

Intra-Party Crises, Defections and Electoral Performance in 2015 General Elections in Kwara State, Nigeria

AHMED OLAWALE MOLIKI

Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagan, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria

Abstract. The paper assessed the effects of intra-party crises and defections on party performance during the 2015 General Elections in Kwara State, North-central Nigeria. Data obtained from secondary sources were content analysed. The paper observed that there has been unmanageable trend of internal crises within the Nigeria's political parties in contemporary times, gradually polarising and distorting party politics. Series of these internal squabbles seemingly uncontrollable have contributed to the conundrums of defections experienced in the major and minor political parties in most states of the federation, Kwara State, inclusive. So alarming is the situation that elections are competed for like warfare with consequences for electoral outcomes. Our major findings indicated that patron-client politics, factionalism, poor party internal democracy and ideologies, money politics, and overambitious character of party leadership occasioned intra-party crises and defections in Kwara State. It further established that intra-party feuds and defections within the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) towards the 2015 General Elections led to its woeful performance while conversely contributed largely to the brilliant performance of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the elections. The paper concluded that party members should be enlightened on moral politics, internal democracy and Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) should be strengthened with a view to timely engaging the political actors involved in internal crisis and resolve their disagreements amicably.

Keywords: Defection, Internal Crisis, Party Politics, Performance, Kwara Politics

1. Introduction

Partisan politics, since 1999, when Nigeria transitioned to democratic governance, has been characterised by strained relations and polarisation, culminating in a

fastidious tensions and crises in the polity. This is because politics and elections in Nigeria are pursued with deadly seriousness thus making political activities to become brutal, conflict-prone and violent-ridden, to the extent that persistent internal face-offs distressing both ruling and opposition parties, have considerably continued to threaten free, fair and peaceful election, as well as stable polity. The nature and character of party politics in the current Republic indicate that the manner at which political parties operate is worrisome due to lack of internal democracy and paucity of viable ideology (Moliki, 2018).

Dearth of internal democracy has impeded party members to subscribe to and abide by the basic and universal democratic norms and principles. Adams cited in Olumide (2017, p.17), remark that "it is a pity that Nigeria's parties found themselves in a situation where party ideologies, discipline and programmes have been substituted for personal and selfish interest of ambitious politicians." He posit further that the bane of parties in the country is that they often jettison their ideology for individual self-aggrandizement. By implication, political elites have often turned electoral competition to political battles, wherein money politics largely determines the election outcome and zero-sums game and patron-client politics have replaced inclusive and transparent governance.

In the last twenty years of consistent democratic transitions, members of political parties, such as the People's Democratic Party (PDP), defunct All Nigeria's Peoples Party (ANPP), the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Labour Party (LP), the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) and the All Progressives Congress (APC), among other minor ones, are at one another's jugular over issues that ought to be addressed internally and amicably. The tumultuous situation, palpable divisions and ensued crises within these parties, especially the PDP, when

2015 General Elections were approaching, at both the national and state levels; the unending face-offs between G.7 Governors, and the National Assembly members, party stalwarts and the national leadership, leading to the formation of “newPDP” (nPDP) heated the political atmosphere and this eventually led to defection of the five aggrieved governors and other party members to APC (Daniel, 2013).

Consequently, political parties in Kwara State in the build-up to 2015 General Elections were embroiled in serious intra-party crises. The crisis rocking the PDP at the national level took its toll on Kwara politics. As a result, the Kwara State Governor, Abdulfatah Ahmed, two Senators, five House of Representatives members, 22 members of the House of Assembly, 16 Local Government chairmen and their Councilors, and party chieftains and their supporters defected to APC from 2013 to 2014 (Adebowale, 2014; Daniel, 2013; Moliki, 2018; Ogunmade, Bello & Shuaibu, 2014). Against the foregoing background, this study is premised on the fact that intra-party crisis and defection at any level are a threat to electoral performance of the affected parties. The thrust of this study, however, was to examine the effects of internal crises and defections on party performance during the 2015 General Elections in Kwara State.

2. Conceptual Foundation and Methodology

Intra-party Crisis: Party politics has been bedeviled by crises in varying proportions. This is as a result of the fact that political party members engage in the scramble for the control over the distribution of power and resources, employing different strategies and means (Babatope, 2012). Eme and Anyadike (2011, p.43) describe intra-party crisis as a distress and tension created within a political party due to the inability of the party concerned to resolve and reconcile effectively its internal differences or disputes among themselves. The scholars further posit that crash opportunism, greed lust for power, lack of trust among elites coupled with animosities between godfathers and godsons are the primary reasons for the various intra-party crises in Nigerian politics.

