the party vulnerable to hawkers and vultures. The problem is that the PDP seems to be clearly under siege. It is under the siege of powerful financial oligarchs.

Lack of internal democracy, internal crisis and the control of the party by powerful financial and political oligarchs are attributable empirically to the pattern and character of funding and campaign financing. The financial oligarchs are able to firmly control the party and imposed anti-democratic whims and caprices. This is evidenced by the imposition of virtually all principal officers and candidates for public offices in the party. Ironically, the subversion of internal democracy and the concomitant conflicts and crisis and the factionalisation of the party have snowballed to critical failures in the conduct of 2003 and 2007 general elections. The outcome of the elections, which was widely condemned by local and international observers demonstrated the incapability of the PDP and expressed its internal organisational shambles. A party that could not ensure internal and external democracy would not be expected to deliver a free and fair election. As PDP primaries and congresses were marred by conflict, violence and litigations, so also were the general elections conducted by PDP controlled government.

Another debilitating implication of this situation is lack of transparency and accountability in running the affairs of the ruling PDP. Candidates' selection and nomination processes are often conducted under extreme security measures, while fundraising and campaign financing dinners under strict invitation and well guarded by security operatives. The PDP is thus being run like a cult organisation. This scenario breeds corruption (Adeyi, 2006; Aiyede, 2006; Walecki, 2006; Babawale and Ashiru, 2006) within and outside the party. Because of lack of accountability and transparency, PDP accounts are only accessible to the 'few cabals.' It is not even accessible to the regulating agency – the INEC. Little

wonder, there have been accusations of funds siphoning by members of fundraising committees. The problem of transparency and accountability has also been extended to the Nigeria at large. What we have today in the name of democracy is a government that disregard these twin democratic virtues and the rule of law. The higher corrupt activities within the PDP could be directly linked to the pattern of funding and campaign financing and by extension to the politics of patronage and clientelism. The highest financial donor either to the party or to candidates(s) is awarded the most lucrative government contracts. In politics, patronage is a norm that is accepted world-wide, it is however, regulated by certain rules and regulations. Even though there are such rules both within the PDP and those from the 1999 Constitution, INEC's Political Finance Handbooks (2005) and Political Party Finance Manual (2005), and Electoral Acts 2002 and 2006, yet those rules make no effects. They are only applied when they would suit the party's interests. This is tantamount to arguing that institutional designs alone do not make a functional political party that would engender stable democratic governance.

To address these problems and ensure the development of the PDP (and indeed all other parties in Nigeria), the following recommendations are suggested:

- a) To ensure limited 'healthy' internal rivalry and conflict, the party must provide a level playing ground for all party members to contest any post or to seek party nomination for any public office. This would help ensure intra-PDP democracy;
- b) To achieve the above, the party must limit individual donations to its coffers. This would reduce the dominance of wealthy political moguls from taking over the party.
- c) Limiting individuals' donations suggests that the party must provide other tangible and reliable sources of funding. Thus since the party has largest membership followings, it should develop an articulate policy manifesto as a way of motivating members to identify emotionally with it, consequent of which they would readily commit themselves financially to the course of the party;
- d) To reduce the manipulation and machinations of money bags holding the party to ransom, the mandatory contribution from salaries of office holders should be scrapped. This would make the party more independent and strengthens its internal democracy;
- e) The government should continue to finance political parties, however, the formula for sharing such grants must be reviewed and disbursed in good time. Government funding of parties would reduce the influence of godfathers who are always ready to strangle the party and break the democratic process;
- f) An articulate and realistic limit on the party's spending, especially during congresses and primaries should be set. Even for individual candidates, a limit should be set. In addition, these regulations should be effectively enforced. This would help in controlling illegal sources of funds getting into the party coffers, most especially if adequate tracking measures are devised by the party and INEC;
- g) Since the nature of party funding and campaign financing generate corruption, it is therefore recommended that rule of law should be ensured within the party. PDP is a corporate organisation. It can sue and be sued. Members who sue the party demanding their rights should not be intimidated and harassed. A committee can be established to ensure compliance with all the party rules governing funding and campaign financing;
- h) There should be periodic publication of the party account and must be made available to all party members and INEC. All irregularities must be checked accordingly and where possible, erring finance officers be sanctioned.

Depending on the magnitude of corrupt activities, EFCC could be invited, allowed and empowered to prosecute any individual found wanting;

- i) Above all party discipline must be enforced. There are relevant laws regarding discipline of party members. What is needed is effective enforcement. This would further ensure internal democracy within the party.

Finally, all problems associated with the PDP could be sum up in terms of developing the party not on a clearly defined and articulate ideology. This could still be achieved though the implementation of these key policy recommendations, as they require radical overhaul of the party structures at all levels. They could be effectively achieved with ardent political will.

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