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# **Internal Party Factionalization and Electoral Performance of Political Parties in Nigeria: An Analysis of APGA in Anambra State**

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### **[0155] Abstract**

*Political parties across the globe are considered as the building blocks of democracy. Since the return of democracy in 1999, the phenomenon of party factionalisation occasioned by the absence of internal party democracy has been the bane of party politics in Nigeria. This paper basically investigated the impact of internal party factionalisation on electoral performance using the All Progressive Grand Alliance in Anambra state as a focal point of analysis. The paper found out that while internal party factionalisation has not impacted on the party's success in the gubernatorial elections in Anambra state, it has continued to rob the party of expected victory in the legislative elections in the state. The party's performance in the state's national legislative seats has been abysmal while its control of the state legislature has suffered major electoral setbacks since 2015. The paper recommends that efforts to end the incessant factionalisation of the party and improve the party's electoral fortunes can only be achieved if the powerful members of the party eschew their neopatrimonial character; ensure that the processes of selecting delegates and candidates for elections reflect the will of the majority.*

**Keywords:** Democracy, Elections, Electoral performance and Party politics.

### **Introduction**

Across the globe, political parties are considered as building blocks of modern democracies. Thus, democratic governance can hardly exist without political parties since the latter represent the soul of the former (Ayeni, 2019). The importance of political parties for democratic governance was underscored by Schattschneider (1942, p. 1) when he averred that, "political parties created democracy and that modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties". The indispensability of political parties is rooted in the notion that they perform essential democratic functions, and that while these functions may not be their exclusive domain, they perform them better than any other type of organisation (Diamond & Gunther, 2001). Accordingly, they serve as a platform for the articulation, aggregation and expression of political interests of the people in relation to acquisitions, consolidation and use of state power. When properly harnessed and used, political parties serve as a means to power and a platform for deepening good governance

based on good policies, probity, transparency and accountability. By serving as a means to power, political party becomes a platform through which citizens with shared common interest – to capture state power – seek to achieve and further this interest. While members of a political party are united by this common interest, they are equally divided by this common interest as each individual places their personal interest above the interest of others by making concerted efforts to represent the party in an election; thus leading to internal struggle to control the affairs of the party. This internal struggle for power is a major feature of party politics in Nigeria. As observed by Ogayi and Abang (2020), “the underlying political character of the Nigerian state is complexed by crass opportunism sired by political jobbery”. Thus, state power in Nigeria is characterised by the Machiavellian principle of intense, reckless rivalry and extreme struggle where the end justifies the means.

Upon return to democratic rule in 1999, Nigeria adopted a constitution which provided for a multi-party system, bestowing on individuals the right to freely come together and form or join political parties of their choice, provided other conditions are met. This created a political environment for the proliferation of political parties in Nigeria, with over 60 registered political parties operating in the country. While this is good for democracy, it is a truism that all the major political parties in the country are often characterised by one phenomenon – factionalisation, occasioned by lack of internal party democracy which is at the heart of other crises bedevilling most political parties of the Fourth Republic. As observed by Odibachi (2010), party politics has exhibited more crisis than cohesion for national development such that virtually all the political parties have been perpetually enmeshed in conflicts owing to lack of internal democracy and imposition of party candidates and party leadership. Prominent among the political parties in Nigeria that have gained notoriety for being constantly divided along factional leaderships is the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), a party formed in 2003, and mainly domiciled in Eastern part of Nigeria. Though the party has been the ruling party in Anambra State since assuming power in 2006, its electoral performances in most legislative contests in the state appear to have been impacted by internal wrangling and division of the party along different factions. The party has continued to battle internal leadership crisis which has more often than not, culminated into factionalisation of the party along parallel executives and the emergence of two or more party candidates contesting the same electoral position in the same election. This paper, therefore, analyses the impact of factionalisation of APGA on the electoral performance of the party in Anambra State. Following this introduction is the theoretical underpinning of the study. This is followed by conceptual overview of factionalisation, and then methodology of the study. The paper gives brief background of APGA, the structure of the party and historical overview of factionalism in the party. After highlighting other factors responsible for factionalisation in APGA, the paper draws a nexus between factionalisation and APGA’s electoral fortunes in Anambra State, and then ends with a conclusion.

