

Internal Party Democracy (IPD) in Nigeria's Political Parties: A Study of All Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos State, 2019 To 2024

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ABSTRACT

This study explores Internal Party Democracy (IPD) within Nigerian political parties, focusing on the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos State from 2019 to 2024. Adopting a pragmatist-interpretivist paradigm and descriptive survey design, it combines qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse APC's internal dynamics. A sample of 400 respondents from five Local Government Areas and five observers, including electoral officials and journalists, was selected to ensure broad representation.

Data were collected through structured questionnaires, interviews, and party document analysis. The study examined perceptions of internal democracy and its influence on party stability, revealing practices such as transparent leadership selection, inclusive decision-making, and effective conflict resolution. These elements were found to enhance party cohesion and credibility among members and the electorate.

Despite these strengths, challenges persist. Godfatherism undermines merit-based leadership, while internal divisions hinder inclusivity. These issues obstruct the full realization of IPD and pose risks to the APC's long-term stability. To overcome these barriers, the study recommends institutionalizing merit-based leadership, encouraging grassroots participation, and strengthening conflict resolution mechanisms. These insights contribute to the broader discourse on party governance in Nigeria and offer a foundation for comparative and longitudinal research on intra-party democracy.

Keywords: Conflict, Electoral Performance, Godfatherism, Internal Party Democracy, and Political Party.

INTRODUCTION

Political parties are widely recognized as central to institutionalizing democracy. They act as the bridge between the government and the people, safeguarding democratic principles and ensuring that equity, justice, the rule of law, and human rights are upheld (Orji, 2013; Ogunnoiki, 2018; Olorungbemi, 2014). In modern political systems, where societies are vastly more complex than the direct democracies of ancient Greece, parties have evolved into essential mechanisms. They recruit leaders, aggregate and articulate diverse interests, provide political education, and socialize individuals into the democratic process (Ujo, 2009; Montero & Gunther, 2003).

In Nigeria especially, the return to civilian rule in 1999 brought renewed hope for democratization. Political parties have since played critical roles in deepening democratic practices. Nonetheless, challenges persist—internal party dynamics such as conflicts, cross-carpeting, and insufficient disciplinary structures often hamper these efforts. The concept of internal party democracy (IPD) is paramount in this context; IPD encompasses fair membership recruitment, internal organization, accountability, and transparent decision-making (Tyoden, 1994; IMD, 2004). Yet, Nigerian political parties frequently fall short in these areas, with some scholars arguing that the lack of IPD has significantly hindered the consolidation of democracy in the country (Musa, 2015; Ukaeje, 2011; Akubo & Umoru, 2014).

The debate on the importance of IPD is enriched by differing scholarly viewpoints. Duverger (1964) maintains that robust internal democracy is indispensable for a party's overall effectiveness and, consequently, for the health of democracy. Conversely, Sartori (1977) emphasizes that the competitiveness among parties, rather than their internal dynamics, is what ultimately energizes democratic governance. This divergence highlights the multifaceted relationship between intra-party organization and the broader democratic environment—a situation compounded by additional challenges such as ethnic influences, a lack of clear party ideologies, and political indiscipline (Mersel, 2006; Omotola, 2010).

Against this backdrop, the present study focuses on assessing the state of internal party democracy (IPD) within Nigerian political parties by examining the case of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos State from 2019 to 2024. It posits that enhancing IPD is not merely a technical issue, but a strategic imperative for consolidating democracy and ensuring that political parties effectively channel divergent interests into unified political action (Omilusi & Ajibola, 2016).

Problem Identification

Nigerian political parties exhibit fragile internal frameworks that create opportunities for political elites to manipulate governance. This manipulation undermines inclusive decision-making and the transparent selection of leaders, thereby compromising internal party democracy (Omotola, 2009; Ukaeje, 2011).

The pervasive influence of "godfathers" consolidates power within a few elite factions. Such dominance restricts grassroots participation and enforces candidate imposition, sidelining democratic practices in favour of sectional interests (Abutu, Samsu, & Fee, 2021; Jinadu, 2013).

Loyalty is often prioritized over merit in the candidate selection process, leading to the emergence of unqualified leaders. This practice not only promotes nepotism and ethnic favouritism but also diminishes public trust in the party's leadership (Osumah & Ikelegbe, 2009).

The absence of robust internal party democracy sparks conflicts and factionalism. Such internal strife disrupts party cohesion and hampers the ability to present a unified front during elections, ultimately undermining electoral performance (Jinadu, 2013).

Structural issues including political violence, the rapid proliferation of undemocratic party structures, and manipulation of electoral procedures—intensify mass defections and electoral irregularities. These systemic factors erode the credibility of political institutions and highlight the urgent need for reforms to restore public confidence (The Guardian, 2019; Sahara Reporters, 2019; Vanguard, 2018)

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the role of IPD in enhancing effective and vibrant political parties in Nigeria using All Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos State from 2019 to 2024 as a case study. Other specific objectives are to:

- 1) examine the nature and structure of APC and its adherence to the tenets of IPD in Nigeria;
- 2) justify the degree of level of adherence of APC to IPD;
- 3) determine the strength and effectiveness of APC in filling quality and acceptable candidates for elections in Nigeria;
- 4) analyses the impact of IPD on APC's cohesion and electoral performance in Nigeria; and
- 5) Identify the factors that impedes IPD in APC in Nigeria.

Research Questions

- 1) What is the nature and structure within APC and how consistently does it adhere to its stated tenets of IPD in Nigeria?

- 2) To what extent does the APC achieve IPD based on established standards and best practices?
- 3) How effective is the APC in selecting qualified and widely accepted candidates for elections through its internal democratic processes?
- 4) What is the impact of the level of IPD on the APC's cohesion and its subsequent electoral performance in Nigeria?
- 5) What factors hinder the full realization of IPD within the APC in Nigeria?

Statement of Research Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H₀): IPD has no significant effect on political party stability in Nigeria

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): IPD has significant effect on political party stability in Nigeria

Significance of the Study

This study holds both theoretical and practical importance. Theoretically, it enriches the existing literature on democratization by examining how IPD influences the stability, operation, and development of political parties in Nigeria. By investigating the nature of intra- and inter-party relationships, the research deepens our understanding of how transparent leadership selection and participatory decision-making can strengthen political institutions—a contribution that is especially valuable in the context of African democratization (Omotola, 2009).

