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Internal Party Democracy and Party Supremacy: Implications for Effective Governance in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Modern debates on party supremacy and good governance have gained momentum due to the significant political processes that have unfolded across Africa. In countries like Nigeria, despite over 60 years of political sovereignty, the nation continues to grapple with challenges in achieving effective governance, largely due to the limited dividends of democracy. Efforts by political institutions to promote party supremacy as a pathway to good governance have often proven ineffective. Despite Lagos State's prominence in Nigerian politics, it continues to face governance challenges, often linked to the tension between democratic practices within parties and the rigid enforcement of party supremacy. This study aims to i) assess how party discipline and adherence to party principles contribute to effective governance in Lagos State ii) to examine the relationship between internal party democracy and the delivery of effective governance in Lagos State iii) investigate the challenges that political parties in Lagos State face in balancing internal democracy with the enforcement of party supremacy? The study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods, drawing data from both primary and secondary sources. Specifically, information was gathered from three senatorial districts in Lagos State. The paper emphasize the need for political parties to adopt and maintain internal party democracy, party discipline, and adherence to party principles as essential components for fostering a stable and accountable governance system. These measures can ensure political accountability, transparency, and long-term democratic growth in Nigeria.

Key Words: Party Supremacy, Good Governance, Governorship performance, Political Party.

Introduction

The interplay between internal party democracy and party supremacy significantly influences the quality of governance in democratic systems. Internal party democracy involves the extent to which political parties uphold transparent, inclusive, and participatory decision-making processes among their members.

Momodu and Matudi (2013) submitted that internal democracy encompasses the fundamental principles of democracy within political parties, reflecting the extent to which these parties adhere to democratic values in their internal structures and the behavior of their members. Conversely, party supremacy emphasizes the overarching authority of the party structure and leadership in directing its members' actions and policies. Striking a balance between these two principles is essential for fostering accountability, inclusivity, and effective governance.

Party supremacy is a political concept emphasizing that governments at any level must align their policies and decisions with the manifesto and programs of the political party that facilitated their rise to power. It implies that party members should adhere to party decisions on matters such as national policies, nomination processes, relationships with the ruling government or opposition, allocation of political offices, and other relevant issues. This principle is considered noble and acceptable,

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provided it does not infringe upon the Constitution or violate the individual rights of party members.

Internal party discipline emphasizes the necessity for party members to remain loyal to the directives and leadership of their political party, except in situations where such directives conflict with the explicit provisions of the party's constitution. This principle ensures that party members align their actions and decisions with the collective vision and objectives of the party, fostering unity and focus within the organization. Internal party discipline is fundamental in maintaining order, cohesion, and a clear sense of purpose, especially in political environments where diverse interests and ambitions often compete.

Closely linked to internal party discipline is the principle of party supremacy, which asserts that the party's directives and leadership hold the highest authority within the organization. Together, these principles act as twin pillars that enable political parties to coordinate effectively toward their goals. According to Vanguard (2013), one way to uphold party supremacy is by ensuring that members elected to public offices, such as governors, remain subordinate to the party. By maintaining discipline and upholding the supremacy of the party's agenda, political formations can minimize internal conflicts, streamline decision-making processes, and present a united front to the electorate. This cohesion is particularly important during elections, as a divided party risks alienating voters and undermining its chances of success.

In the Nigerian political landscape, the absence or erosion of these principles has often led to the failure of many political formations. In recent history, the lack of party discipline and supremacy has contributed to internal wrangling, factionalism, and disarray within political parties. These issues have weakened their organizational structures and undermined their electoral performance. Ugwummadu (2018) aptly describes this phenomenon as a "feast of confusion," where the absence of clear directives and unified leadership creates chaos, ultimately leading to the party's electoral defeat and diminished relevance in governance.

The failure to uphold internal party discipline and supremacy reflects broader challenges in Nigeria's political culture, where personal ambitions and sectional interests frequently overshadow the collective mission of political organizations. To address these issues, Nigerian political parties must strengthen adherence to their constitutions, enforce disciplinary measures, and cultivate leadership that prioritizes the party's long-term goals over short-term individual gains. This approach is essential not only for the survival of political parties but also for the advancement of Nigeria’s democratic process.

