Challenges of Intra-Party Democracy and Democratization Process in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

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A b s t r a c t

The study examined the link between political party internal democracy and democratization in Nigeria's fourth republic. Using the Elite theory in explanation of the phenomenon under study, adopted the historical design which made effective use of qualitative secondary data that was sourced from scholarly textbooks, newspapers, journals, seminar papers, working papers, electronic media, internet printout among other relevant materials. The findings of the study revealed that the Nigeria's political parties are faced with several challenges which has hindered internal democracy within the parties, and these range from poor party ideology, excessive control by the elites in terms of dictating decisions, selection of party flagbearers contrary to the will of the majority and agreed zoning arrangements. It was further revealed that political godfatherism cripple party internal democracy, given the fact that the godfathers are only after their self-interest. Overall, the study demonstrates that there is absence of political party internal democracy, and this has a profound negative impact on democratization process and governance in Nigeria. Based on the study findings, it is therefore recommended that political parties should adopt a swell-defined and adhered party ideology that will guide all the actions of the party as well as help to win the trust of the masses. Only then can the party nomination for elections be free, fair and credible, dovetailing the entire electoral process as the masses will be provided with credible candidates that could chart the course of good, democratic and accountable governance; by so doing, democracy is deepened.

Background to the Study

Political parties are conventionally noteworthy organizations in democratic societies. Students of political science have usually associated them with democracy itself (Orji, 2013). Political parties, as 'makers' of democracy, have been so idealized that scholars claim that neither democracy nor democratic societies are thinkable without them (Omotola, 2009). In other words, the presence of active political parties is a sine qua non for democratic consolidation in any society (Dode, 2010). Well-functioning political parties are vital for the success of electoral democracy and political development in a nation state (Adetula and Adeyi, 2013). Democracy along with its characteristics of freedom of expression, rule of law, accountability and elective representation has become the conventional system of government all over the world. Democracy as a system of government implies that the power of the political community hinges on popular sovereignty. Elected representatives, in contemporary times, refer to democracy as the means by which the political community expresses its general will.

Democracy in Nigeria has not really been entrenched when compared to what is observable in other parts of the world. This assertion stems from the fact that is limited respect for human rights and the rule of law, which are the high points of true democracy, since the fourth republic that began in 1999 was enthroned. As rightly observed by Osabiya, (2015), the 1999 and 2007 elections, for example were marred by not obvious rigging and gangsterism while the government of the day could hardly be distinguished from autocracy. Whereas in contemporary civilizations, political parties are pivots of democratic and political process via their vital role of interest articulation and aggregation and the fulfilment of those interests through government control. At the twilight of the last century, Africa witnessed the "third wave of democratization" even as the rest of the world's authoritarian regimes were replaced or displaced by civilian governments through elections. The same could be said of Nigeria which was hitherto one of the strongholds of dictatorship in Africa. And having made several failed attempts to transit to democratic rule as orchestrated by military junta regimes of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida and Sani Abacha, the dust settled down when on 29th May 1999, civilian administration gained its footing (Ette, 2013). However, despite the transition to civil rule, Nigerian citizens are yet to experience true democracy which include good governance, fair and legitimate elections, equity, justice, transparency, accountable leadership, accountability, political education of the common people, respect for the rule of law and cooperation among different branches of government.

The media catch phrase, "consolidating its democracy" is observed in the breach as the political parties which are supposed to midwife the consolidation are in themselves undemocratic (Momoh, 2013; Yagboyaju, 2012). The much-needed democratic pathway which the political parties are to chart towards democratization of the Nigerian political space seems to be lacking, hence democratic ethos are also lacking as a culture. This is because as indispensable as they are to sustainable democracy and as the cornerstone of democracy, once the political parties are defective, the democratic process itself becomes defective (Omotola, 2009; Michael, 2013). Conversely, being composed of like-minded

people, with viable ideology and programmes designed to meet the needs of the populace, political parties drive the wheel of democracy by prodding popular participation of the citizenry to choose their leaders during periodic elections (Adejumobi and Kehinde, 2007). The political parties can only live up to the above functions and consolidate democracy when they must have strived to be democratic in their operations internally.