Okonkwo and Unaji (2016), Moliki (2018) and Moliki & Dauda (2017) identify weak institutional structure, poor internal democracy, lack of political ideology, selfish interests of the party stalwarts, poor selection of candidates, inadequate party manifestoes, ethno-regional interest, godfatherism, influence of money politics and poor party leadership, as the reasons for the incessant crises within parties with the conclusion that intra-party crises are a bane to the

democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Deducing from the foregoing is that intra-party crisis is an anomalous trend in contemporary party politics which has become the cankerworm in Nigeria’s political parties defying every possible solution. Indeed, it has become an abnormal routine in every political party once the general elections are near. It is a precursor to division, factionalisation and defection. In other words, changes in party affiliations have often hinged on divisions and/or crises within their former parties.

Defection: Defection has been perceived by scholars as part and parcel of party politics in the developing nations, Nigeria inclusive (Aleyomi, 2013; Moliki, 2018; Ogundiya, 2011). Party defection is known by different nomenclatures, such as decamping, party switching, canoe-jumping and cross-carpeting, among others. Etymologically conceived, defection is derived from the Latin word *defectio* which means “an act of abandonment of a person or a cause to which such person is bound by reason of allegiance or duty, or to which he has willfully attaches himself” (Omilusi, 2015, p.57). Eme and Ogbochie (2014, p.22) use the term defection technically to refer to “anyone who switches loyalty to another political party or other rival faction within a political party.”

Broadly conceived, Ogundiya (2011, p.202) explain defection as “the abandonment or a change of party affiliations or movement of politicians and/or political office holders either elected or appointed to an alternative party from the one under which they are elected or appointed into power or position.” In Nigeria, as in other developing nations, defection occurs when the decampsee feels dissatisfied and discontented with his/her former party without the defection reflecting any ideological leaning (Aleyomi, 2013). This is also buttressed in the observation made by Ogundiya (2011) that unlike the mature democracies where their philosophical basis for defection is mainly ideological and policy-oriented, the defection in the developing democracies is often devoid of ideology. This, coupled with other factors, such as weak formation of parties, lack of internal democracy, kleptocracy, godfatherism, failure to adhere to party ideologies and manifestoes, and constitutional deficiency (Agudiegwu & Ezeani, 2015), are responsible for incessant defection of politicians from one party to another. In the context of this paper, defection is conceived as the situation of abandoning the political party one originally belongs to and moving to another political party already in existence or newly formed.

Party Performance: The concept of party performance defies a straightforward interpretation or

meaning. This is because it is an emerging area of academic exploration, where scholars have provided no or little explanation of the concept. *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2005) describe performance as an act of performing, achievement, accomplishment or undertaking of a duty. Performance is associated with success, competitiveness, action, effort and progress. It has to do with the result of action and does not exist by itself. In this context, party performance refers to a situation whereby a political party performs to the expectation of the people, especially after the announcement of the election result (Moliki, 2018). To talk of party performance is to rely on the number of elective posts won during elections by each party. The implication of this is that a political party with viable ideology and working internal democracy may not be reckoned with if such party could not pull crowd and win any political seat during elections.

This paper employed documentary research method. Data were collected from secondary sources, such as textbooks, journals, articles, newspapers, and official documents, online and unpublished materials. Content analytical approach was applied to analyse the collected data, which helped us to make logical explanation on internal crises, defections and implications on party performance coherently, in addition to realistic group conflict and elite theories adopted as frameworks of analysis.

3. Theoretical Underpinnings

The theoretical constructs adopted to guide the study are realistic group conflict and elite theories. Realistic group conflict theory (RGCT) is traceable to Donald Campbell (1965) and popularised by Jackson (1993), Brief, *et al.*, (2005) and Baumeister and Vohs (2007). The theory traces the conflicts, negative prejudices and discriminations among group of people to competition for same goals and resources. It emphasise that inter and intra-group hostility arises as a result of conflicting goals and competition over limited resources, money, military protection, social status, position and political power. The struggle for power is further aggravated when feelings of resentment set in as a result of “zero-sums game” depicting a situation where once this group wins, the other lose out entirely (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007; Jackson, 1993).

Since different individuals and groups with varying and competing interests are differently situated within political parties, there is a very high probability that relationship between party members would be characterised by disagreements, enmity, antagonism, division and crisis. Hence, unhealthy

rivalry and competition over political powers and resources among political actors within political parties have undermined political stability and peaceful party relations in Nigeria. As observed by Eme and Anyadike (2011, p.38), “the history of political parties activities since 1999 is replete with so much crisis that rather than furthering democratic ethos, have indeed become stumbling blocks to attainment of stable democratic order.”

There is overwhelming evidence that prolonged internal party crisis due to struggle for political power, authority and influence prompted the exodus of defection of some party members who felt threatened and deprived of certain opportunities and privileges (Moliki, 2018). For instance, internal crises within PDP led to the defection of the nPDP members, including former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, State Governors, Rabiun Kwankwaso (Kano), Aliyu Wammako (Sokoto), Murtala Nyako (Adamawa), Rotimi Amaechi (Rivers) and Abdulfatah Ahmed (Kwara) in November 2013 (Tukur, 2015).