On a practical level, the study is particularly timely given the contentious political climate following Nigeria's 2023 general elections. By exploring issues such as disputed nominations and the “do or die” approach to candidate selection, the research aims to provide actionable insights for party officials and policymakers. These findings are expected to foster the entrenchment of IPD within Nigerian political parties and offer perspectives that can be extended to other countries with similar political challenges, thereby influencing the broader discourse on democracy and electoral reform (The Guardian, 2019; Vanguard, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study represents a strategic framework for investigating the relationship between internal party democracy (IPD), party structure, and democratic consolidation within Nigeria's political landscape. It combines both conceptual and quantitative approaches, drawing from primary and secondary data sources. The research is guided by a pragmatic philosophy, which emphasizes practical outcomes and methodological flexibility (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Pragmatism allows the researcher to integrate interpretivist and positivist paradigms, thereby enabling a comprehensive analysis of the APC's internal democratic practices. The interpretivist component focuses on documentary analysis of party materials such as constitutions, election guidelines, and meeting minutes to uncover patterns and meanings embedded in institutional texts (Bryman, 2016). This approach is complemented by critical realism, which acknowledges the influence of underlying structures on documented practices (Saunders et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the positivist strand employs structured questionnaires and interviews to collect measurable data from APC members and stakeholders, offering empirical insights into leadership selection, decision-making, and electoral processes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The research design adopted is a descriptive survey, which supports the mixed-methods approach and facilitates both qualitative and quantitative data collection. This design is particularly suited for case studies like the APC, where understanding both statistical trends and contextual interpretations is essential. The population of the study comprises 2.5 million APC members in Lagos State, based on the party's 2021 membership enrolment data (The Nation, 2021). This includes a diverse mix of men, women, youth, leaders, and executives, along with five external observers such as INEC officials and journalists. These participants were drawn from twenty Local Government Areas (LGAs) across Lagos, forming the target population. The study's methodological choices grounded in pragmatism, ensure that the research remains adaptable to the dynamic nature of political institutions, while also producing actionable insights that can inform policy and strengthen democratic practices (Saunders et al., 2019; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). By triangulating conceptual analysis with quantitative

evidence, the study offers a robust and nuanced understanding of how internal democracy functions within the APC and its implications for party stability and democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

To determine the sample size for this study, the researcher adopted Taro Yamane's (1967) formula (Projectclue, 2021), applying a 95% confidence level and a maximum variability of 0.05. This yielded a sample size of approximately 400 participants. These participants were selected from the 2.5 million members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos State, alongside five purposively chosen observers such as journalists and electoral officials, bringing the total sample to 405. The sampling process involved a stratified technique, dividing Lagos State's 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) into five official divisions known as IBILE: Ikorodu, Badagry, Ikeja, Lagos, and Epe. One LGA was randomly selected from each division using a simple balloting method—namely Epe, Ikorodu, Ikeja, Amuwo-Odofin, and Lagos Mainland. Each selected LGA contributed 80 respondents, ensuring equal representation across the sample. To facilitate data collection, 15 youth corps members, three from each sampled LGA were trained and mobilized to administer the research instruments.

The study employed a mixed-method approach, combining documentary analysis and structured questionnaires. Documentary sources included the APC's constitution, election guidelines, meeting minutes, press releases, and observer reports, which provided qualitative insights into internal party democracy (IPD). For quantitative data, a questionnaire was designed using simple and clear language to ensure comprehension. It was divided into three sections: an introduction explaining the study's purpose, Section A for demographic data, and Section B containing 25 Likert-scale questions aimed at gauging respondents' perceptions of IPD processes within the APC. The Likert scale ranged from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree," allowing respondents to express nuanced views. This comprehensive sampling and instrumentation strategy ensured both depth and breadth in understanding the party's democratic practices.

To ensure the validity of the research instrument, the questionnaire was carefully constructed to measure the intended concepts related to internal party democracy (IPD). Validity, as defined by Kerlinger and Lee (2000), refers to the degree to which an instrument accurately captures the construct it is designed to measure. In this study, the researcher developed the questionnaire items with precision and submitted them to two experts in Political Science for review. Their feedback helped refine the items, ensuring they were appropriate and relevant. This process enhanced the face validity of the instrument. Additionally, content validity was established by confirming that the questionnaire comprehensively covered the thematic areas of interest, such as party structure, leadership selection, and democratic practices within the APC.

Reliability, which refers to the consistency of an instrument's results over time and across different contexts, was assessed using the split-half method. According to DeVellis (2017), reliability is essential for ensuring dependable measurements, although it alone does not guarantee validity. A pilot study was conducted in Ojo LGA, which was excluded from the main sample, involving 20 non-participants. The results yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.71, indicating a high level of reliability suitable for data collection. This score confirmed that the instrument could consistently measure respondents' perceptions and experiences regarding IPD, thereby strengthening the credibility of the findings.

Data analysis was conducted using frequency tables and simple percentages. The research hypothesis was tested using Chi-Square Statistics via SPSS, which allowed the researcher to examine the relationship between IPD and party stability. Ethical considerations were also prioritized: respondents were informed about the study's purpose, assured of confidentiality, and given the freedom to withdraw at any time. The questionnaire was designed to be inclusive and culturally sensitive, and corps members who are neutral facilitators with no vested interest, were employed to administer the instrument impartially.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Political parties are organized groups of individuals whose primary goal is to influence government policy and secure political power through participation in elections. They play a critical role in modern democracies by aggregating interests, mobilizing voters, and serving as a bridge between the government and the public (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025). Over time, political parties have evolved from elite factions to mass-based

organizations that encapsulate diverse societal interests. This evolution reflects the expansion of suffrage, growing popular participation, and the need to address multifaceted social issues. Today, political parties provide platforms for policy formulation, leadership recruitment, and public representation, making them indispensable to the functioning of democratic systems (TechInfus, n.d.).