***Theoretical Underpinning*** The study of party factionalisation and APGA’s electoral fortunes in Anambra State is predicated on the propositions of neopatrimonialism as expounded by Ekeh (1975), Clapham (1985), Diamond (2007) among others. These exponents described neopatrimonialism as a system of an informal patron-client relationship where patrons use state resources to secure the loyalty of clients in the general population. Neopatrimonialism often usurp the bureaucratic structure of the state, and presupposes only those with connections have the real power rather than those who hold

higher positions thereby undermining political institutions and the rule of law (Aniche, 2018b; Kalu, 2018; Aniche, Alumona & Obiwulu, 2021). In this vein, Clapham (1999) stated that neo-patrimonialism is a system of patronage where relationships of a broadly patrimonial type pervade formal rational-legal lines of political and administrative system. Clapham (1985) further noted that it is a patronage system of vertical distribution of resources in which an office of power is used for personal uses and gains, as opposed to a strict division of the private and public spheres. In other words, elements of patrimonial and rational-bureaucratic rule co-exist and intermingle, giving rise to patron-client networks revolving around a powerful individual or group of individuals popularly called cabal. This is why patronage networks have been considered to be antithetical to democracy or incompatible with democratisation (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1994; Van de Walle, 2007; Orock, 2014; Aniche, 2022).

Since the formation of APGA in 2003, the party has witnessed series of internal crisis arising from leadership tussle and personality clash. The pervasive power struggle between and amongst the political gladiators and 'big men' in the party often manifests in many forms, including incessant disagreement over the selection of party delegates during primary elections, disagreement between national Executive Council and other vested interests during the nomination of candidates for elective positions, etc. Hence, these political actors constitute themselves into cabals with the ultimate aim of party capture through hijacking, bypassing, torpedoing and side-lining the formal structures and internal mechanisms of party institutional processes of decision making. By so doing, they leverage on their enormous political influence, personal charisma, and economic power to undermine party officers so as to capture the party and probably the state. But this party capture does not always translate to electoral success because these party big men often lack electoral value. More so, they usually throw the party into crisis, disunity, division, schism and factionalisation in their bid to capture the party for their selfish goals thereby hindering electoral performance of the political party. Thus, Amusan (2011) maintained that factionalisation of a party is antithetical to the growth of the party since the focus of the factions is usually on their individual narrow-minded and primordial objectives designed to help the capture or perpetuate their stay in power.

### **Conceptual Overview of Factionalisation**

One of the most common features of literature on party politics and party organisation is the acknowledgment by scholars that political parties are not homogenous organisations which are certain about goals and which follow some sort of established unitary will (Köllner & Basedau, 2005). Rather, political parties consist of coalitions of political actors who pursue their individual interests and goals by exchanging political resources (Panebianco, 1998). In the pursuit of these individual interests within a particular coalition (intra-party), conflicts and consensus are reached which could lead to emergence of sub or intra groups within the party. These intra groups within a party which Maor (1997), Harmel and Tan (2003) referred to as factions have the capacity of not only affecting the stability of the party but also influencing the performance of the party. The concept of factionalisation or factionalism is derived from the word "faction" which according to *Webster's New Encyclopedic Dictionary* entails (1) a group or combination acting together within and usually against the larger body (as in a state, political party, or church). (2) Dissension within a group (Latin *factio* 'act of making, faction', from *facere* 'to make, do'.