Elite theory is another theoretical proposition relevant to this study. Elite theory was originally propounded by Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923) and Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941). Other views on elite theory are derived from these scholars’ writings. Pareto believes that any society is organised into two strata: an *upper stratum* - the elite; and a *lower stratum* - the non-elite. To him, elites are those persons who are recognised to be outstanding with extraordinary qualities and as such are considered the leaders in a given field of competence. They comprises the governing elite who directly play some considerable part in government or wear appropriate labels of political offices, and non-governing elite - those people who influences larger part of government’s decisions and actions.

Mosca, on the other hand, classifies the composition of society into the rulers and ruled. He asserts that whatever form of government in existence, power would reside in the minority who forms the ruling class. He describes the ruling elites as those that are highly esteemed and influential in the society. He believes that the minority rules over the majority by the fact that it is organised and composed of superior individuals with leadership qualities. Thus, there is a general agreement between Pareto and Mosca on the elite as a minority which rules the majority and that the ruling class has the direct influence over the decision-making process of any kind. These elites control public utility services, own private property, control means of production and distribution, and

powerful religious and democratic institutions (Mondal, 2015; Mukhi, 2008).

The utility of elite theory to the current study suggests that political party as one of the democratic institutions play a very effective and decisive role in the process of decision making in the democratic societies, such as Nigeria. Thus, political elites see political parties as manipulative devices that can be used to preserve elite's domination of state resources and their allocations. This explains the character of party leaders and executives, presidency, state governors and party patrons, who dictates and directs the party affairs to promote and protect their selfish aggrandizement. It is obvious that in every political party, there exist party financiers and national leaders. These are power brokers who determines who gets party tickets or who rides on the back of the party to win any political post. Their activities and decisions, include but not limited to imposition of candidate(s), hijack of party structure and dictatorial tendencies, purposely causing tension, division and promote factions within parties and encouraging internal crisis and defection, when the struggle become tensed between them and the new rising elites.

Buttressing the above submission, Azeez and Adenuga (2015) contend that political parties are often influenced in order to promote elite circulation and interests of political elites. Parties in the current republic have been characterised by series of disagreements and squabbles between political actors and sometimes between godfathers and godsons, which have invariably led to constant trend of "survival of the fittest". As a result, members of the political parties switch parties or form new ones, to gain access to petro-rents and political privileges. This explains what was responsible for series of internal crises and the defections that eventually followed in the PDP and APC in Kwara State between 2013 and 2015.

4. Kwara State and 2015 General Elections: An Overview

Kwara State is one of the states in the North-Central geo-political zone of Nigeria created on 27th May 1967, when the Federal Military Government of General Yakubu Gowon broke the old four regions (the North, West, Mid-West and East) and constituted the Federation into twelve (12) States. By the return to democracy in May 29 1999, out of the three existing political parties, Kwara State government was under the All People's Party (APP) platform. In the April 1999 elections, Rear Admiral Mohammed Lawal was elected as the Governor under the umbrella of the APP. In the 2003 General Elections,

Abubakar Saraki was the elected Governor of Kwara State, under the platform of PDP, the position he held till May 29 2011. In 2011 gubernatorial election, Abdulfatah Ahmed was elected the Governor of the State, and he was re-elected in 2015. Since 1999, three political parties, namely: APP/ANPP, PDP and APC, had been the ruling parties in the state.

The 2015 General Elections were the fourth general election to be held since Nigeria returns to democratic rule in 1999. The elections (Presidential and National Assembly) and (Governorship and State Assembly), were slated for February 14, 2015 and February 28, 2015, respectively. Unfortunately, the elections were postponed for some notable reasons. Thus the major reason given for the postponement was security challenges facing the northern part of the country. This was emphasized in a letter written by the then National Security Adviser (NSA), Col. Sambo Dasuki, to the INEC Chairman, Prof. Attahiru Jega, on 4th February, 2015. It was stressed that the security services needed at least six weeks within which to conclude a major military operation against the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East region, hence the military would be concentrating its attention in the theatre of operations, such that they might not be able to provide the traditional support they render to the Nigeria Police Force and other agencies during elections (Abayomi & Osimen, 2015; Jega, 2015).

Expectedly, the stakes in the 2015 General Elections were particularly high due to intense competition between the newly merged APC and the then ruling PDP. Benneth (2014) note that the emergence of a 'grand' opposition party, APC, which is the result of a merger between the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP), and faction of the All Progressive's Grand Alliance (APGA), targeted at supplanting the PDP, made the contest more intense. Moreso, internal party issues, became another cause of concern for most party patrons, public affairs analysts and keen watchers.