Party supremacy has largely been absent from Nigeria’s political system since the restoration of democratic governance. Efforts to establish the supremacy of political parties continue to face significant challenges, particularly under the presidential system of government that Nigeria has adopted. The ceding of leadership positions within political parties to political office holders represents a deviation from democratic norms, one that has negatively affected the nation’s democratic culture and governance.

In many cases, party leaders exert considerable influence over elected party officials across various levels, often undermining the independence of these officials. Furthermore, the weak financial foundation of political parties and their heavy reliance on a few wealthy individuals for funding have significantly eroded their authority and ability to enforce discipline among members. This dependency not only compromises the autonomy of political parties but also diminishes their capacity to act as vehicles for democratic accountability and good governance.

The problem is that, the effectiveness of governance in Nigeria is deeply influenced by the internal dynamics of its dominant political parties. However, the interplay between internal party democracy and party supremacy raises critical concerns about the balance between inclusivity, accountability, and central authority within these parties. While internal party democracy emphasizes participatory decision-making and transparency, party supremacy prioritizes the overarching authority of party leadership and adherence to its directives.

Despite the significant role of political parties in shaping governance, there is limited empirical research that examines how the tension between internal party democracy and party supremacy affects governance outcomes. This gap in

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knowledge limits the ability of policymakers, political actors, and scholars to identify sustainable solutions that can enhance party cohesion while promoting effective and inclusive governance. The research problem, therefore, lies in understanding how the dynamics of internal party democracy and party supremacy influence governance effectiveness in Lagos State and determining the extent to which these concepts can be balanced to strengthen democratic practices and governance outcomes in the state.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess party supremacy on effective governance in Lagos State. The specific objectives are to:

i) assess how party discipline and adherence to party principles contribute to effective governance in Lagos State,
ii) to examine the relationship between internal party democracy and the delivery of effective governance in Lagos State,
iii) Investigate the challenges that political parties in Lagos State face in balancing internal democracy with the enforcement of party supremacy.

Research Questions

1. How do party discipline and adherence to party principles contribute to effective governance in Lagos State?
2. What is the relationship between internal party democracy and the delivery of effective governance in Lagos State?
3. What challenges do political parties in Lagos State face in balancing internal democracy with the enforcement of party supremacy?

Research Hypothesis

$H_{o1:}$ There is no significant relationship between party supremacy and effective governance in Lagos State.

Conceptual Discourse and Literature Review: Internal Party Democracy, Party Supremacy and Governance.

Scarrow (2005) defines "internal party democracy" as a comprehensive set of strategies designed to empower party members by facilitating their active participation in discussions and decision-making processes. This concept emphasizes creating mechanisms within political parties that ensure members have a voice in shaping policies, selecting candidates, and influencing the party's direction.

According to Ojukwu et al. (2011), it was understood that the internal structure, organization, and coordination of political parties, when aligned with democratic principles, played a crucial role in several key aspects of party operations. These included the selection of candidates, the rise of leaders to positions of influence, the formulation of policies, and the equitable distribution of financial resources. This perspective highlights how adherence to democratic ideals within a party's internal framework directly impacts its effectiveness and governance.

Internal democracy, as described by Okhaide (2012), refers to an inclusive, comprehensive approach to decision-making within political parties. This approach emphasizes a top-to-bottom structure that ensures all members are actively involved in key processes, such as party primaries, representation, and accountability. It also seeks to provide a fair and equitable platform for all members, fostering inclusivity and collaboration within the party's internal operations. By prioritizing these principles, internal democracy strengthens the party's unity and transparency while ensuring that diverse voices are heard and represented.