The crux of the problem of this study is that it is a truism that most of the political and electoral crises witnessed in Nigeria are by-products of the inability of the political parties to midwife a viable and workable internal democracy, especially with recourse to selection of candidates for various political offices. If this trend is not checked, it will no doubt spell doom for the consolidation of democracy in the country no sooner than later. The political party history of Nigeria is replete with cases of cross-carpeting or decamping, parallel party leadership structures, fractionalization, monopolistic and overbearing attitude of political incumbents, party leaders and self-serving godfathers etc., which are capable of affecting, endangering and circumventing the credibility of the Nigeria political process. The current scenario of lack of internal democracy among political parties is such that cases abound of unwarranted and questionable candidate substitution, disqualification and reversal of nomination of previously screened and cleared candidates by an interplay of party intrigues, brazen power display, culture of impunity and disregard for fair play and internal democracy. To this end, the core objectives of the study are: to identify the challenges of internal democracy; examine the impact of godfathers on internal democracy and the impact of political party internal democracy on democratization process in Nigeria.

The Concept of Political Party
This term has no generally agreed definition. However, political parties are groups organized, with the main intention of contesting, winning elections and taking control of government. To take control of state power is the primary reason for the existence of any political party. A political party is an organized group of people with a minimum of approximately similar political goals and views who aim to influence the general public policy by electing their candidates to position (Likoti, 2005). According to Neumann (Obah-Akpowoghaha, 2013, p.34), "Political party is an organization of the society with active political agents who compete for popular support with another group or persons holding diverse views". A school of thought sees political party as an "instrument for catching power". Essentially, a political party is a platform, or apparatus for taking part in the tussle for power, thus "a political party is an agency to mobilize people's support at the time of elections; it is a tool for aggregation of interests that demand strident articulation (Johari, 2008, p.28). In addition, Heywood (2000, p. 56) holds the opinion that a political party is a group of people that is structured solely for the purpose of holding elections or using other means to claim government power. He taxonomizes the characteristics and functions and makes a distinction between political parties and other groups. To him, political parties - are organized bodies with formal card-carrying membership; - win political offices with the aim of exercising government power by doing so; - usually takes

on a large focus issue, addressing each of the major government policy areas; and - holds similar political preferences and a broad ideological identity, making them united to some extent. However, political parties are not subject to only these functions, "they perform other functions that include mediating between citizens and state institutions; recruiting and preparing individuals for political leadership; organizing election campaigns; aggregating societal interests, and providing a participatory, responsive relationship with the people; political recruitment and training; education, socialization, building consensus, providing alternative world views and political communication among others" (Pogoson, 2013, p.4).

The Concept of Democracy
The concept of democracy is a fluid concept and has been defined in diverse ways by scholars either in the classic political studies or in the contemporary world of scholarship (Erunke, 2012; Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, 2024). To this end, the former American President, Abraham Lincoln describes democracy as "government of the people, by the people and for the people" (Lincoln cited in Clingendael, 2018). However, this definition has faced a lot of confrontations by many scholars who would rather see the same as outmoded. The reasons being that democratic ethos have practically been mismanaged by agents of state through the instrumentalities of coercion and brutal use of force, so much so that the "people" are now alien to the very values and dictates of the principles of democracy" (Odofin, 2007; Bako, 2007; Akinsanya and Erunke 2010). Appodorai (1974) defines democracy as the system, either of government under which the people exercise governmental power directly or indirectly through representatives elected by them. By this standard, a state could be termed democratic if it provides institution for the expression and supremacy of the popular will on basic questions of social directions and policy. Similarly, democracy becomes sustainable in the presence of free, fair and credible elections. It is through periodic elections that potential public office holders (should ordinarily) find their ways into public office. This is what makes the concept critical in this discourse' because election serves as the most fundamental element of modern-day representative democracy (Alapiki, 2004).

Okolie (2005) noted that elections are the processes of selecting the officers or representatives of an organization and groups by votes of its qualified members. And as a political phenomenon, elections are institutionalized procedures for choosing political office holders by the electorates of a country. In other words, it is a means through which the electorate choose their representatives into the different organs of government (Paki, 2006). On the other hand, sustainable democracy is the practice which allows room for persistence of democratic projects over a long period of time without any external interference whatsoever, Jega (2006) argued that democratic consolidation is a term which describes the vital political goal for a transiting democracy such as Nigeria, with intermittent flop by authoritarian rule. Above view has also been buttressed by Diamond (1997).