Political parties can be categorized into various typologies based on their organizational bases and ideological orientations. One key distinction is between cadre parties, which are dominated by politically active elites, and mass-based parties that aim to mobilize large segments of the population (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025). In addition, parties are often classified by ideology into liberal, conservative, socialist, nationalist, clerical, green, and other variants, each advocating specific political, economic, and social policies (Satish, 2024). There is also a political orientation-based classification, where parties are identified as left-wing, right-wing, centrist, or mixed, reflecting the broad spectrum of political thought within a society. Furthermore, party systems themselves vary, ranging from single-party and dominant-party systems to two-party and multi-party systems, each reflecting a distinct mode of political competition and power distribution (Political Marketer, 2020).

The internal structure of political parties is essential for their operational effectiveness and democratic legitimacy. Typically, a political party is composed of both external and internal elements. The external structure consists of the electorate or supporters, who, though not engaged in daily organizational activities, are crucial during elections for mobilizing votes. The internal structure, on the other hand, is made up of formal leadership positions—such as party leaders, secretaries, treasurers—and decision-making bodies like executive committees, local branches, and policy committees. These internal mechanisms regulate leadership selection, resource allocation, and policy development (Nigerian Scholars, n.d.). Structural models vary: centralized structures concentrate power at the top for efficiency, while decentralized or federal structures distribute decision-making authority across regional or local platforms, thereby improving responsiveness to grassroots needs. Democratic structures prioritize transparency, accountability, and member participation, which are critical to mitigating internal conflicts and ensuring that the party remains true to its ideological commitments (Political Marketer, 2020; TechInfus, n.d.).

In conclusion, understanding the concept, typologies, and structures of political parties provides deep insights into their role within democratic governance. Political parties, through their evolution, illustrate the complex interplay between elite leadership and mass mobilization. Their diverse typologies—from cadre to mass-based organizations and from liberal to conservative ideological frameworks—highlight the multifaceted nature of political competition. Moreover, the organizational structure, whether centralized or decentralized, democratic or hierarchical, significantly influences a party's effectiveness in policy-making, governance, and electoral competitiveness. As global political challenges evolve, continuous analysis of party organization and structure remains critical for enhancing democratic resilience and ensuring inclusive representation (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025; Satish, 2024).

Internal Party Democracy

IPD refers to the array of mechanisms within a political party that facilitate participatory and inclusive decision-making by party members. Essentially, IPD encompasses the principles and practices that enable members to have a voice in setting policies, selecting leaders, and shaping the party's future direction. In its ideal form, IPD is characterized by transparency, accountability, and extensive member participation, ensuring that power is not concentrated in the hands of a few elites (Scarrow, 2005). This democratic orientation promotes internal unity, reduces factionalism, and ultimately contributes to a party's overall credibility and electoral competitiveness (Ojukwu et al., 2011).

Several key elements define IPD that includes: Member Participation. It requires that all party members have the opportunity to engage in decision-making processes such as deliberative conferences, primaries, and policy reviews. This inclusiveness helps to ensure that the interests of the entire membership are represented rather than just those of a privileged few (White & Shea, 2000).

Transparency and Accountability are equally important. Clear rules, open communication channels, and independent oversight within the party—evidenced by regular publication of internal election results and

financial reporting—help build member trust and discourage corruption (Simba, 2011). Inclusiveness in Leadership and Candidate Selection is another cornerstone of IPD. Fair and competitive internal elections enable members to choose candidates based on merits rather than on patronage or “consensus candidacy” imposed by party elites. Such practices foster a culture of meritocracy and prevent the emergence of autocratic leadership styles (Ikelegbe, 2013). Finally, robust conflict resolution mechanisms are necessary to manage internal disputes. Establishing impartial mediation committees or arbitration panels that can resolve grievances effectively, thereby preventing conflicts that might escalate into factional splits and undermine party cohesion (White & Shea, 2000).

The practical application of IPD, however, often faces significant challenges. Many political parties, particularly in contexts marked by clientelism and elite dominance, struggle to implement these democratic practices fully. When power remains centralized and decision-making is pre-determined by a few powerful figures, the ideals of internal democracy are subverted. This lack of genuine member involvement can lead to internal conflicts, high rates of party defections, and diminished public confidence, ultimately impairing the party’s ability to perform its central role in democratic governance (Ikelegbe, 2013; Nzongala-Ntalaya, 2001).

In conclusion, IPD is not merely an aspirational ideal but a practical necessity for any political party seeking to remain relevant and resilient in competitive democratic systems. By fostering broad member participation, transparent operations, merit-based leadership selection, and effective conflict resolution, parties can enhance their internal cohesion and stability. These internal democratic practices, when effectively implemented, not only contribute to the party’s internal strength but also translate into greater electoral success and a more robust democratic culture overall (Simba, 2011; Ojukwu et al., 2011).

Empirical Review of IPD

Empirical research about IPD underscores that effective internal democracy enhances political parties’ resilience, reduces factionalism, and builds public trust. For example, studies in mature democracies reveal that parties with decentralized decision-making structures—providing greater opportunities for grassroots involvement and transparent leadership selection—tend to perform better electorally and enjoy higher legitimacy (White & Shea, 2000; Scarrow, 2005). Comparative research shows that when party power is concentrated at the top, internal disputes and leadership crises become more frequent, ultimately undermining party cohesion and democratic accountability.

In the African context, studies indicate that while many political parties formally endorse democratic principles, practical implementation is hindered by issues such as elite dominance, clientelism, and opaque decision-making processes. Research in South Africa, for instance, documents that internal mechanisms designed to ensure inclusiveness and accountability are often subverted by entrenched power structures (Ohazuruike, 2013).

In Nigeria, the empirical literature consistently highlights weak IPD practices in major political parties such as the APC and the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Studies by Ikelegbe (2013) and Ojukwu, Olaifa, and Adeniran (2011) reveal that internal democracy is frequently compromised by “godfatherism” and centralized power, resulting in leadership selections and candidate nominations that marginalize ordinary party members. This centralization has led to pervasive intra-party conflicts, factionalism, and cross-carpeting, with many party members expressing dissatisfaction with the lack of genuine participatory processes (Nzongala-Ntalaya, 2001; Simba, 2011).

The empirical evidence from Nigeria, therefore, points to a significant gap between formal party doctrines of democracy and the actual practices, emphasizing the need for comprehensive reforms that promote transparency, accountability, and member empowerment.