The 2015 General Elections were eventually held on 28th March 2015 and 11th April 2015, for the national elections (National Assembly and Presidential) and the state elections (Governorship and State Assembly), respectively. The PDP which has been the ruling party since 1999 at the national level faced its toughest opposition in the APC which was formed on February 6 2013. The 2015 General Elections were historic for the introduction of an electronic accreditation process, which in spite of the challenges encountered, seemed to have remarkably increased the credibility of the country's election administration process. The elections witnessed the use of Smart Card Reader (SCR) for the

authentication of biometric Permanent Voters' Cards (PVCs) and accreditation of voters. As Dauda (2016) has observed, the conduct of the 2015 General Elections marked a turning point in the annals of electoral management in Nigeria. The elections were largely seen as transparent, free and fair by both the local and international observers compared to the previous elections.

5. Internal Crisis, Defection and Politics of 2015 General Elections in Kwara State: Cases and Causes

Political activities in Kwara State have never been tensed as the one witnessed in the build-up to the 2015 General Elections. This may be traced to the product of political space that has pervaded the State for several years. Although it was easy to locate the source of that conflict, yet it has been so difficult to find solution. Kwara State became a conflict-prone state and its resources were frittered away on the altar of resolving the squabbles. Therefore, this section will look at the cases and causes of internal wrangling within the PDP and APC in the State and their linkage with the politics of the 2015 General Elections.

PDP since its inception in Kwara State has moved from one crisis to the other. It was initially bedevilled by leadership crisis, then controversy over the alleged moves by new members to hijack its structures and later the ripples over who succeeds Governor Bukola Saraki. The party was enveloped in crisis in 2010 as regards who succeeds Bukola Saraki in the 2011 Gubernatorial Election. The crisis began when on September 18, 2010, at a rally, elder Saraki declared his daughter, Senator Gbemisola, representing Kwara Central Senatorial District, as the next governor. Some of the members of PDP, including members of the National Assembly, 18 of 24 lawmakers in the State House of Assembly and local government chairmen attended the rally. The same day, Isiaka Danmairomo, the then PDP Publicity Secretary, in a statement, said: "the leadership of the party was not aware that any candidate had been endorsed." He added that "the guideline for the emergence of party's flag-bearer either as president, governor and other political offices released and sent to all states would be religiously adhered to" (Abimboye, 2010). This surprising declaration threw off balance all permutations in the "The State of Harmony". Bukola Saraki, the then Governor, was opposed to the plot to install his sister as Governor. Indeed, some PDP members under the aegis of "Aggrieved Delegates of Kwara PDP" and loyalists of the patriarch accused the governor of hijacking the party machinery in the State to subvert his father's plan. Bayero Ahmed, the

group's leader said the Governor was persecuting his group for its support for Gbemisola in the 2011 General Elections (Abimboye, 2010). During this period, PDP was polarised and all efforts to reconcile the warring factions proved abortive.

The crisis in the PDP at the national level in 2012-2013 equally affected Kwara State's PDP chapter. On August 31 2013, during the National Convention of PDP, seven State Governors, party chieftains, National Assembly members, the delegates from these States and their supporters walked out of the Convention ground. On November 26 2013, the incumbent Governor, Abdulfatah Ahmed, informed the public of his defection to APC. By February 2014, the two Senators, including Senator Bukola Saraki, the House of Representative members representing the State, party stalwarts, including Kawu Baraje, 22 members of the House of Assembly, 16 Council Chairmen and their Councilors, along their supporters defected to APC (Adebowale, 2014; Moliki, 2018; Ogunmade, *et al.*, 2014).

Similarly, over 2,000 youths under the aegis of Mohammed Dele Belgore (MDB) Solidarity Team who were primarily from Ilorin West Local Government Area defected from PDP to the ruling APC on 26th September 2014. The defectors hinged their defection on leadership crises, misappropriation of party funds by PDP State Executives and inaccessibility to Mr. Dele Belgore, who was nursing gubernatorial ambition under the umbrella of PDP in the 2015 General Elections. In what can be referred to as counter-defection, Mr. Belgore defected from APC to PDP in February 2014 (*Ilorin Info*, February 20 2014).

The APC in Kwara State, like that of other states in Nigeria equally experienced crisis of monumental proportion immediately after its emergence in 2013. The causes of this crisis are not far-fetched; these include the sharing of elective positions and control of party structures towards the 2015 General Elections. The party was factionalized. Specifically, the defection of the Saraki group to APC and the decision to take over the political control of the APC in the State, as viewed by the Belgore group, were unjust and unacceptable. After series of meetings with the national leadership of the APC to change this situation, the Belgore group later formed a new interim State Executive Council led by Rev. Bunmi Olusonna. On 20th February 2014, the former ACN Governorship candidate in the 2011 General Elections, Mr. Muhammad Dele Belgore and thousands of his supporters across the sixteen (16) Local Government Areas of the State, left APC for PDP over the alleged injustice by the APC leadership (*Ilorin Info*, February 20 2014).