Internal democracy, as outlined by Awofeso, Obah-Akpowaghaga, and Ogunmilade (2017), encompasses various essential practices within political parties. These include the transparent selection of candidates, meaningful consultation with members, adherence to internal principles of party discipline, and the enforcement of sanctions when necessary. It also involves the promotion of the party's ideology and values, as well as fostering accountability among party leaders and members. Together, these elements ensure that the party operates in a democratic, organized, and principled manner, strengthening its integrity and alignment with democratic norms.

The supremacy of a political party is rooted in its foundational principles, which are shaped by the ideals of liberal democracy. This concept emphasizes that, for discipline and order to be maintained within a party, certain hierarchical structures must be respected. Individual members are

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expected to align their actions with the collective will of the party. Similarly, the minority must adhere to the decisions of the majority, lower levels of the organization are subordinate to higher levels, and the entire membership must ultimately respect the authority of the central committee, which serves as the party's highest decision-making body. This structure ensures coherence, unity, and the effective functioning of the party within the framework of democratic governance (The Impact Newspaper, 2024).

All members of a political party must operate within its established laws, principles, and traditions, with no exceptions or "sacred cows" allowed. Party supremacy can only be sustained when the leadership adheres strictly to the party's rules, ideology, and guiding principles. A political party's purpose extends beyond merely winning elections; it must maintain discipline and uphold its values to ensure its supremacy and integrity. Those elected under the party's banner represent its image, meaning their successes or failures reflect directly on the party as a whole. Therefore, the actions and performance of elected representatives play a crucial role in shaping the party's reputation and credibility (The Impact Newspaper, 2024).

Governance is defined as the ability of a government to establish and enforce rules, as well as to effectively deliver public services, irrespective of whether the government operates under a democratic or non-democratic system. Michael Mann (1984) refers to this capacity as "infrastructural power" rather than "despotic power." Infrastructural power reflects a government's ability to organize society and implement policies through institutions and systems that reach deeply into the lives of citizens. This contrasts with despotic power, which is characterized by the ability of rulers to impose their will through coercion and centralized authority. In essence, governance emphasizes functionality and service delivery as the markers of effective government, beyond the nature of the political system in place.

Governance is closely associated with the principles of efficient and effective administration within a democratic framework. It embodies an approach to administration that prioritizes being citizen-friendly, transparent, and responsive to the needs of the people. Good governance ensures that policies and actions are carried out with a deep sense of care for citizens, safeguarding their rights and promoting their well-being. Furthermore, it emphasizes accountability, inclusivity, and respect for human rights as fundamental elements of a responsive and people-centered administration.

Governance extends beyond the mere maintenance of law and order; it encompasses a participatory system where those entrusted with authority are driven by a commitment to serve the people and deliver their best. This involves addressing the everyday challenges faced by citizens and striving to enhance their quality of life, making it more fulfilling, satisfying, and enjoyable.

Frey (2008) defines governance as the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs. It includes all the mechanisms—both positive and negative—through which societies allocate power and manage public resources. In essence, governance reflects the way power is exercised in the administration of a country's social and economic assets, aimed at fostering sustainable development and improving the well-being of its citizens.

A significant issue frequently discussed in public discourse is the ability of political parties to maintain firm control over their elected representatives and effectively manage their internal affairs. Party supremacy has largely been absent from Nigeria's democratic practice. Party supremacy signifies the authority of political parties to dictate guidelines and influence the direction of national affairs, control state policies, shape and regulate the framework of government and its institutions, implement party policies, and oversee the private lives and activities of citizens (Miti, 1980). This absence of party supremacy has undermined the effectiveness and coherence of Nigeria’s democratic governance.

Tinubu (2018) asserts that party supremacy involves submission to the desires and directives of the party structure. He stated, “Ambode is doing well, but it’s not just about the glamour or the physical structures; talent is determined by character. To become influential, you must respond to the party's needs.”

Similarly, Ambode (2018) emphasized that the party is supreme over individual interests because it represents the collective good for all members, underscoring that the party should remain the highest

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authority. From these perspectives, it can be inferred that party supremacy prioritizes the interests of party members over individual ambitions. Candidates are elected on the platform of political parties, making it imperative for the party to play an active role in guiding and intervening in the actions of those who emerge as its representatives.