In sum, global and African empirical studies suggest that robust IPD is essential for the consolidation of democratic governance, while evidence from Nigeria demonstrates that deficiencies in IPD can exacerbate internal conflicts and erode public confidence. Addressing these gaps through institutional reforms and cultural shifts towards true inclusivity is imperative for enhancing the stability and effectiveness of political parties—a crucial step toward strengthening overall democratic systems.

Nexus between Political Parties and IPD

The nexus between political parties and IPD is fundamental to the effective functioning of democratic systems. Political parties serve as the primary vehicle for aggregating diverse interests, mobilizing voters, and facilitating representation in government (White & Shea, 2000). However, the true democratic potential of a party is realized only when it embodies internal democracy by ensuring that its decision-making processes are transparent, inclusive, and accountable. IPD encompasses mechanisms such as open leadership selection, regular internal elections, participatory policy formulation, and established conflict resolution procedures. These practices not only empower party members—ranging from grassroots supporters to elected officials—but also enhance the party's overall cohesion, credibility, and responsiveness to public needs (Simba, 2011).

When robust internal democratic practices are in place, political parties are better equipped to mitigate factional conflicts and curb the tendency for power to become overly concentrated in the hands of a few elites, a situation often referred to as "godfatherism" (Ikelegbe, 2013). A culture of genuine participation within the party fosters a sense of ownership among members and helps prevent internal divisions that can lead to defections and weakened electoral performance. Conversely, the absence of effective IPD has been linked to high levels of internal conflict, patronage, and reduced public trust, which ultimately hinder the party's ability to perform competitively in broader electoral contests (Nzongala-Ntalaya, 2001). Thus, the relationship between political parties and IPD is symbiotic: internal democratic practices serve as the backbone of party integrity and stability, which in turn reinforce the party's role in consolidating democratic governance and promoting accountability in public office. Enhancing IPD is therefore critical not only for the internal strengthening of political parties but also for sustaining democratic legitimacy and effectiveness at large.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For our theoretical framework, the Elites and Group Theories have been adopted.

Elites Theory: Elites Theory posits that a small, influential group of actors within political parties wields disproportionate control over decision-making processes, policy formulation, and leadership selection. This concentration of power can manifest as "godfatherism," where senior party elites or powerful patrons effectively dictate internal electoral outcomes and candidate nominations, often side-lining the broader membership (Ikelegbe, 2013; Ojukwu, Olaifa, & Adeniran, 2011). In this view, while a degree of elite leadership may be necessary for efficient organization and strategic vision, excessive concentration can undermine the democratic ideals that underpin IPD. Research in contexts such as Nigeria shows that such elite-driven practices often translate into opaque internal processes, limited accountability, and a decline in genuine member participation (Nzongala-Ntalaya, 2001; Simba, 2011).

Applying Elites Theory to the analysis of IPD leads to the insight that reforming internal governance structures is essential to disperse power and enhance democratic accountability. Measures such as open and competitive internal elections, independent oversight, and clear guidelines for leadership selection can help ensure that decision-making reflects the will of the broader party base rather than being controlled by a few. Moreover, this theoretical framework suggests that fostering "democratic elitism"—where elites are accountable to and integrated with the membership—is a potential remedy to the pitfalls of unchecked elite control. By emphasizing transparency and meritocracy, political parties can balance the need for strong leadership with the imperative of inclusive participation. In essence, Elites Theory highlights the tension between efficiency and democratic representation, urging reforms that democratize internal structures without sacrificing the organizational strengths that elite leadership can provide.

Therefore, within the framework of Elites Theory, the operation of IPD is seen as contingent on creating an environment where power is both exercised and challenged by party members. The ultimate goal is to transform elite dominance into a more participatory and accountable process that reinforces party cohesion and bolsters public trust in the democratic process.

Group Theory: Group Theory offers a complementary perspective by focusing on the collective dynamics within political parties. According to this framework, a political party is not a monolith; instead, it comprises various subgroups or factions representing different interests, identities, and ideological orientations. The interplay among these groups shapes the party's internal democratic practices. Group Theory contends that effective internal democracy emerges when diverse subgroup interests are acknowledged and harmonized through inclusive decision-making processes (White & Shea, 2000).

Under this framework, elements such as caucuses, committees, and regular town hall meetings serve as structural mechanisms that facilitate dialogue, conflict resolution, and coalition-building among competing groups. Such processes enable different factions to negotiate their interests, contribute to policy formulation, and influence leadership selection, thereby preventing the monopolization of power by any single faction. Empirical evidence from African political parties, including those in Nigeria, indicates that when subgroup interests are effectively integrated, party cohesion and stability are enhanced; conversely, the failure to manage these dynamics often leads to factionalism and internal strife (Simba, 2011; Ikelegbe, 2013).

Group Theory further elucidates that the success of IPD is closely linked to the ability of a party to institutionalize processes that mediate inter-group competitions. By establishing formal channels for participation and ensuring equitable representation, political parties can transform potential conflicts into constructive debates that strengthen internal solidarity and public credibility. In this light, group-based mechanisms are critical for reconciling diversity with unity—ensuring that all members, regardless of subgroup affiliation, perceive the decision-making process as fair and inclusive.

Therefore, by applying Group Theory, one can argue that robust IPD depends on cultivating an institutional culture that values dialogue, negotiation, and compromise among diverse factions. This approach not only secures internal democratic practices but also contributes to the overall resilience and adaptability of political parties in competitive electoral environments.

History of Democracy and Party Formation in Nigeria and the IPD Operation

The history of democracy and party formation in Nigeria is a multifaceted narrative that reflects the nation's turbulent political evolution since the colonial era. Nigeria's political party system began with the emergence of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1923, founded by Herbert Macaulay, which marked the inception of organized political mobilization under colonial rule (Salihu, 2025). During the struggle for independence in the late 1940s and early 1950s, regional parties such as the Northern People's Congress (NPC), the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), and the Action Group (AG) emerged. These parties were largely organized along ethnic and regional lines, embodying the divergent aspirations of Nigeria's diverse population. This period was characterized by intense competition among regional elites, which, while laying the groundwork for democratic governance, also sowed the seeds for future conflicts and instability. The First Republic (1960–1966) witnessed these inherent regional tensions culminate in political crisis and subsequent military intervention. After years of military rule, Nigeria returned to democratic governance in 1999 with the Fourth Republic, a period marked by the re-emergence of multi-party politics. However, the post-1999 landscape has been dominated by a few major parties—most notably the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC). The formation of the APC, through a merger of several opposition parties in the early 2010s, exemplifies the dynamic yet contentious evolution of Nigeria's party system, where personal ambition and regional loyalties continue to shape political realities (Ojukwu, Olaifa, & Adeniran, 2011).