Some of defection cases in Kwara State towards the 2015 General Elections are presented in the tables below:

Table 1: At the National Assembly

Name of Defectors	Office	Party before	Party defected to
Hon. Ali Ahmad	House of Rep.	PDP	APC
Hon. Ahman Bahago	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Akeem Olayinka	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Mustapha Mashood	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Ibrahim Adebayo	" "	PDP	APC
Senator Bukola Saraki	Senate	PDP	APC
Senator Mohammed Lafiagi	" "	PDP	APC

Source: Compiled by the Author from *Ilorin Info* (February 20 2014), Ogunmade, *et al.*, (2014) and Moliki (2018).

Table 2: Governorship and House of Assembly

Name of Defectors	Office	Party before	Party defected to
Abdulfattah Ahmed	Governor	PDP	APC
Hon. Razak Atunwa	House of Assembly	PDP	APC
Hon. Mohammed Yisa	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. AbdulKareem A.	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Audu Saidu	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Sadu Tanke	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Sikirat Anako	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Hassan Oyeleke	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Abdulkadir S. R.	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Felicia Ojeleye	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Tope Olayonu	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. David Bamidele	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Moshood O. B.	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Afolabi Giwa	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Ebun Owolabi	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Abraham A. A.	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Adamu Sabi	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Kamal Fagbemi	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Sulaimon Idris	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Raliat Adifa	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Nimota Ibrahim	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Mande Umar	" "	PDP	APC
Hon. Haliru Idris	" "	PDP	APC

Source: Compiled by the Author from Adebowale (2014), Daniel (2013), and Moliki (2018).

Table 3: Party Stalwarts and Members

Name of Defectors	Status	Party before	Party defected to
Mohammed Dele Belgore	Former ACN governorship aspirant	APC	PDP
Alhaji Abubakar Kawu Baraje	Party chieftain	PDP	APC

Source: Compiled by the Author from *Ilorin Info* (February 20 2014) and Moliki (2018).

Table 1-3 shows the summary of the defected members of the PDP and APC between 2010 and 2015 at the National Assembly, Governorship, House of Assembly and other party members in Kwara State. The crisis in PDP led to the defection of member of the Senate from the State, Senator Bukola Saraki, the incumbent Governor, Abdulfattah Ahmed, Senator representing Kwara North, Mohammed Lafiagi, five honourable members of the House of Representatives, PDP chieftain and former chairman, Kawu Baraje, 22 members of the House of Assembly from PDP to APC. The former ACN Governorship candidate in the state, Muhammed Dele Belgore later defected from APC to PDP in 2014. However, the following could be identified as causes of internal

wrangling and defection saga in Kwara State during the period under review:

Patron-Client Politics: The internal crises and defections within the two dominant parties in Kwara State towards the 2015 elections cannot be dissociated from patron-client politics syndrome. Clientelistic politics has precipitated a situation in which patrons with financial powers, political structure and larger group of followers using their established relationship influence the decision-making process of political parties to favour their preferred candidates, thereby causing chaos, rancor, bitterness and acrimonious relationships, among party members. The patrons seek to be accorded enormous recognition by respecting their wishes and

decisions. In the situation where the party elements refuse such unworthy recognition, they do within their powers to divide the party.

The emergence of late Dr. Olusola Saraki in Kwara political scene in the 60s came with a brand of politics which has since become a case study for political scientists. The strongman of Kwara politics, as late Saraki was popularly called, during his lifetime provided political leadership and gave a political direction upon which Kwara thrived till his demise late 2012. His death did not toll the knell of his political philosophy and enduring followership. Senator Bukola Saraki took the mantle of political leadership, and had also risen to become a key player in the Kwara and national politics (Sambo, 2013). Thus, Kwara politics has always been influenced by patron-client politics.

Monetised Politics: There is no doubting the fact that money is needed in politics, elections and management of party activities, such as political campaigns, party elections, sponsorship of candidates, compensation of party agents, advertisement and so on (Omede, 2004). Money is always the cause of bribery and falsification of election results among other evils associated with the electoral process in Nigeria, Kwara State inclusive. Since the illegal use of money in politics belongs to the realm of the godfathers, it may be difficult for the godsons as the contending candidates vying for political offices generally to achieve success without the support of a godfather.

