



AIC 2018: GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT IN HUMANITIES, EDUCATION AND CIVILIZATION

Intra-Party Conflict and the Future of Nigerian Democracy:  
Examining the All Progressives Congress (APC)

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*Peer-review under responsibility of 4<sup>th</sup> Asia International Conference 2018 editorial board  
(<http://www.utm.my/asia/our-team/>)*

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## Research Highlights

This study examined precisely the basis for internal democracy and the need for promoting internal party democratic tenets in addition to the analysis of the nature, causes and manifestations of intra-party conflicts in the present ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) as well as the implications that these crises or conflicts have for the future of democracy and democratisation in Nigeria.

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## Graphical Abstract

This study is an analysis of the nature and pattern of intra-party conflict in Nigeria's Fourth Republic with specific reference to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC). Intra-party conflict has been the norm in Nigerian politics leading to crises, setback and failure of many parties to forge ahead for proper democratisation in Nigeria including the ruling parties in many instances. The problem is the way in which intra-party conflict is becoming the bane of democratisation and good governance in Nigeria for many decades and despite the previous experiences, the phenomenon continued unabated. The study investigated the new dimension of intra-party conflict in Nigeria taking the All Progressives Congress as the case study. The study used a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. Primary and secondary sources of data were used. The primary data involved an in-depth interview with some selected informants from the relevant institutions and agencies related to the APC and the crises such as the national party executives, senior officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and academicians that are experts in the area of study. The secondary sources include books, journals, newspapers, internets and other documented materials. The data obtained were discussed using content analysis where thematic analytical interpretations were used in the discussions. The research discovered that, the intra-party conflict under the APC has taken a new dimension where the members of the ruling party constituted an opposition and a stumbling block for the party's progress and governance. The work recommends that intra-party conflict of APC and other Nigerian political parties can be resolved through constitutional reforms, institutionalisation of party ideology and principles and strict sanctions from the national leaders of the party.

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## Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to draw the attention of all stakeholders in Nigerian government and politics to the dangers pose by the incessant and rampant seemingly escalating intra-party conflicts in the ruling party the APC which has been the experienced of the former ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) leading to its demise as the ruling power and becoming an opposition party. The work targets an approach of identifying the problem and proffering practical solutions that will ensure that such disaster is averted in order to safeguard the Nigerian democracy.

## Methodology

This research used both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary source is the conduct of in-depth interview with some selected informants/participants from some agencies and categories that are directly related to political parties and their activities. In this regard, informants are selected from four categories. The secondary data consists of textbooks, journals, internet sources and data from newspapers. The data obtained from the field are grouped into themes and analysed using thematic analytical interpretations including tables and models where necessary. It was supplemented with the existing scholastic views in the field of study and the interpretations using the theoretical framework or framework of analysis to arrive at research findings and conclusion.

## Results

In this section, issues of intra-party conflict would be practically presented and analysed thematic interpretations as proposed in the methodology. This will lead to research findings and contribution to knowledge since the area of study is not adequately explored by scholars. While there are numerous writings on intra-party conflicts and internal democracy in Nigeria, there is no research work that examine the nature of the conflict in the newly established ruling APC and that is what made the work unique and a new discovery in knowledge. The seeds of APC's crisis were sown right from its amalgamation in 2013. The parties that





formed the merger were fragmented and emerged with frustrated members especially the new PDP. The major aim of the APC was to capture power from PDP without carefully setting proper machineries for internal democracy such as party ideology, principles and mechanism for collective decision making. It is not surprising considering the postulations of Gauja (2009) in the framework of analysis that parties' historical, conditional and nature of establishment are the major factors that determine its level of internal party democracy.

## Findings

The crises are divided into three: National Assembly internal crises; executive versus the legislature and state internal crises. They include the National Assembly Internal Crisis among the ruling APC members, the executive-legislative crises and states APC internal crises involving more than ten states where the APC is ruling in Nigeria.

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