Ozogwu (2018) argued that party supremacy has its limitations, as the constitution does not recognize that party supremacy should play a role when selecting a candidate. While the party does have a role in the selection process, it is crucial that every party member is involved in building a consensus, particularly when endorsing a candidate. Imposing a decision from the party leadership without the involvement of the broader membership can lead to friction and division within the party

Olulade (2019) argued that the party's supremacy is paramount, and once a decision has been made, loyal members must be ready to comply or follow suit. Barnes (2017) observed that party supremacy is only effective when there is a harmonious working relationship between political parties and the legislative arm of government, which serves as the cornerstone of representative democracy. He further contended that political parties, having facilitated the election of lawmakers, are expected to establish a framework to ensure the enactment of laws and policies that fulfill their electoral promises.

Nnamani (2017) argued that:

> Many legislators struggle to balance being effective lawmakers with being loyal party members. He emphasized that the principle of parliamentary independence is not inherently at odds with the concept of party supremacy. However, party supremacy should not entail party bureaucrats dictating how legislators or executives carry out their duties, as this would undermine the constitutional principle of legislative independence. He further stressed that the leadership of the legislative house should not be subordinated to the party's headquarters, nor should members of the party's National Executive Committee (NEC) control legislative proceedings.

Na'Abba (2017) submitted that party supremacy as the principle that the interests of a political party take precedence over those of individual members. He further explained that this principle implies that even within the legislature, members are expected to act in line with their party's directives. However, he argued that party supremacy cannot function effectively in the legislature because it is incompatible with the constitution. The constitution clearly delineates the powers of each branch of government. Nonetheless, Na'Abba emphasized the importance of political parties working collaboratively with their congressional members.

Mantu (2017) explained that party supremacy signifies that the party holds the ultimate authority in managing its affairs. This principle is rooted in the idea that the party is supreme over its members, who are subject to the constitution of the party as represented by its various organs. However, he argued that while all political parties in Nigeria enshrine party supremacy in their constitutions, party leadership has usurped this supremacy from both the people and the party's organs. Since 2003, governors across political affiliations have taken full control of party affairs, particularly in the allocation of tickets for elective offices. Mantu noted that even highly popular candidates are sidelined if they are not aligned with the governor's preferences. As a result, voters often spend long hours in harsh conditions, casting their ballots for candidates of their choice, only to have their decisions overridden by governors, who replace elected candidates with their own surrogates. Consequently, the concept of party supremacy has effectively been reduced to the supremacy of governors.

Okoh (2019) argued that:

> Party leaders and elected officials are equal partners who must collaborate to ensure their party's success at the polls. He emphasized that the primary responsibilities of party leaders are to expand the party's support base and lead it to electoral victory. Moreover, he stressed that the rights of party members and the principles

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> of democracy should remain central to all their actions and decisions.

He emphasized that party leaders have a critical role in ensuring the success and sustainability of their political organizations. To achieve this, they must uphold democratic values, fostering an environment where fairness, transparency, and inclusivity guide decision-making processes. By adhering to these principles, leaders can build trust and unity within the party, which is essential for long-term viability. Furthermore, Okoh highlighted the importance of steering the party away from internal conflicts and controversies. This involves proactive conflict resolution, effective communication, and a commitment to maintaining the party's integrity and reputation.

And, finally, noted that leaders must ensure members feel genuinely invested in the party's mission and future. This sense of ownership can be cultivated through active engagement, meaningful participation in decision-making, and recognition of members' contributions. Together, these efforts help create a strong and cohesive party that is well-positioned for electoral success (2019).

Olusegun Osoba stated that:

> "I want to appeal to you on two key issues. First, let us establish an effective lobbying system by organizing a meeting with all aspirants for the position of Senate President in the 10th Senate. The goal is to help them understand the importance of aligning with the party's direction"(Leadership, 2024).