Over-ambition and Greed of Party Leadership: Party leadership in their over-ambition and greedy tendencies has been identified as one of the salient causes of intra-party crises and defections in Kwara State. The aggrieved PDP governors in 2013 accused the PDP national leadership of scheming and breaking party rules to hijack control of the party machinery and support for handpicked aspirants for 2015 General Elections. Moliki and Dauda (2017) and Okohue (2013) argue that PDP crises towards 2015 elections were precipitated by increasing repression, restriction of freedom of association, arbitrary suspension of members, unlawful dissolutions of party executives in some of the states of federation and other violation of democratic principles by the Bamanga Tukur-led party leadership led to defection/ cross-carpeting of five state governors, party stalwarts and serving parliamentarians as well as their supporters to APC in November 2013 (*BBC News*, November 26 2013).

Factionalism: Virtually all the political parties in Kwara State were factionalized and this threatened peace and stability of party activities in the State. The

PDP was completely crippled as it was divided right down the middle by the factional fight to finish between warring factions in the party. Same later happened in APC as it was divided into two factions, along with Senator Bukola Saraki and Lai Mohammed. Factionalism was partly responsible for the different internal squabbles within the PDP and APC, and by extension, defection of members of these major political parties in the country.

Lack of Internal Party Democracy: It has been difficult to find an operational party system in Nigeria and Kwara State in particular that is anchored on effective democratic norms and principles. Virtually all the political parties of this period have failed to abide by democratic tenets. Poor selection of candidate, imposition of anointed candidates, repressive party leaders/executives, contemptible party manifesto and secrecy in party activities, and so on became the order the day in these parties. It is in line with this submission that Jibril Ibrahim posits that: *Historically, political parties got into the bad habit of refusing to practice internal party democracy because of the prevalence of the culture of electoral fraud in our history. Precisely because so many parties routinely plan to bribe, shoot and rig themselves into power, the "popularity principle" that encourages parties to play internal democracy is largely absent* (Ibrahim, 2017, p.9).

Zoning: Zoning was also responsible for the crisis that reared its ugly head in the ACN/APC, particularly preparatory to the 2015 General Elections in Kwara State. Some party members from the Kwara South Senatorial District, where Lai Mohammed hails from, did not want Belgore to be given the governorship ticket, but wanted the ticket of the party for the gubernatorial election to be zoned to the Kwara South Senatorial District. This situation split the caretaker committee of the party in the State (*Ilorin Info*, June 4 2013).

6. Effects of Internal Crises and Defections on Electoral Performance of Political Parties in 2015 General Elections

This section analyses the effects of intra-party crises and defections on electoral performance of political parties in the 2015 General Elections. It comparatively assesses the performance of the PDP and APC in Kwara State before and after the general elections, with a view to pinpoint whether the internal crises experienced in the PDP between 2012 and 2015 actually affected the party performance during the elections or otherwise. Tables 4-7 specifically present this analysis according to the available seats contested for and won during the elections.

Table 4: Governors Elected by Parties before and after 2015 General Elections

Name of Governor	Party	Tenure	Remark
Abdulfatah Ahmed	PDP	2011-2015	Elected
Abdulfatah Ahmed	APC	2015-2019	Re-elected

Source: Moliki (2018).

Table 4 shows that the Kwara State Governor, Abdulfatah Ahmed was elected on the PDP platform in the 2011 gubernatorial election. He was re-elected in 2015, this time not on the platform of PDP but the APC, the party he defected to in 2013 alongside other five aggrieved PDP governors. It also reveals that the PDP was in control of Kwara State before the 2015 elections, but with the crisis that rocked the party in 2013-2014 and the defections that eventually took place the party lost the seat to the APC in the 2015 gubernatorial election.

Table 5: Kwara House of Assembly by Parties before and after 2015 Elections

Political Party	Before 2015	After 2015
ACN	2	-
PDP	22	-
APC	-	24

Source: Moliki (2018).

Table 5 shows that 22 out of 24 seats in the Kwara State House of Assembly between 2011 and 2015 were occupied by the PDP members, depicting the PDP as the dominant party in the House, until after the 2015 elections, when the table turned to its opposite. By implication, the APC swept all the seats in the Kwara House of Assembly. This situation was believed to be the outcome of intra-party crises in the PDP at both the national and state levels prior to the elections.

Table 6: Senatorial Representations before and after 2015 General Elections

Name	Party	Before 2015	After 2015
Senator Bukola Saraki	PDP	✓	
Senator Simeon Ajibola	PDP	✓	
Senator Mohammed Lafiagi	PDP	✓	
Senator Bukola Saraki	APC		✓
Senator Rafiu Ibrahim	APC		✓
Senator Mohammed Lafiagi	APC		✓

Source: Moliki (2018).

As presented in Table 6, the three Senatorial districts in Kwara State before the 2015 General Elections were represented by the PDP Senators, until the unrestrained crises that erupted within the party in 2013 and which ultimately led to defections of party financiers, leaders and stalwarts to the APC. The consequence of the crises was that the PDP lost all the three Senatorial positions in the State to the APC in the 2015 General Elections.