The Concept of Democratization
The concept of democratization refers to a conscious, deliberate and committed attempt at entrenching enduring democratic values and ideals in political actors and the entire citizenry with a view to ensuring the continuity and sustainability of a democratic system. It can also be referred to as the process of engineering the behaviors and attitudes of the political actors and citizenry towards imbibing positive democratic ideals and values required for building and sustaining a democratic system. Such ideals and values include adhering to the tenets of the rule of law, equality, citizens' participation in democratic activities, respect for the rights of all including the rights of the majority and minority groups, tolerance for one another and creation of equal opportunities for all citizens among others.

More explicitly, Gunther et al. (1995) posits that the democratization process has three phases: the fall of the authoritarian regime, consolidation, and enduring democracy.' By these phases, it shows that democratization is a gradual and developmental process. Gunther et al. (1995) also noted that political party development and multiparty dialogue are necessary steps towards the creation of a stable, democratic political system that can be conducive to development, the protection of human rights and peaceful conflict prevention. As Dahrendorf (1990), (Muller, 1988). observe that democratization takes different amounts of time to accomplish different tasks, because it needs time to nurture on incremental basis. While we agree with the argument that democratization process is developmental in nature and therefore requires some time to be nurtured, we would also like to argue that it is very necessary that emerging democracies should set some standards or parameters to really measure or determine whether the ideals and values of democracy, which are key ingredients of democratization are being entrenched in their democratic systems.

Political parties are essential institutions that drive the democratization process. As Schattschneider (1942, p.1) famously asserted more than half a century ago, that political parties created democracy and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the political parties. Political parties are also widely seen as a sine qua non for the organization of the modern democratic polity and for the expression of political pluralism (Dode, 2010). The affirmation of the centrality of political parties in modern democracy is generally accepted both by contemporary scholars as well as policymakers charged with fostering the development of newly emerging democracies and those saddled with the task of improving the quality of democracy in established democratic polities (Biezen, 2004). This analysis therefore underscores the crucial role that political parties play in the democratization process as it provides the channel for changing of government and continuity of the democratic system through periodic elections. This is so because democratic stability cannot be super-imposed or predicated on a shaky, unstable and unpredictable crises-ridden social and political environment (Ogundiya, 2005).

The Concept of Internal Democracy
Internal democracy in political parties, also known as intra-party democracy, refers to the level and methods of including party members in the decision making and deliberation

within the party structure. Intra-party democracy is usually known to nurture citizens' political competencies and/or producing more capable representatives which in turn ensures that the party produces better policies and political programmes (Scarrow 2005).

According to Norris (2004), one of the key issues in intra-party democracy is parties' nomination processes, in other words who decides and how which citizens are entitled to run for parliament as a candidate of that specific party. Whether such nomination processes are deemed democratic or not, depends according to Norris on the degree of centralization. Secondly, the scale of participation in the nomination is also considered: The more people that are involved in the selection, the more democratic the procedure is. Finally, also the scope of decision-making - number of candidates vying for nomination - is important. The nomination process is governed by law only in a few countries. In most legal systems parties are entitled to decide themselves upon the most appropriate processes and internal regulations. Furthermore, in order to enhance parties' internal democracy, a number of countries have adopted positive action towards entrenching gender sensitiveness. This means that a certain percentage of nominated candidates and/or elected representatives in each party have to come from a certain gender, ethnic minority or other group.

According to Gauja (2006), countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia have been reluctant to impose external regulations on political associations due to strong liberal traditions. In New Zealand the legislation provides for democratic pre-selections of candidates, but there have never been any recorded attempts to enforce this regulation. Wall cited in Sundberg (1977) sees Germany as a good example of intra-party democracy regulations.

Essential Ingredients of Internal Democracy
Indeed, some variables are central to internal democracy. The first and major variable is equal participation of all members and groups in the democratic processes of the party. (Salih, 2006, p.31). The second variable is inclusiveness. Democracy is all about inclusiveness. If there is no provision for people's inclusion in the party, there may be little participation since one begets the other (Scarrow, 2005). The third variable is party institutionalization. Institutionalization demonstrates the degree to which internal decisions and procedures are formalized, and the extent to which the party has coordinated structures throughout its target constituency. The most widely accepted criteria for identifying a country as democratic have been put forward by Dahl (1971). These include, civil and political rights, fair, competitive, and inclusive elections. Dahl calls countries that meet these criteria 'polyarchies', but they are more commonly referred to as 'liberal democracies. Nwankwo (1992) and Toyo (1994) corroborate Dahl's criteria for measuring a democratic state.