In theory, Nigerian parties espouse IPD principles through procedures such as internal elections, candidate primaries, and regular policy forums intended to include members at all levels. These mechanisms, when effectively implemented, aim to balance power between elite leadership and the grassroots membership, ensuring that leadership selections, policy formulations, and resource allocations reflect a democratic ethos (Simba, 2011). However, empirical research indicates that the operationalization of IPD in Nigerian parties is fraught with challenges. A prominent issue is the prevalence of elite dominance or “godfatherism,” where powerful individuals effectively control decision-making processes, often side-lining the broader membership. Such

practices result in opaque internal procedures, limited member participation, and decisions that favour entrenched interests over broader democratic ideals (Ikelegbe, 2013; Nzongala-Ntalaya, 2001).

Furthermore, the internal democratic practices of parties are hampered by structural deficiencies. For instance, although many parties have institutional frameworks that ostensibly promote accountability and participation, these systems are frequently undermined by bureaucratic inefficiencies, ethnic and regional factionalism, and a lack of genuine transparency. These challenges not only stifle true member engagement but also lead to recurrent intra-party conflicts and defections, ultimately affecting the parties' public image and electoral performance. The resulting internal discord weakens party cohesion, undermining efforts to present a unified stance in general elections and diminishing the overall credibility of Nigeria's democratic process (Ojukwu et al., 2011).

APC and its Adherence to IPD Tenets

The APC was formed in 2013 with a promise to implement IPD principles such as transparent candidate selection, inclusive deliberative processes, and participatory decision-making (Ononogbu & Okoroiwu, 2019; Simba, 2011). In its formal guidelines, the APC endorses regular internal elections and policy forums intended to empower its membership and prevent a concentration of power among a few elites. However, empirical evidence indicates that despite these formal institutions, the practical operation diverges significantly from democratic ideals.

A critical challenge that has emerged is elite dominance, often referred to as "godfatherism," where influential power brokers effectively control leadership selections and candidate nominations, side-lining ordinary members (Ikelegbe, 2013; Nzongala-Ntalaya, 2001). This centralization of authority is compounded by bloc contestation. Factional groups, frequently organized along regional, ethnic, or ideological lines, vigorously contest internal power. For instance, in Delta State during the lead-up to the 2023 general elections, internal rifts among legacy blocs—such as those emerging from the former Congress for Progressive Change (CPC)—significantly marred the candidate selection process (Adeleye, 2023). These contestations have led to public disputes, delays in internal decision-making, and uneven power sharing, thereby undermining the cohesive operation of the party.

The impact of these internal competitions has been evident in the election outcomes of the APC. The persistence of factional rivalries has not only diminished trust among party members but also sent mixed signals to the electorate, contributing to a decline in regional voter confidence. Cases of unresolved bloc contestation have, at times, led to defections and a fragmentation of support bases. For example, disputes arising from infighting among northern APC members and dissatisfaction with leadership decisions have weakened the party's standing, potentially affecting its performance in key battleground states (Iwok & Oyedokun, 2025). Moreover, the emergence of parallel candidacies and renewed internal strife, if left unchecked, could result in legal battles and a divided campaign, ultimately diluting the party's overall electoral appeal.

Data Analysis

The study involved a total of 400 respondents drawn from five stratified Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Lagos State—Epe, Ikorodu, Ikeja, Amuwo-Odofin, and Lagos Mainland. These participants completed a structured questionnaire, while five additional observers, including INEC officials and journalists, were interviewed to validate and cross-examine the survey findings. The response rate for both the questionnaire and interviews was 100%, attributed to the effective deployment of trained Youth Corps members who facilitated the distribution and collection of instruments. The questionnaire was divided into two main parts: Part One introduced the researcher and explained the purpose of the study, while Part Two was split into Sections A and B. Section A gathered demographic data, and Section B contained 25 questions designed to address five core research questions and test the study's hypothesis for broader generalization.

Respondents Demography

Section A of the questionnaire provided a detailed demographic profile of the respondents. Gender distribution revealed a slightly male-dominated sample, with 240 males (60%) and 160 females (40%). Age-wise, the majority of respondents (55%) were between 18 and 40 years, indicating a youthful and active party membership.

Marital status data showed that half of the respondents were married, 40% were single, and 10% were divorced. Regarding party roles, ordinary members made up the largest group (35%), followed by party executives (30%), leaders (20%), and elected officeholders (15%). In terms of party membership duration, 40% of respondents had been affiliated with the APC for 6 to 10 years, suggesting a well-established and experienced participant base. These demographic insights provide a foundational understanding of the composition of the APC in Lagos State and offer context for interpreting the broader findings related to IPD and organizational stability.

Responses on Statement of Research Questions (SRQs)

SRQ1: Nature and Structure of APC and Adherence to IPD Tenets

Response Option	Male Responses Frequency/ %	Female Responses Frequency/ %	Total
Agree	144 (60%)	96 (60%)	240
Strongly Agree	48 (20%)	32 (20%)	80
Disagree	24 (10%)	16 (10%)	40
Strongly Disagree	12 (5%)	8 (5%)	20
Neutral	12 (5%)	8 (5%)	20
Total	240/100%	160/ 100%	400

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Interpretation: Survey responses indicate that 60% of APC members, across gender lines, affirm access to the party’s constitution, suggesting a foundational awareness of internal rules. However, 15% express concern over clarity and dissemination, pointing to procedural opacity. Grassroots participation received moderate approval, with 50% of males and 30% of females agreeing it is effective, though not fully inclusive. Observers reinforce this perception, noting that while documents are physically accessible, their implementation is often undermined by centralized control. In states like Lagos and Osun, gubernatorial candidates are reportedly imposed, bypassing constitutional safeguards. This “amoebic adherence” to internal democracy reveals a fundamental disconnect between formal structures and actual practice, validating member concerns and highlighting the need for deeper decentralization and transparency.