Table 7: House of Representatives members before and after 2015 Elections

Name	Party	Before 2015	After 2015
Hon. Ali Ahmad	PDP	✓	
Hon. Ahman Bahago	PDP	✓	
Hon. Akeem Olayinka	PDP	✓	
Hon. Mustapha Mashood	PDP	✓	
Hon. Ibrahim Adebayo	PDP	✓	
Hon. Zakari Mohammed	PDP	✓	
Hon. Aliyu Ahman-Pategi	APC		✓
Hon. Razak Atunwa	APC		✓
Hon. Olarinoye Olayonu	APC		✓
Hon. Abubakar Amadu-Kannike	APC		✓
Hon. Olufunke Adedoyin	APC		✓
Hon. Aliyu Ahman Bahago	APC		✓

Source: Compiled by the Author.

As shown in Table 7, all the six honourable members of the House of Representatives in Kwara State were elected on the PDP platform in the 2011 General Elections; whereas the 2015 general elections saw the

six seats in the House of Representatives for the state won by the APC. This huge loss can only be blamed on intra-party crises that characterised the PDP

towards the elections at both the National and State levels.

The foregoing analyses show that the crises in Kwara PDP greatly affected the party performance in the 2015 General Elections, because members were unable to work as a team, rather, each group tried to outwit and undermine one another. This simply explains the abysmal performances of the PDP in the elections. As fallout of the crisis, the party failed to win any election in the state. Subscribing to this assertion, Shittu (2017, pp.9-10) contend that,

Expectedly, the seemingly intractable crisis affected the electoral fortunes of the party in the state during the 2015 General Elections, especially that of the governorship election in which the party performed woefully and lost to the APC. The party could also not win a single seat both at the state's House of Assembly and at the National Assembly. Instead of the party to work in unity during the said election, the factions worked against each other which eventually affected the electoral success of the party in the State. Similarly, Atiku Abubakar cited in Tukur (2015) remark that the movement of the five governors to the APC greatly enhanced the fortune of the party and led to the defeat of the PDP in the 2015 General Elections.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, we have extensively interrogated the effects of internal crises and defections on party performance with emphasis on PDP and APC during the 2015 General Elections in Kwara State. The study notes that these political parties were embroiled in serious intra-party crises in the build-up to the General Elections in the State. The crises which elicited different reactions endangered continuous harmonious relationship within the affected party thus leading to defection of embittered party members from PDP to APC. Different cases and causes of this political malady were identified. Among the causes noted include, patron-client politics that has over the years characterized Kwara politics, monetised politics, overambitious and greedy party leadership, factionalisation of parties, poor internal party democracy and zoning.

The study argues that the intermittent war and politics of acrimony among political blocs in PDP during this period affected the electoral fortunes of the party in Kwara State during the 2015 General Elections. The party performed woefully and lost the governorship, the National Assembly and the Kwara State House of Assembly seats, to APC. The study submits that the controversies within political parties

distract the government from engaging in robust policies that would enhance and improve the standard of living of its people. Therefore, contemporary politicians should shun politics of the belly and concentrate more on how to ensure that the democratic institutions, such as political party, work to engender effective democratic consolidation.

In the light of the foregoing, the study makes the following recommendations:

- Enlightenment on moral politics. Party members should be enlightened on playing politics of morality as against unethical (monetised and patron-client) politics that have pervaded political landscape of Nigeria. Politicians should not only ensure that they follow the rules of the game, they must also avoid winner-takes-all character, greed, arrogance, impunity and politics of calumny.
- Strengthening of the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC). The IPAC should be strengthened with a view to timely engaging the political actors involved in internal crisis in order to resolve their disagreements amicably.
- Unbundling the INEC's structure and composition. This study calls for unbundling of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as a prerequisite for conducting free, fair, credible and acceptable elections. Going by Prof Samuel Egwu's suggestion, this study also advocate for the need to create a new and dedicated body out of the present INEC to take care of heavy burden and responsibilities of the commission, especially in the areas of registration, regulation of political parties and prosecution of electoral offenders.
- Strict adherence to party internal democracy, party ideology and organisational effectiveness. Party leaders/executives and members need to respect internal democracy and ideological stance of their political parties. Party leadership should try to aggregate the varying interests of their members and articulate a unified front for achieving such goals. Party discipline should be strictly abided with.
- Sanction of erring politicians flouting party constitution and guidelines. In a political party with diversity of interests and ideologies, there is the tendency that some members would place their personal interests over and above their constituents'

interests. Hence, necessary measure should be put in place by both the parties and the regulatory bodies to sanction any politician found flouting the party's constitution and guidelines, as this will limit the extent of internal crises and defections being experienced in the contemporary political parties.