Theoretical Framework: The Elite Theory
This study adopted the Elite theory to give insight into the relationship between political party internal democracy and democracy in Nigeria. The elite theory can be defined as a

set of ideas, principles and assumptions on the concept, structure and exercise of power. It is a theory that inquiries about and elucidates power relationships in the modern society. The proponents of the theory include Vilfredo Pareto (1935), Gaetano Mosca (1939), Robert Michels (1911), James Burnham (1905-1987; Buttomore, 1993), Floyd Hunter (1953), C. Wright Mills (1956), Thomas R. Dye (2000), G. William Domhoff (1967), and Robert D. Putnam (1977).

The theory postulates that a small group of people which can be found in the economic, policy planning and military institutions of the state is vested with overriding power. Thus, the elite theory is based on two main sets of ideas, principles or assumptions on the concept, structure and exercise of power. Firstly, that power lies in position of authority in key economic, political and military institutions. Secondly, that the psychological difference that sets apart political elite from non-elite is that they have personal resources, for instance, intelligence, skills, and vested interest in government (Mills, 1956). Elite theory is also a theory of the state which seeks to describe and explain the power relationships in a contemporary society. The theory posits that a small minority consisting members of the economic elite are the power brokers in any society. According to the elite theory, the small group of people with overriding power is referred to as the political elite. It is a group of people with exceptional abilities in politics and great monopoly of power. This so-called power elite abounds in all societies, and they always have the exceptional ability to secure power, perpetuate it and rule (Friedrich, 2014; Okonofua, 2013).

The adoption of this theory as the basis for examining intra-party democracy and democratization process in Nigeria is incumbent on interplay of forces and struggle for power among elite groups in the Nigerian society which results in circumvention of the rules to satisfy their group interest. Therefore, the adoption of the group theory, helps us to examine how the intrigues among the elite groups and the resulting consequences affect the outcomes of political activities and in particular, democratization process in the country. In the Nigerian context, going by Mitchel's iron law of oligarchy, in which small group of people must emerge to dominate any group of people, the elite group have emerged to dominate the structure of Nigerian political parties in terms of funding and influence. Through their dominant interests, they manipulate the party machinery by imposition of candidates. This they do by manipulating the party primaries through bribery of delegates and intimidation of other party members to succumb to their whims and caprices. They sponsor willing their proteges or adopted godsons who they in turn dictate how they will govern when they eventually emerge victorious in the election into power. This position exposes the character of some Nigerian elites, particularly the retired military generals and their cronies, and indeed top government officials as well as the wealthy political gladiators who have joined and dominated the political parties. They have become political machines using unconventional means to weaken party democracy. By their domineering and exclusive rather than inclusive approach, they truncate due process in nominating the party leaders; for instance, these money bags ensure that they plant their cronies and loyalists at the party hierarchy. Thus, in Nigeria, the members of the Boards of Trustees and National Working Committees across party

lines in Nigeria are sworn loyalists of the political elites through whom they manipulate the parties to do their biddings. A situation where few influential party members make and influence decisions and distribute resources hinder internal party democracy, and by extension, negatively affecting the entire democratization process. In essence, when political parties which supposed to be the bedrock of democracy has been reduced to oligarchic rule as conceived by Michels (cited in Varma, 2006), as the law of the few chosen, particularly the party grows in size in which more and more roles tend to be assigned to the inner circle of leaders, typical of the dominant political parties such as the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the ruling All progressive Congress (APC). In this scenario, other less privileged members of the party are made less capable of controlling their overwhelming influence even as they are capable of using their privileged position to circumvent part rules and making it of no effect (Obah-Akpowoghaha, 2013a) through unconventional means such as use of money to impose party delegates during and actual vote buying during party primaries (Ayoade, 2008), recruitment of partisan thugs and hooligans to destroy and snatch ballot boxes and cause chaos during elections. In fact, through their manipulative instruments, the actions and inputs of political elites or godfathers are so pronounced that election results are decided in their favour before the conclusion of election. "This was quite widespread both at the state level and at national level during the elections of 1999, 2003 and 2007. One case in mind is the political dispute between the then Party Chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Audu Ogbeh, and former President Olusegun Obasanjo, which resulted in the former Party Chairman being forcefully removed (Aleyomi, 2013). This manifests in party cross-carpeting, factional executives that snowballed into dual or multiple executives within the same political party. Therefore, the inference is that the political elites are so powerful either as a way to reach out to the masses or by electoral manipulation to gain political power. This describes how political parties focus on the elites in terms of articulation and accumulation of interest, both at the party level and the polity as a whole and rather than contribute to deepening democratic principles of mass participation and playing according to party rules and electoral guidelines, derogate the democratization process, which political parties supposed to foster. At the end, the legacies the elites bequeath to the democracy turn out to be thuggery, vote buying, lack of inclusivity, manipulative electoral process, intra-party rivalry and crisis, absence of party discipline, circumvention of party rules, party defections, election apathy, etc., and by extension godfatherism and bad governance. From the foregoing theoretical exposition, Elite theory has proved relevant for explaining the relationship between political party internal democracy and democracy in Nigeria.