In party politics, factionalism can be viewed from two perspectives. The modernisation school views it as a proto-parties or forms of party organisation that are precursors to more developed modern parties. Modernisation theorists such as Chambers (1963), Huntington (1968) conceive factions as being characteristic of the early stages of the so-called modernization process in which individuals and groups have broken with traditional patterns of political behaviour but the degree of political participation and institutionalization is still low. The second perspective views factions as groups within parties. This perspective represents the view of most scholars of party politics. Thus, Lasswell (1931) provided one of the classical definitions of factionalism when he opined that: "The term faction is commonly used to designate any constituent group of a larger unit which works for the advancement of particular persons or policies. The faction arises in the struggle for power and represents a division on details of application and not on principles". Lasswell's definition provides not only the meaning of a faction, but also the intention which is to advance the interest of particular persons or policies within the party. In his own view, Key (1984) argued that a faction denotes a group of people, both voters and politicians, which forms at a certain point of time in support of a given candidate running for office. For Zariski (1960, p. 33) a faction could be seen as "any intra-party combination, clique, or grouping whose members share a sense of common identity and common purpose and are organized to act collectively – as a distinct bloc within the party – to achieve their goals".

Bearing in mind how factional groups emerge within Nigerian political parties, the definition given by Beller and Belloni (1978, p. 419) suffices. They conceive factions as "any relatively organised group that exists within the context of some other group and which (as a *political* faction) competes with rivals for power advantages within the larger group of which it is a part" (emphasis in the original). Drawing from the above definitions, party factionalisation exists when: (a) there is any intra-party grouping existing for a certain period of time (b) the group possesses a minimum of organization (c) the group exhibits a common group conscience (d) when the group actively pursues political goals, whether in the form of policy, personal, or group goals within a party (e) it could be discerned that a group exists as a bloc within the party (Kollner & Basedau, 2005, pp. 8-9).

Arising from this, a faction differs from other intra-party groupings in the sense that the former are characterised by a higher degree of organisation, a shared identity, and a binding agreement on common goals (Rose, 1964; Hine, 1982). A faction is a disciplined group with a solid organisation, conscious of its own existence and possessing some stable personnel. Another distinguishing factor between factional group and any other group within a political party revolves around longevity. Thus, even a group which puts forward clearly visible political positions or leaders should not be called a faction if it does not exist for a certain period of time. Intra-party groups that exist only for a limited span of time are unlikely to develop an 'organisational backbone' (Pridham 1995, p. 10). What, in this perspective differentiates factions from other intra-party groups is their greater organisational strength and their durability or high degree of institutionalisation.

In their own study, Beller and Belloni (1978) argue that most intra-party groupings are merely different categories and typologies of factionalism; thus, factions as an overarching category of differently structured intra-party groups. They differentiate these groups on the basis of their particular organisational traits which include (a) cliques and tendencies, (b) personal, client-group factions, and (c) institutionalised, organisational factions. These categorisations serve as models of factionalisation of political parties.

Buttressing their argument, they contend that factional cliques and tendencies have very little structure, and are either almost unorganised or exhibit only a very ephemeral organisational set up for pursuing a single issue or for fighting an electoral campaign. Such groups lack hierarchical structure, and leadership (where it exists) is usually based on charisma rather than clientelism, and on an ad hoc basis. Also, such groups lack formal group membership and only exist for a short period.

For personalised factions, leadership is based on clientelism which serves as the central mechanism for mobilisation. A personalised faction maintains a vertical chain of command characterised by asymmetrical exchange of power resources. In temporal terms, the existence of such groups is mostly limited by the political life of the respective leader. Institutionalised factions are distinguished by their developed organisational structure and high bureaucracy. While the political ambitions of the groups' leader/s are important for the cohesion of these groups, their survival and continued existence is – as a rule – not dependent on individual leaders. This often gets also reflected in the groups' names or symbols. Also, membership in such groups is formalised and members share a common identity (Beller & Belloni, 1978).