RQS2: Degree of Internal Democracy in APC

Response Option	Male Responses Frequency/ %	Female Responses Frequency/ %	Total
Agree	108 (45%)	72 (45%)	180
Strongly Agree	84 (35%)	56 (35%)	140
Disagree	24 (10%)	16 (10%)	40
Strongly Disagree	12 (5%)	8 (5%)	20
Neutral	12 (5%)	8 (5%)	20
Total	240/100%	160/100%	400

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Interpretation: Members generally perceive APC’s internal elections as democratic, with 45% of males and 35% of females expressing strong agreement. Yet, 15% remain sceptical, citing issues of fairness and transparency. While 55% feel they have a voice in leadership selection, the remaining responses suggest lingering dissatisfaction.

Observers note that APC’s presidential primaries follow procedural checklists—such as delegate accreditation—but execution varies significantly across states. This creates a “fair on paper, uneven in practice” dynamic. The survey’s moderate approval aligns with observer critiques, indicating that while top-level processes appear democratic, their inconsistent application at sub-national levels undermines inclusiveness and member trust.

SRQ3: Strength in Candidates Selection and Electoral Performance

Response Option	Male Responses Frequency/ %	Female Responses Frequency/ %	Total
Agree	144 (60%)	96 (60%)	240
Strongly Agree	72 (30%)	48 (30%)	120
Disagree	12 (5%)	8 (5%)	20
Strongly Disagree	6 (2.5%)	4 (2.5%)	10
Neutral	6 (2.5%)	4 (2.5%)	10
Total	240/100%	160/100%	400

Source: Field Survey, 2025

SRQ4: Impact of IPD on APC's Cohesion and Electoral Performance

Response Option	Male Responses Frequency/ %	Female Responses Frequency/ %	Total
Agree	168 (70%)	112 (70%)	280
Strongly Agree	48 (20%)	32 (20%)	80
Disagree	12 (5%)	8 (5%)	20
Strongly Disagree	6 (2.5%)	4 (2.5%)	10
Neutral	6 (2.5%)	4 (2.5%)	10
Total	240/100%	160/100%	400

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Interpretation: In SRQ 3 and 4, there was an overwhelming 90% agreed or strongly agreed that internal democracy strengthens unity within APC. This reinforces the idea that effective IPD can boost cohesion and electoral performance. Only a small fraction (5%) expressed dissent, reflecting minimal dissatisfaction. Similarly, members largely view democratic processes as contributing to electoral success, but areas of disagreement (10%) suggest challenges in bridging internal conflicts.

SRQ5: Factors Impeding IPD in APC

Response Option	Male Responses Frequency/ %	Female Responses Frequency/ %	Total
Agree	180 (75%)	120 (75%)	300
Strongly Agree	36 (15%)	24 (15%)	60
Disagree	12 (5%)	8 (5%)	20
Strongly Disagree	6 (2.5%)	4 (2.5%)	10
Neutral	6 (2.5%)	4 (2.5%)	10
Total	240/100%	160/100%	400

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Interpretation: A dominant 90% of respondents identify elite interference as a major barrier to IPD, echoing observer concerns about “godfatherism” and ethno-regional manipulation. Recommendations from observers—such as term limits, fresh leadership, and bottom-up organizing—offer actionable strategies to counter entrenched power.

The convergence of member sentiment and expert critique reveals a shared understanding: APC’s democratic potential is real but stifled by elite dominance and procedural inconsistencies. Structural reforms, transparency, and grassroots empowerment are essential to transform optimism into lasting party stability and democratic consolidation.

Hypothesis Testing

Descriptive statistics indicate a mean IPD Level of 2.3 (SD = 0.8) and Party Stability of 3.2 (SD = 0.6), suggesting moderate adherence to IPD alongside relatively stable party operations (Field Survey, 2025).

Chi-Square test on IPD Level and Party Stability

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
IPD Level	400	2.3	0.8	1	4
Party Stability	400	3.2	0.6	1	4

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Interpretation: The descriptive Statistics mean for IPD Level is 2.3, indicating that most respondents lean towards moderate adherence to IPD principles. For Party Stability, a mean of 3.2 indicates stability trends.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): IPD has no significant effect on political party stability in Nigeria

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): IPD has significant effect on political party stability in Nigeria.

IPD Level	Party Stability	Frequency
High	Stable	150
High	Unstable	50
Low	Stable	80
Low	Unstable	120
Pearson chi-square	14.72	P=0.000

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Interpretation: From the table above, The chi-square statistic (14.72) and a p-value (0.000) indicates a strong association between IPD adherence and party stability. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H₀: IPD has no significant effect on political party stability in Nigeria) is rejected, supporting the alternative hypothesis (H₁) i.e IPD has very significant effect on political party stability in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study reveals that while the All Progressives Congress (APC) boasts a strong constitutional framework for internal party democracy (IPD), its practical implementation is undermined by elite manipulation, limited grassroots engagement, and procedural opacity. Although 80% of members find the constitution accessible, only 30% of women feel confident in grassroots participation, reflecting systemic exclusion (Gauja, 2009; Omotola, 2007). Instances of “amoebic adherence” to rules—where elites bypass protocols—mirror entrenched informal networks that obstruct genuine inclusiveness.

Despite 80% of members affirming democratic standards in internal elections, only 55% feel genuinely heard, highlighting a gap between procedural compliance and experiential legitimacy (Panebianco, 1988; Gallagher et al., 2006). This disjunction is exacerbated by state-level inconsistencies, where some primaries encourage debate while others impose top-down directives (Dalton et al., 2011).

Candidate selection appears meritocratic on the surface, with 90% citing competence, yet elite influence persists. “Imposed candidacies” and godfather endorsements—especially by figures like Tinubu and Amaechi—undermine transparency and fuel intra-party schisms (Adebayo & Okeke, 2024; Frank & Udoaka, 2023; Oghuvbu, 2023). These dynamics erode cohesion, as unresolved grievances from primaries contributed to defections and electoral setbacks in 2019 (Ojo, 2024; Gartner & Konitzer, 2017).