Challenges of Internal Democracy in Nigeria's Political Parties
The challenges to internal democracy amongst Nigerian political parties appear as set of mutually reinforcing challenges in a chain of vicious cycle. These include intra-party conflict; lack of or lack clearly defined party ideology; elite funding of party; flawed party primaries and imposition of candidates; and party executive arrogance.

Intra-Party Conflict in Nigeria

Intra-party conflict has been the major trend among Nigerian party politics in the Fourth Republic involving big parties such as AD, PDP, ANPP and APGA with internal conflicts affecting their performance and activities in election and beyond (Toyin 20 14:47). The PDP as the major ruling party set the foundation for intra-party conflicts as a result of the above factors identified by various scholars. The party became too strong and dominant in the country to the extent that it violated democratic principles and internal democracy making many members aggrieved causing anti-party activities, decamping and other undemocratic practices. The party had harboured members with grudges and lamentations beyond control to the extent that it internally crumbled. The violation of an informal party agreement for zoning of presidential seat between the North and the South for 8 years each was violated by President Jonathan in 2011 which further polarized the party beyond repair (Aleyomi, 2013: 54). By the end of 2013, PDP was speedily scattered towards its political doom as a result of intra-party conflicts. The nature of the conflicts is all encompassing involving the national executive and the legislature, intra-state internal crises between one faction and another and party executives. The party set a norm for intra-party conflicts in which the APC hurriedly stumbled across and continued from where the PDP stopped. This trend reoccurred in 2015 amongst members of the leading All Progressive Congress (APC) when the party controlled National Assembly were singing discordant tunes with its APC-led executive arm (the presidency) (Nwabufo, 2017).

The consequences of these conflicts is the factionalization in the parties leading to bouts of decamping from one party to another in addition to anti-party activities (Jude &Ika, 2013). Intra-party conflict being an off shoot of lack of internal party democracy is facilitated by imposition of candidates, politics of godfathers, corruption, lack of ideology and selfishness, non-level ground for equal participation, inclusiveness and institutionalization, hijacked or skewed party funding, flawed party primaries, and party executive arbitrariness (Ojukwu & Olaifa, 2011). All the over fifty registered political parties are functioning without any clearly 'identified' ideology. The question is, what is the ideology of the People's Democratic Party? Is the party progressive, conservative, leftist, rightist, reactionary, revolutionary? Until this is addressed, problem of internal democracy will persist in PDP and other political parties in Nigeria.

On the issue of party selection of candidates, it is a well-known fact that candidates are imposed on the party by a few powerful elites (Anyaoku, 2010). A striking example was what happened in Anambra State chapter of the PDP where Professor Chukwuma Soludo was imposed on the chapter as the selected governorship candidate for the Anambra State by the National executive of the party. This was not only rejected by the State chapter, but it also triggered a spate of petition writing and prosecution which in effect brought about factions in the party and last- minute cross-carpeting of some members to other parties. According to the Vice Chairman of the southeast zone of the PDP, "Internal party wrangling denied our great party the governorship seat in the February 6 governorship election in Anambra State. The Anambra election is a litmus test to the party, and we will

not tolerate such development in any of the remaining States in the southeast zone. We are going to put all the machinery in place to ensure that PDP wins the remaining States in the zone come 2011" (Metuh, 2010).