While the above typologies or models advance our understanding of party factionalisation and party groupings, it is germane to emphasise that in reality, they may not always be found in their pure form. Again, changes leading to a growing or diminishing complexity of intra-party groups can occur in the course of time. Personalised factions can thus undergo a process of institutionalisation, but they can also evolve into loosely coupled cliques. Moreover, it has to be pointed out that intra-party groups can exist at different levels. Thus,

factions do not have to be confined to the central level of a party but can also exist at the local or regional level of the party's organization or within the parliamentary caucus of a party. In a related vein, also the diffusion of factionalism can vary. It can be restricted to elite groups within parties ('elite factionalism') or it can affect a party as a whole ('open factionalism'). A third pattern consists of 'factional alliances', i.e. factional competition which extends from a lower, maybe the local level of a party to increasingly higher echelons of the party's hierarchy (or vice versa) (Kollner & Basedau, 2005, p. 11).

Beyond the degree of fragmentation, institutionalisation, and polarisation, we have to address another important characteristic of factions, viz. the central reason why factions exist: their *raison d'être*, their main functions.

Primarily, factionalism helps to advance the intra-party and governmental careers of their members through the attainment of positions and allocation of posts. Beyond this, factions also serve to articulate and mediate particular or sectional interests and can also be aimed at influencing party's strategy or promoting certain values (Chambers & Ufen, 2020). While party factions serve for representation of specific interests, they also help in the articulation of politico-ideological goals or normative issues (Satori, 1976). Furthermore, factions also help to satisfy emotional and social needs of their members by means of reciprocal support and respect, intensive contacts, and provide a sense of belonging.

Conversely, factionalism poses a challenge to party leadership and management. It undermines the cohesion and the effectiveness of political parties (Samuels, 2004). This

corroborates the view of Gunther and Hopkin (2002) who argued that clear-cut dissent within a party and ensuing repression can take parties to the verge of disintegration and beyond. It could give rise to intra-party decisions on personnel that are not purely based on merit and competence but on factional affiliation. It damages party's ability to recruit new members, execute effective campaign, and enter coalitions. Factionalisation of a party can hinder intra-party discussions, create room for contradictory positions, and ultimately render voters' decision more difficult. As espoused by Chambers and Ufen (2020), party factionalisation impacts the ability and incentives of politicians to develop meaningful and credible party labels, and reduces the capacity of electorates to collectively demand accountability from politicians. It could also predispose a party to corrupt practices and weaken the integrity of the party, and lead to cynicism on the part of voters.

Arising from the above, factionalism plays an ambivalent role in a political party. Thus, Sferza (2002) contends that factionalism is a double-edged format. However, whether factionalism acts negatively or positively in party politics is highly dependent on the particular functions of the relevant factions, the context they are embedded in, as well as the decisions and strategic options of the leadership of the party (Pridham, 1995).

### **Methodology**

The study adopted qualitative method of data collection in collecting both primary and secondary data. It combined both survey and documentary methods in generating data needed for the study. Specifically, the survey instruments used in gathering the needed primary data in this study were Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interview (KII). During the FGD, several relevant questions were administered to small groups of party members, officials and other stakeholders which included former aspirants, for robust interaction and discussions. The questions were open ended which provided the discussants wide opportunity to comment on issues and make clarifications where necessary, discuss their beliefs and life experience in relation to party politics, internal party democracy, emergence and impact of factions within the party, elections of candidates and party officials as well as the electoral fortunes of APGA in the Anambra state. The FGD was conducted in six local government areas, with two representing each of the three senatorial zones of Anambra state. The number of discussants ranged between six and ten for each group. We also generated information through KII as we interviewed four stakeholders from the party for a balanced opinion. The four stakeholders included One (1) former Anambra State Party Deputy Chairman, two (2) former Local Government Party Chairmen (Awka South and Onitsha North), and one (1) former House of Representative aspirant. Like the FGD, our questions for the interview were open-ended which allowed the respondents to make inferences and clarifications where necessary. Data from these survey instruments were complemented by data generated from secondary sources such as INEC documents, APGA website, Anambra State House of Assembly, newspaper reports, etc. The data were presented in tables and logically analysed to show if relationship exists between factionalisation of APGA and the electoral fortunes of the party in Anambra State.