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The quantitative methods were used to address research questions 1 and 2. Meanwhile, the qualitative aspect focused on interviews with experts to explore the challenges political parties face regarding internal party democracy and party supremacy, as well as how these issues affect governorship performance. The qualitative findings were employed to complement the insights obtained through quantitative methods, particularly in understanding internal party democracy and governorship performance in Lagos.

Participants

The study population consists of all registered party members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Lagos State, Nigeria. The three Senatorial districts in Lagos State were considered, and the three largest local governments within each district were selected using a stratified random sampling technique. In each of the randomly selected local governments, 450 questionnaires were administered, with 75 distributed to APC members, 75 to PDP members, and a total of 397 questionnaires were successfully retrieved. The participants included both males (250) and females (147).

Instruments

The instrument consists of section A to D. Section A consists of demographic data of the respondents such as sex, age, qualifications among others. Section B consists of items that measure the party Supremacy of the respondents and the section has seven (7) items. Section C consists of items that measure the effective good governance of the respondents and the section has ten (10) items.

Validity of Research Instruments

To evaluate how effectively the survey instruments achieved their intended objectives, the process of content validity was utilized. This involved thorough cross-examination and verification to ensure that the survey items accurately and comprehensively represented the intended content areas.

Reliability of Research Instruments

The study employed the test-retest reliability coefficient to evaluate the consistency of the instrument. The instruments were pre-tested on a sample of 30 respondents who were not part of the study's main scope to determine their reliability. Following the pre-test, the instruments were thoroughly reviewed, and necessary modifications were made to enhance their effectiveness before final administration. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was found to be 0.75.

Procedures and Data Analysis

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The research design employed in this study is a descriptive design. This approach is suitable because descriptive research involves collecting data to answer research questions or test hypotheses based on the current status of the subject under investigation. It also facilitates the comparison of opinions among the various participants in the study.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression statistical analysis were used to analyse the data. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to establish the relationship among the independent variables to the dependent variable in the study.

Research Question 1: How do party discipline and adherence to party principles contribute to effective governance in Lagos State?

Results

Table 1: Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on party discipline and adherence to party principles contribute to effective governance in Lagos State?

S/N	Items	SA F (%)	A F (%)	U F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	Total	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	In Lagos State, governorship candidate adherence to party supremacy and party's manifestoes	152 (38.3)	175 (44.1)	36 (9.1)	27 (6.8)	7 (1.8)	397	4.10	.947
2	In Lagos State, Party supremacy had provided opportunity to select qualified governorship candidate.	173 (43.6)	141 (35.5)	19 (4.8)	42 (10.6)	22 (5.5)	397	4.01	1.187
3	Party Supremacy had favours the party elite above the governorship candidate in Lagos	156 (39.3)	131 (33.0)	50 (12.6)	46 (11.6)	14 (3.5)	397	3.93	1.139
4	The existence of party supremacy has great influence on the performance of governorship candidates in Lagos State	168 (42.3)	173 (43.6)	29 (7.3)	20 (5.0)	7 (1.8)	397	4.20	.905
5	In Lagos State party supremacy had promoted party discipline.	145 (36.5)	157 (39.5)	33 (8.3)	43 (10.8)	19 (4.8)	397	3.92	1.144

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6	Governorship administration in Lagos State did not consider party supremacy before taking any political decision.	53 (13.4)	66 (16.6)	59 (14.9)	166 (41.8)	53 (13.4)	397	2.75	1.262
7	The influence of party supremacy on outcome of party primaries justified the poor performance of executive governors in Lagos State	55 (13.9)	86 (21.7)	52 (13.1)	142 (35.8)	62 (15.6)	397	2.82	1.314

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 1 reveals the response of samples on party supremacy on emergency of party candidate and its performance in Lagos state. This shows that majority 327 (82.4%) of the respondents agree that governorship candidate adherence to party supremacy and party's manifestoes. However; 314 (79.1%) of the respondents believe that party supremacy had provided opportunity to select qualified governorship candidate, furthermore, 287 (72.3%) of the respondent agreed that Party Supremacy had favours the party elite above the governorship candidate.