In the case of funding, when a party is well funded elaborately by majority of its members, it may be able to achieve a lot of things; but when it is funded by few elites, the financiers usually have some strings attached to it. They ultimately determine who is nominated or elected within the party or to public office (International IDEA, 2006). In 2002, preparatory to the 2003 general elections, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) campaign team organized a launching to boost the campaign. This attracted a wide range of technocrats, captains of industries, political elites and bureaucrats. In that event, over six billion naira was realized. While some of the donors are key political actors and members of the PDP, others are not, but well connected to the presidency and the party. On the case of flawed party primaries, contrary to best practices, the PDP displayed a drama in December 16, 2006 at the Eagle's Square, Abuja during the presidential primaries. Studies reveal that Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, the then Governor of Katsina State, a late entrant for the presidential primaries was imposed on the party as the consensus candidate, meanwhile it was not so (Adeyemo, 2006, p.14). Party executive arrogance was exhibited between 1999 and 2007 when the then President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, took total control of the running of the affairs of the National Assembly and kept replacing Senate presidents leading to having five senate presidents, which include: Evans Enwerem, Chuba Okadigbo, Pius Anyim Pius, Adolphus Wabara and Ken Nnamani within the same dispensation. He also fell out with some key actors and players of the party who were not ready to compromise and tolerate his undemocratic whims and caprices. Some of these personalities were, Chief Audu Ogbeh, Atiku Abubakar, Orji Uzor Kalu, Ghali Naaba, Ibikunle Amosun, Chief Tony Anineh, Aruthur Nzeribe and Uche Chukwumereije. The inability of the party to manage the crisis and conflicts (which was a result of party executive arrogance) led to decamping of many of the founding fathers and respected chieftains of the party to other political parties. The same problem of executive arrogance prevails in the States occupied by the PDP; a setting where the State Governors solely dictates what goes on at the State level (Metuh, 2010).

The Impact of God Fathers on Internal Party Democracy
The advent of godfathers in Nigeria's political parties portends a negative impact on the internal democracy of political parties in Nigeria. Political godfathers are those stakeholders in the party, who undertake the funding of virtually all the party activities. Therefore, they weigh much influence and power on the party and tend to solely dictate how the party will function, including nomination or imposition of their choice candidates against the will of the majority members. The above was reflected in Lagos when Bola Amend Tinubu the APC national leader and a onetime governor of Lagos state (now the incumbent Executive President of Nigeria) fought and stopped the seating governor Akinyomi Ambode from seeking re-election during the 2018 APC state primaries prior to the 2019 general election (Asadu, 2021). A similar case was witnessed in Edo state when the former governor of Edo state and the national chairman of the APC

attempt to unseat the seating governor Godwin Obaseki who after losing the primary in APC decamped to PDP where he got the governorship ticket to contest for the 2021 governorship election in Edo state (Akpata, 2020). The emergence of godfather in the Nigerian politics is posing a great threat not to political parties alone but to good governance as well as socio-economic development, and stability of democratization processes in Nigeria. One of the most disturbing and damaging influence of godfathers in Nigeria is in the domain of making nonsense of a truly free, fair and credible electoral process in which the electorates by right are expected to freely elect representatives of their choice into public office to represent them and their interests (Chukwuemeka, 2012).

There are many cases of imposition of candidates and control of the party machinery by the political godfathers, thereby stifling party internal democracy. The imposition or substitution is always necessitated by disagreement between the godfather and the godson on what should be gains of the godfather (Ikejiani-Clark, 2008). As Ngige (2008) has observed the magnitude of the mafia-style phenomenon of godfathers also demonstrated by how the godfathers decide party nominations and campaign outcomes. He noted further that when candidates resist the godfathers use violence to deal with the situation. He posits that the godfathers are mainly interested in controlling the party machines instead of presenting popular candidates for healthy electoral competitions. He observes that with such control of the party organization, godfathers cum PDP have various ways of eliminating popular candidates from the so-called party primaries.

For instance, Bassey and Edet (2008) observed that in Anambra State, the problem of Godfathers has done more harm in the PDP than in any other place, particularly in the gubernatorial position taken at different times. As the recounted, from 1999-2003, the battle was between Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju and his godfather, Emeka Offor. Dr. Mbadinuju refused to dance to the tune of his godfather and as a consequence, Mbadinuju lost bid for the second tenure as the pressure from his godfather made him perform far more below expectations in governance. The bickering and acrimony raised by the two actors are yet to settle when two others emerged. Chief Chris Uba and Dr. Chris Ngige. Uba was the godfather of Ngige as the governor of Anam bra State, 2003 -2006. Ngige refused to pay back his godfather the necessary commission and patronage. Since then, peace never returned to the seat of power in Anambra State. Eventually, appeal court declared Mr. Peter Obi as the winner of the 2003 gubernatorial election in Anambra State in March 2006 and this marked the beginning of scattered elections in Nigeria in this political dispensation (Okoli and Au, 2014; Olorungbemi, 2014; CDD, 2017).