References

- Abayomi, M. A. & Osimen, G. U. (2015). The Political Economy of the Postponement of Nigeria's 2015 General Elections: Effects, Implications and Lessons. *Developing Country Studies*, 5(16), 102-110.
- Abimboye, D. (2010). PDP's House of Crises. *Newswatch Magazine*, November 22.
- Agudiegwu, M. O. & Ezeani, E. (2015). Party Defections and Survival of Democracy in Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (IJHSS)*, 4(6), 103-112.
- Aleyomi, M. B. (2013). Election and Politics of Party Defection in Nigeria: A Clue on Kogi State. *Covenant University Journal of Politics and International Affairs*, 1(1), 72-84.
- Azeez, A. & Adenuga, I. (2015). Elite Theory and Elite Circulation in Nigerian Politics. *International Journal of Banking, Finance Management & Development Studies*, 3(1), 152-162.
- Babatope, O. A. (2012). Party Conflicts and Democracy Consolidation in Nigeria: Bumpy Past, Shaky Future. *Journal of Research in Arts & Social Sciences*, 1(1), 12-20.
- Baumeister, R. F. & Vohs, K. D. (2007). Realistic Group Conflict Theory. *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology*, 2, 725-726.
- Benneth, S. O. (2014). 2015 and the Survival of the Nigerian State. Retrieved from <https://stephadieseruvwe.com/2014/05/03/2015-and-the-survival-of-the-nigerian-state-by-simon-okolo-benneth%ef%bb%bf/>
- Brief, A. P., Umphress, E. E., Dietz, J., Butz, R., Burrows, J. & Schoelten, L. (2005). Community Matters: Realistic Group Conflict Theory and the Impact of Diversity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48(5), 830-844.
- Campbell, D. T. (1965). *Ethnocentric and Other Altruistic Motives*. Lincoln, N.E: University of Nebraska Press.
- Daniel, S. (2013). Amaechi, 4 other PDP govts, nPDP join APC. *Vanguard*, November 27.
- Eme, O. I. & Anyadike, N. (2011). Intra and Inter-Party Crisis in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Implications for the Sustainability and Consolidation of Democracy in Post Third Term Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences and Public Policy*, 3, 38-52.
- Eme, O. I. & Ogbochie, A. (2014). The Legal/Constitution Basis of Political Party Defection in Nigeria. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 3(11), 19-34.
- Ibrahim, J. (2017). The poor health of our parties. *Daily Trust*, April 28.
- Ilorin Info. (2013, June 4). Issues as things fall apart in Kwara ACN. Retrieved from <https://www.ilorin.info/fullnews.php?id=4219>
- Jackson, J. W. (1993). Realistic Group Conflict Theory: A Review and Evaluation of the Theoretical and Empirical Literature. *Psychological Record*, 43(3), 395-415.
- Jega, A. M. (2015). Preparations for the 2015 General Elections: Progress report. Presented to the National Council of State, February 5.
- Kumolu, C. (2016). APC crisis: Lessons from Extinct Political Parties. *Vanguard*, October 15.
- Moliki, A. O. (2018). Party conflict, defection and performance in Nigeria's 2011 and 2015 General Elections in Ogun and Kwara states. An unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State.
- Moliki, A. O., & Dauda, K. O. (2017). Party Leadership, Intra-Party Crises and the Challenges of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: A Focus on South-Western Region (2010-2016). Paper presented at the 1st Annual Conference of NPSA South-West Zone held at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, 7th-10th March.
- Mosca, G. (1923/1939). *The Ruling Class*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Mukhi, H. R. (2008). *Political Thought*. Nai Sarak, Delhi: Surjeet Book Depot.
- Ogundiya, I. S. (2011). Party switching and defection in Nigeria: Implications for democratic consolidation. In I.S. Ogundiya (Ed.) *Political Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria* (pp. 200-231). Ibadan: Codat Publications.
- Ogunmode, O., Bello, M. & Shuaibu, I. (2014, January 30). Nigeria: Finally, Saraki, Goje,

- Abe, Eight Senators join APC. *This Day (Lagos)*.
- Okohue, P. (2013). Cost of resolving PDP crisis. *My Daily Newswatch*, September 18.
- Okonkwo, C. N., & Unaji, F. N. (2016). Intra-party conflict and prospects of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 21(5), 91-98.
- Olumide, S. (2017). APC's, PDP's crisis threaten party politics. *Guardian*, April 25.
- Omilusi, M. (2015). The nuances and nuisances of party defection in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academic Research*, 3(4), 56-66.
- Pareto, V. (1915/1935). *The mind and society. A treatise on general sociology*. New York: Dover.
- Sambo, H. (2013, December 1). Kwara and the abiding faith in party leadership. *Nairaland*. Retrieved from <http://www.nairaland.com/1539510/kwara-politics>
- Shittu, H. (2017). Kwara PDP's endless crisis. *ThisDay*, July 26.
- Tukur, S. (2015, May 20). Defection of 5 PDP governors ensured victory for APC-Okorochoa. *Premium Times*.