In addition, 85.9% (341) of the respondent indicates that the existence of party supremacy has great influence on the performance of governorship candidates, while 76% (302) believes that party supremacy had promoted party discipline, however, 55.2% which translates to 219 of the respondents in Lagos state disagree mean that governorship administration in Lagos State consider party supremacy before taking any political decision and 51.4% depicting (204) in Lagos state disagree.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between internal party democracy and the delivery of effective governance in Lagos State?

Table 2: Pearson Correlation of Party Supremacy and Governorship Performance in Lagos State 2003-2018

Variables	Mean	SD	N	Df	R-cal	P-value	Remark
Party Supremacy	25.73	4.03	397	395	.353	. 000	Significant
Governorship Performance	39.82	7.59	397				

P<0.05

The table 5.17b showed that there was significant relationship between party supremacy and governorship performance in Lagos state from 2003 to 2018 (r= .353; P<0.05). This means that the null hypothesis is therefore rejected, because the party supremacy influences significantly the level of governorship performance.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study align with several scholarly perspectives. For instance, (a) Iredia (2013) argued that for party supremacy to thrive, no individual should be greater than the party. In situations where party caucuses and secretive bodies dominate over elected public officials, governors are rendered redundant and become subservient to bourgeois influences.

Similarly, (b) Kedzia (2011) contended that a key criterion for maintaining party supremacy arguably the most essential one is the party's political effectiveness. This is evidenced not only by election outcomes but also by the party's ability to influence

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decisions made by its representatives in parliament and governance.

Weissenback (2010) corroborated this argument, asserting that party officeholders who adhere to party supremacy are more likely to govern efficiently and effectively. In the same vein, Kędzia and Hauser (2011) posited that party supremacy enhances organizational predictability and accountability. They emphasized that if a party plays the role of a political broker, its members should be capable of fulfilling social functions within governance.

Furthermore, Tonnie (2013) suggested that upholding party supremacy requires ensuring that elected officials, such as governors, remain subordinated to the party.

In an interview with an APC stakeholder in Lagos State, the respondent noted that:

> The performance of governors in Lagos State is heavily influenced by party supremacy, which is shaped by the Governorship Advisory Council (GAC), party leaders, and certain party members who serve as the driving force behind influencing the governor's decisions. Governors are subjected to scrutiny and monitoring, and there are specific templates used to evaluate their performance. Any governor who fails to adhere to party supremacy is disciplined by the party (Interview, Anonymous, 2019).

Research Question 3: What challenges do political parties in Lagos State face in balancing internal democracy with the enforcement of party supremacy?

Political parties in Lagos State, like in many other regions, face significant challenges in balancing internal democracy with the enforcement of party supremacy. These challenges stem from the tension between fostering inclusive participation among party members and maintaining discipline to project a unified political front.

Responding to the interview question on what is the challenges facing political parties in its efforts of enhancing internal party democracy and ensure good governorship performance.

In the opinion of Respondent 1, a Ward Party Chairman in Lagos States state that:

> The concentration of power in the hands of Prominent in Lagos politics, influential individuals or political "godfathers" often dominates decision-making processes. This undermines internal democracy by sidelining party members and grassroots stakeholders. Party supremacy often leans heavily on the decisions of top leaders, leaving little room for internal dissent or broader consultation.

The obstacles to internal democracy within Nigerian political parties appear to form a vicious cycle of interconnected issues that perpetuate one another. These challenges include flawed candidate selection processes, the pervasive influence of money in politics, the dominance of powerful individuals (godfatherism), inadequate mechanisms for resolving internal conflicts, intra-party disputes, the absence of a clearly defined party ideology, reliance on elite funding, irregularities in party primaries, the imposition of candidates, and the arrogance of party executives (Omotola, 2009; Aleyomi, 2013; Nwabufo, 2017; Anene & Ndubuisi, 2024).

One of the primary challenges undermining internal democracy in the APC is godfatherism, characterized by the undue influence of powerful individuals within the party. These influential figures often manipulate party processes to ensure the selection of their preferred candidates, frequently ignoring the broader preferences of the party's membership (Anyaoku, 2010).