Similar situations occurred in Enugu State, Ebonyi and Oyo States. Therefore, candidate imposition by godfathers does not only affect the parties' internal democracy but also the generality of the people who would be or are always at the mercy of the godfather in terms of welfare that would have come from good governance (Kura, 2014; Badejo and Obah Akpowoghaha, 2015; Okonkwo and Unaji, 2016; Okafor and Aniche, 2017). Since the inauguration of the Fourth Republic in Nigeria in 1999, the case of Anambra State has been a confounding one. It is the only state that has paraded five governors under controversial

circumstances from 1999 to 2007 (Ogbeide, 2012; CDD, 2017). The electoral history of the state since the country's return to democratic rule in 1999 is full of political notoriety. From 1999- 20 13, the State created a new record in Godfathers. First was the Ofor Mbadinuju saga (1999-2003), Uba-Ngige comedy (2002-2006) (Okoliand Au, 2014; CDD, 2017).

The Effects of Internal Democracy on Democratization in Nigeria

Expectedly, the strength of any foundation determines the strength of a building. Thus, the question is, how can a political party which cannot organize itself democratically provide the constituencies, local government, state or the federation with democratically elected candidates and quality leaders and accountable governance? It follows that the same way the political parties manipulate and impose candidates on members is the same way they use every available means, including, voter intimidation, ballot snatching and stuffing, manipulation of election figures on result sheets, thuggery, electoral violence, bribery of electoral officers and security agencies etc., to impose political leaders on the people. Thus, the actions of political parties in Nigeria have really affected the nation's democratization process in Nigeria in the negative. People no longer have trust in the electoral system, as this has generated voter-apathy believing that their votes would not count. For instance, party primaries designed to select party flag bearers in Nigeria's general elections have always been controversial and acrimonious, with most parties exhibiting grossly undemocratic tendencies and disregard for popular choice. In the 2003 elections only a few parties held primaries (Akinbobola 2003) and even fewer did so for the 2007 elections, signaling a growing tendency towards anti-democratic practices. The charade was beamed live on national television, with party flag bearers being anointed rather than elected.

The immediate consequence was massive defections from virtually all the parties. The situation in the PDP was particularly intriguing. Following the feud with the former president, the then incumbent vice-president (Atiku Abubakar) was prevented from contesting in the PDP presidential primaries. It was in the bid to stop the erstwhile vice-president that the party executive committees were dissolved, directing members to seek reregistration. In the process, those considered to be either supporters of or sympathetic to the vice-president were denied registration. Elections for positions of leadership within the party were devoid of credibility or democratic practice. Consequently, the president was able to gain effective control of the party and frustrate the presidential ambitions of his deputy. The vice-president was forced to defect to another party, the Action Congress (AC), to pursue his presidential ambition. The situation was similar in almost all the other parties. In the ANPP almost all the aspirants melodramatically withdrew from the race in recognition of the 'apparent' qualities and capability of General Buhari, the preferred candidate of the leadership of the party. In the AC, Atiku Abubakar was 'adopted' unopposed in the presidential party primaries, reflecting not consensus, but overt political control by the dominant forces in the party. Besides, the party primaries across party lines were ridden with cases of unlawful substitution of candidates. The cases of two PDP gubernatorial candidates Senator Ifeanyi Ararume of Imo State and Chief Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers State are typical examples of brazen undemocratic substitution of candidates by the party godfathers and leadership (Nnaji, 2021).

Furthermore, the undemocratic tendencies of party politics resulted in an increase in politically motivated violence and assassinations. Indeed, the rate of political assassinations assumed proportions never before known in the country. The spate of arson, thuggery, unconstitutionality and general insecurity was, perhaps, second only to the operation wetiel4 era in the old Western Region, when political violence was rampant and endemic (Kehinde 2007). The party system contributes in no small measure to the escalating political violence. The zero-sum nature of electoral competition, which leaves no room for coalition and cooperation, propels parties to consider elections as 'must win'. The stakes are simply too high for losing an electoral contest to be considered an option. Thus, a range of devices is employed to outsmart fellow competitors in order to influence results. Since there can only be one winner there will always be losers; the losers denied access to state power become frustrated, which leads to aggression and violence.