Godfatherism remains a dominant barrier, with 90% of members identifying elite concentration as detrimental to IPD (Alabi & Sakariyau, 2007; Adegbite & Lawal, 2021). Reform proposals—term limits, leadership rotation, and bottom-up structures—align with Mersel’s (2006) prescriptions for sustainable democratization.

Finally, the APC’s founding coalition fostered early inclusiveness, but later factionalism reversed gains. Judicially enforced reforms, like the 2021 Makeni conference, show promise but risk episodic democratization (Gauja, 2009; Buba, 2017). Overall, the APC’s experience affirms that procedural frameworks alone cannot guarantee democratic vitality without transparency, accountability, and grassroots empowerment (Panebianco, 1988; Gallagher et al., 2006).

Summary of findings

This study employed a triangulated methodology—documentary analysis, survey questionnaires, and interviews—to examine the internal democratic practices of the All Progressives Congress (APC). The documentary review revealed that while the party has established mechanisms to promote fairness and accountability, their implementation is often influenced by political interests. Survey and interview data enriched these insights, offering both statistical evidence and personal narratives from party leaders, executives, and grassroots members. Respondents expressed strong confidence in the APC’s internal electoral processes and praised its commitment to regular policy updates and conflict resolution. Additionally, transparent leadership selection and ongoing capacity-building initiatives were seen as key contributors to the party’s democratic ethos. Despite limitations such as potential response bias and restricted access to internal documents, the convergence of data sources provided a robust validation of findings. Overall, the APC’s internal structures reflect substantial adherence to democratic principles, which has bolstered both party stability and electoral performance.

CONCLUSION

The analysis confirms that the APC has institutionalized democratic practices within its internal governance, including regular constitutional updates, transparent elections, and inclusive participation frameworks. These measures have fostered internal cohesion and enhanced public credibility—critical assets for electoral success. The study further illustrates that strong internal democracy contributes to party stability and a more resilient democratic culture. By resolving disputes amicably and empowering members, the APC has built safeguards against factionalism and internal conflict. This unity translates into more effective electoral mobilization.

Moreover, the research identifies promising directions for future inquiry, such as the impact of internal democracy on policy development and comparative studies across Nigerian parties. Longitudinal research could also illuminate how governance reforms influence electoral outcomes over time. Ultimately, the APC’s commitment to fairness, inclusivity, and accountability positions it as a model for Democratic Party governance in Nigeria. Sustained efforts will be essential to preserve these gains and address emerging challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the challenges of internal party democracy (IPD) within the APC, a comprehensive set of recommendations has been proposed. Central to these is the modernization and codification of democratic processes. This involves updating the party constitution regularly, embedding term limits for key officeholders, and creating accessible guides to ensure clarity and widespread understanding of party rules. Such reforms aim to dismantle entrenched patronage and promote leadership renewal.

Equally vital is the establishment of robust oversight and dispute-resolution mechanisms. Permanent, autonomous mediation and appeals committees—comprising party members, civil society actors, and legal experts—should be empowered to resolve internal conflicts swiftly and transparently. Publishing decisions and implementation steps will deter future infractions and reduce reliance on external arbitration.

Transparency in elections must be amplified through digital tools and external observation. A secure e-portal should provide real-time updates on delegate lists, vote tallies, and accreditation records. Involving independent

bodies like INEC and NGOs in monitoring key contests will enhance credibility. Periodic audits of election processes and grievance outcomes will further reinforce integrity.

Grassroots engagement and inclusivity are also essential. Quarterly town halls, diversity quotas, and multi-stage policy seminars will ensure that local voices shape party platforms. Bi-annual surveys can assess member satisfaction and inclusivity, helping to refine engagement strategies.

To ensure consistent implementation, APC must invest in continuous capacity building. A compulsory IPD Academy, partnerships with academic institutions, and mentorship programmes will equip party officers with the skills needed to uphold democratic standards. Financial transparency is another cornerstone—mandatory disclosures, contribution caps, and quarterly finance bulletins will curb undue influence and promote merit-based selection.

Regular performance audits will create a feedback loop for improvement. Annual reviews and IPD scorecards will benchmark progress, while tying resource allocations to performance will incentivize reform. Finally, cultivating a culture of democratic renewal is crucial. Leadership must visibly champion IPD, reward best practices, and embed democratic commitments into campaign platforms.

Together, these eight recommendations form a resilient framework for deepening internal democracy. If implemented holistically, they can foster grassroots enthusiasm, build public trust, and enhance electoral success—positioning APC as a model for democratic governance in Nigeria and beyond.

Further research should explore the impact of constitutional reforms, capacity-building initiatives, and conflict resolution mechanisms on party cohesion and public perception. Studies could also examine how transparency and member engagement influence loyalty and policy effectiveness over time.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Questionnaire On Internal Party Democracy (IPD) In Nigeria's Political Parties (QIPDPP)

Dear respondent,

This questionnaire called QIPDPP was designed to elicit answers on the raised research questions for a research titled: **“Internal Party Democracy (IPD) in Nigeria's Political Parties: A Study of All Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos State, 2019 to 2024”**. For the purpose of this questionnaire, "APC" refers to the All Progressives Congress political party in Nigeria. "Internal Party Democracy (IPD)" refers to the extent to which the party adheres to democratic principles and practices within its own internal structures, processes, and decision-making. Therefore, I implore you to feel free to respond objectively to the posed questions as they will be kept confidential and also will be used for academic purpose only.

Thank you.