In view of the same question, Respondent 2, a Ward Party Secretary in Lagos State observed that:

> Imposition of Candidate during Selection Processes that its Party supremacy sometimes leads to candidates being imposed by the leadership rather than being chosen through transparent and democratic primaries. When members perceive the selection process as

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> unfair, it can lead to divisions and weaken party cohesion.

The submission of Anyaoku (2010) argues that attributing disproportionate influence particularly self serving influence to a party's parliamentary group during the candidate selection process would gravely jeopardize the democratic process. The APC's candidate selection procedure has frequently been tarnished by accusations of a lack of inclusivity and transparency. One recurring problem has been the imposition of candidates by party insiders, as opposed to democratic primaries.

There are numerous instances of candidate imposition and control of party machinery by political godfathers, which stifle internal democracy within parties. Candidate imposition or substitution often arises from disagreements between godfathers and their protégés (godsons) over the expected benefits for the godfather (Ikejiani-Clark, 2008).

Responding to the question, Respondent 3, a Party stakeholder in Lagos state that:

> Internal Factionalism or Group Rivalries in the course of competing factions within parties may vie for control, leading to struggles that erode trust in internal democratic processes. Lack of Inclusivity which is Marginalization of certain groups or zones within the state can lead to internal conflicts, as members feel alienated from decision-making.

These party conflicts often result in factionalism, leading to defections and anti-party activities (Jude & Ika, 2013). According to Momodu and Matudi (2013), many political parties experience crises, factionalism, and member defections due to the lack of internal democracy. Since democracy is expected to thrive through competition between and among political parties, rather than solely within them, it is imperative for political parties to uphold internal democratic practices (Disch, 2012).

Responding to the same question above, respondent 4, a Ward Youth Leader in Lagos State states that:

> Parties often fail to engage effectively with their grassroots members, weakening their democratic legitimacy. A perception that party decisions are made by elites at the top rather than through participatory processes alienate ordinary members.

In the opinion of Respondent 5, a Ward Leader in Lagos States state that:

> Weak Institutional Structures such as lack of clear guidelines. Many parties struggle with ambiguous or poorly enforced rules on internal democracy and party discipline, causing confusion and disputes and mechanisms for holding party leaders accountable are often weak, allowing the violation of democratic principles without consequences.

Conclusion

This paper evaluates the impact of party supremacy on effective governance in Nigeria, with a particular focus on Lagos State. The analysis of the results indicates that party supremacy has a significant effect on the performance of governors and other political officeholders in Lagos. Additionally, party supremacy enhances the prospects of fostering internal party democracy.

A critical element of internal party democracy is the presence of a functional political party that plays essential roles in the state's political processes. One such role is providing a platform for its members to emerge as elected officials in government. In any developing democracy, party supremacy should be at the forefront of lobbying efforts to ensure leadership aligns with the executive branch for the effective implementation of the party's manifestos, policies, and programs.

Recommendations

1. All political parties should firmly adhere to the features that contribute to achieving party supremacy. These attributes are crucial for promoting party discipline and building strong party institutions, which invariably lead to effective governance and the benefits of democracy. To achieve this, there must be

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openness and transparency in upholding party supremacy, in accordance with the party constitution.

2. Party supremacy plays a significant role in ensuring effective governance. Every political party should embrace party discipline and principles as fundamental values. The positive outcomes of party supremacy are reflected in good governance. However, party elites and leaders must adhere to the party constitution and avoid misusing party supremacy for personal or factional gains.

3. Balance Party Supremacy with Governance Independence. The party leaders should ensure that party directives do not override constitutional mandates or the autonomy of elected officials in making governance decisions. Constructive dialogue should exist between party leadership and elected officials to foster collaboration while respecting governance principles.

4. Party stakeholder should educate Members on Party Supremacy and Governance, Provide training for party members to help them understand the balance between party supremacy and the autonomy of public office holders in delivering effective governance. Develop guidelines that clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of party members and elected officials.

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