The intrigues in the party system have filtered into the electoral institutions such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The INEC by law establishing it ought to be independent in the discharge of its electoral duties, however, on the contrary the institution has been heavily compromised. As a result, the institution has not been able curry public confidence and legitimacy having been enmeshed in credibility burden. The political leaders have refused to grant INEC the requisite administrative and financial autonomy to conduct free, fair, and transparent elections. A situation where the INEC are forced to recruit card carrying members of the political parties, including recruitment of its ad hoc staff for the elections, leaves much to be desired (Agbaje and Adejumobi, 2006) and stifles democracy in its essence (Adejumobi, 2007). Besides, the activities of political Godfathers have threatened the country's nascent democracy. As they compete among themselves (godfathers) to control state powers and resources through their favoured godsons, they deny the electorate the right to elect their preferred candidates, thereby rendering elections and electoral processes ineffective to the disenchantment of other party members. Furthermore, their struggle for control of state power has also resulted in some worst electoral violence in the country (Nkwede, Ibeogu, and Nwankwo, 2014). What more, flawed elections, manipulation of the will of the people by the political godfathers and gladiators, control of leaders at various levels in Nigeria while bidding them to do their will, including appointment of commissioners, ministers, board members of parastatals, award of contracts and exaction of large part of state's monthly statutory allocations from their planted godsons (the current case of former Governor Nwike and incumbent Governor Fugbara his estranged godson in Rivers State in mind), the issue of deepening democratic ethos, credible elections, good governance, accountable leadership, rule of law and development in Nigeria is still far-fetched.

Conclusion
The study examined the link between political party internal democracy and democratization in Nigeria's fourth republic. The objective of the study is to highlight how internal party democracy affects the democratization process in the country. It is an attempt to examine if most of the political and electoral crises witnessed in Nigeria are by-products of the inability of the political parties to midwife a viable and workable internal

democracy, especially with recourse to selection of candidates for various political offices. Political party internal democracy is vital and pivotal to democratization in any nation just like Nigeria. Thus, a party that is aiming at providing leadership to the local, state or federal government must first have a good track record of democracy because it is pertinent that one cannot give what he does not possess. As such, features of the political parties in Nigeria's fourth republic have exposed the fact that they lack ideology, viable and credible candidate selection procedures thereby trading the part of undemocratic practices. Nigeria political parties are in no doubt under the whims and caprices of the political godfathers who use these parties as their tool for accumulating wealth for themselves and their cronies without recourse to the yearnings of the masses. Just like a boss, they hire and fire as it pleases them so much so that whoever dances to their political tune receives their support and occupies made to occupy juicy political positions while those who dare to go against them get fired as in the stick and carrot principle.

As revealed by the findings of the study, prior to the 1999 general elections when for example, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) was formed, the slogan was "power to the people" which most Nigerians saw as an abstract of the party ideology to bring about democratization. However, to all intent and purposes, contrary to the envisaged slogan, the party became ravaged by dictatorship and vestiges of undemocratic norms. Thus, the slogan which once brought hope for genuine democracy to the hearts of well-meaning Nigerians with the perception that after many years under military rule, the people would once again have the power to influence the decision and actions of public offers, turned out to become a sour grape and a dashed hope given the level of undemocratic practices by political party stalwarts and actors. This disillusionment has so appalling that most eligible voters except being monetarily induced or otherwise in kind, have become so apathetic to the electoral process that they remain at home during the general elections. This results from the mindset that their votes do not count. This undemocratic attitude of fielding candidates for elections through intimidation, suppression of popular views, and untoward monetary inducements within the political parties has become a norm in the larger political space; even as there are no more free, fair, and credible elections in the country. Rather, what plays out is both a charade and mockery of democratic elections. Thus, instead of enshrining and advancing the democratic principles as a political culture, the reverse has been the case. The above negative democratic attitudes have not only been extended into governance but resonates and radiates in lack of good and accountable governance without checks and balances in so far as the interest of the few political elites and godfathers alike are protected and perpetuated. Wherein lies the positive democratization process which the political parties are expected to usher in as a culture if this continues unabated? In view of these unsatisfactory state of affairs within the political parties, there is therefore need for the political party reforms in terms of creating well-defined political ideology, enshrining a system that ushers in free, fair and credible means of selection of candidates for elections, as this will rub-off positively on the general elections, introduce party discipline and credible means of generating party funds rather than allow few predatory godfathers fund the party, and by so doing, hijack the party structures to their advantage and to the chagrin of internal party democracy, and de-democratization of the entire political space.

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