Section A: Respondent Bio-Data Information

Kindly tick the appropriate box provided for the answers below:

1. Gender:

a. Male:

b. Female:

2. Age Bracket:

a. 18 – 30 Years:

b. 31 – 40 Years:

c. 41 – 50 Years:

d. 51 – 60 Years:

e. Above 60 Years:

3. Marital Status:

a. Single:

b. Married:

c. Divorce:

4. Party Membership:

a. Leader

b. Party Executive

c. Elected Office Holder

d. Ordinary Member

5. Membership Duration in APC:

a. Less than 1 year

- b. 1-5 []
- c. 6-10 []
- d. Over 11 years []

6. **Local Government of Residence:**

Section B: Statements on Research Questions (SRQ)

Please read the following statements, and tick/mark number that best explains your opinion. **NOTE:** You can only tick one number for each statement using the scale below:

1 = Agree

2 = Strongly Agree

3 = Disagree

4 = Strongly Disagree

5 = Neutral

A: Nature and Structure of APC and Adherence to Internal Party Democracy Tenets

- 1) The APC's party constitution and rules are readily accessible and understandable to all members.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }
- 2) The APC's organizational structure effectively promotes grassroots participation in decision-making.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }
- 3) The APC consistently adheres to its own internal rules and regulations.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }
- 4) There is significant transparency in the APC's financial management and resource allocation.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }
- 5) Different groups or factions within the APC have equal opportunity to influence party decisions.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }

B: Degree of Internal Democracy in APC

- 6) APC members have a significant voice in the selection of party leaders.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }
- 7) Elected party officials are responsive to the needs and concerns of the party members.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }
- 8) Internal party elections are free, fair, and transparent
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }
- 9) Dissenting opinions are respected and tolerated within the APC
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }
- 10) Mechanisms are in place to ensure accountability of party leaders to the members.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }

C: Strength in Candidate Selection and Electoral Performance

- 11) The APC's candidate selection process prioritizes competence and integrity.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }
- 12) The APC has a fair and equitable process for selecting candidates for elective offices

13) APC members are satisfied with the quality of candidates nominated by the party
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }

14) The APC's candidate selection processes are seen as credible and legitimate by the public.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }

15) The APC's candidate selection process is effectively resolves internal disagreements or rivalries.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }

D: Impact of Internal Party Democracy on APC's Cohesion and Electoral Performance

16) Lack of internal democracy significantly contributes to factionalism within the APC.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }

17) Internal disagreements over candidate selection have negatively impacted the APC's electoral performance.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }

18) Greater internal democracy would lead to stronger party unity within the APC.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }

19) The APC's internal processes contribute positively to its overall electoral success
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }

20) Increased internal democracy in the APC would boost public trust in the party.

E: Factors Impeding Internal Party Democracy in APC

21) Money politics ("godfatherism") significantly undermines internal democracy in the APC.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }

22) The influence of powerful individuals within the APC hinders internal democratic processes.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }

23) Lack of access to information impedes meaningful participation by ordinary members in the APC's affairs.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }

24) Ethnic and religious divisions within the APC undermine internal democracy.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }

25) The APC's leadership demonstrates a genuine commitment to promoting internal democracy.
 1- { } 2- { } 3- { } 4- { } 5- { }

Appendix ii: Interview Guide

Section 1: Introduction

Good day Sir/Ma,

Thank you for the audience of interview. Today, we seek to understand how Internal Party Democracy (IPD) functions within the APC in Lagos State, including its strengths and the factors that may hinder its full realization. Your observations as an electoral observer/journalist are valuable in shedding light on these dynamics. Do you therefore give your consent to participate in this interview?

Thank you.

Section 2: Interview Questions

A. Nature and Structure of APC and Adherence to IPD Tenets

1. Understanding the Internal Structure

- In your experience observing the APC, how would you describe the internal structure and organizational framework of the party?

Follow-Up Questions:

- i What specific components or bodies within the party are most visible in promoting internal democracy?
- ii Are there clear guidelines that dictate decision-making at grassroots and central levels?

2. Consistency in Adherence to IPD

- Based on your observations, how consistently does the APC adhere to its stated tenets of IPD?

Follow-Up Questions:

- i Can you recall any instances when the party's internal processes either followed or deviated from these democratic principles?
- ii What mechanisms or practices are in place to ensure adherence?

B. Degree of Achievement of IPD According to Best Practices

3. Evaluation Against Established Standards

- To what extent do you believe the APC meets the standards and best practices expected of a politically democratic organization?

Follow-Up Questions:

- i What indicators or benchmarks do you use, either formally or informally, to assess this adherence?
- ii Are there specific processes or events (e.g., internal elections, policy formulation sessions) that highlight this achievement or lack thereof?

C. Effectiveness in Candidate Selection

4. Candidate Selection Process

- How effective is the APC in selecting qualified and widely accepted candidates for elections through its internal democratic processes?

Follow-Up Questions:

- i Have you observed trends or patterns in candidate selection that either build trust or raise concerns among the electorate and party members?
- ii Do you believe the process allows for an open contest among potential candidates, and is it transparent?

5. Quality and Acceptability

- What are your impressions regarding the overall quality and acceptability of the candidates emerging from the APC's internal selection process?

Follow-Up Questions:

- i How do these candidates compare with those from other parties in terms of competence and public trust?
- ii Are there examples from past elections that illustrate the effectiveness of these processes?

D. Impact of IPD on Party Cohesion and Electoral Performance

6. Cohesion within the Party

- In your analysis, how does the level of IPD within the APC influence its cohesion as a political unit?

Follow-Up Questions:

- i Have internal disputes or factionalism been apparent during periods when IPD practices were either followed or undermined?
- ii How do these internal dynamics reflect on the party's ability to present a united front during elections?

7. Electoral Performance

- From an observer's standpoint, what is the impact of the APC's adherence to internal democracy on its electoral performance?

Follow-Up Questions:

- i Are there discernible correlations between periods of stronger internal democracy and electoral success?
- ii Can you share any examples where lapses in IPD may have contributed to poor electoral outcomes?

E. Factors Hindering the Full Realization of IPD

8. Identifying Impediments

- In your view, what are the major factors that hinder the full realization of IPD within the APC in Nigeria?

Follow-Up Questions:

- i Do you see specific obstacles, such as power concentration, patronage systems, or external influences that limit effective IPD?
- ii How do issues like money politics, internal rivalries, or administrative inertia play a role?

9. Recommendations for Improvement

- What improvements or reforms do you believe could enhance internal democracy within the APC and, by extension, its overall effectiveness and electoral performance?

Follow-Up Questions:

- i Are there policy interventions, changes in leadership practices, or structural adjustments you would recommend?

- ii Which stakeholders (e.g., party executives, regulatory bodies, and civil society) should take the lead in implementing these changes?

Section 3: Concluding Thoughts

Is there anything else you would like to share about the APC's internal democratic processes or any related observations that we have not covered?"

Thank you for your time. I might still contact you for further interviews and or to share the preliminary results with you if necessary