### **APGA: Formation, Structure and Factionalisation**

The All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) was founded in 2003 by its pioneered National Chairman, Chief Chekwes Okorie and associates. The Late Dim Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu became the national leader of the party and provided charismatic

leadership which resulted in its overwhelming popularity, supports and acceptability in the South-eastern region of the country. Just few months after the formation of the party, the 2003 general election took place. In compliance with its constitution and the country's electoral act, the party conducted primaries and fielded candidates in most elective positions, with Ojukwu its presidential flag bearer in the 2003. At the end of the election, which was marred by gross irregularities, the party lost the presidential election, lost all the governorship seats it as well all the senatorial seats it contested; only managing to win two seats out of the available 360 in the Federal House of Representatives (Aniche, 2018a). However, the fortunes of the party changed in March 2006 when the Appeal Court sacked Dr Chris Ngige of the PDP and declared Peter Obi as the rightful winner of the 2003 Anambra State gubernatorial election. Peter Obi remained the first and only Governor produced by APGA in Nigeria and was re-elected under the same party in 2010. He was succeeded by Willy Obiano in 2014 despite the controversy that characterised the primaries in 2013. Willy Obiano was re-elected as Governor of Anambra State in 2018 for his second tenure (Aniche, 2018a). In 2022, Professor Chukwuma Soludo was elected and succeeded Obiano as the governor of the State; thus ensuring that APGA produced three successive governors in the state between 2006 and 2022.

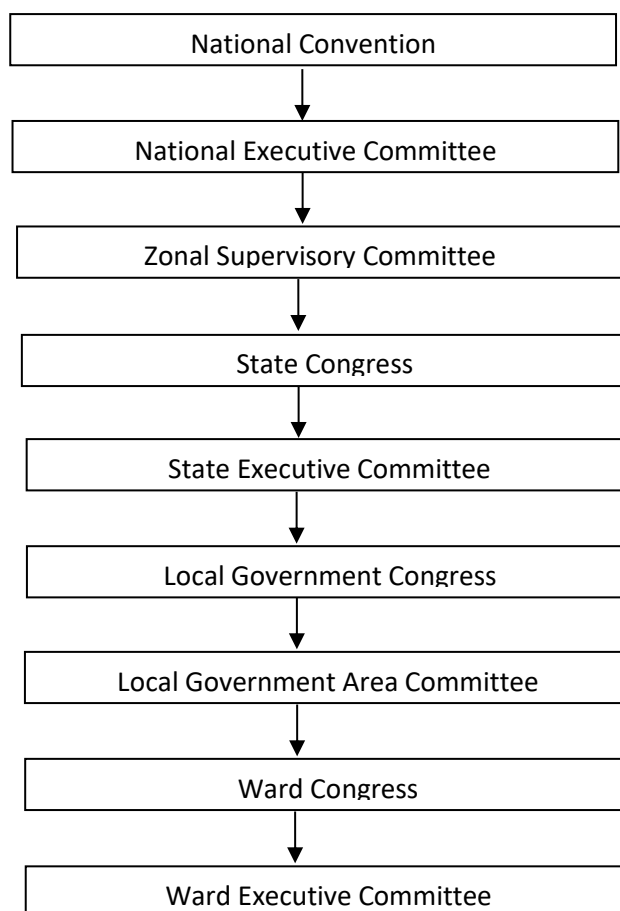
Despite the party's seemingly popularity in South-east Nigeria, it has not been that successful in gubernatorial contests in other states as it had to wait until 2011 to take control of another state in Nigeria when its candidate, Rochas Okorocha, won the gubernatorial election in Imo State. With this victory, APGA controlled two states in Nigeria and as well became the majority party in Anambra State since 2011, winning majority in the State House of Assembly.

However, just like other political parties in Nigeria, all these were achieved but not without crises and controversies surrounding leadership and organisational structure of the party. Just before the Appeal court declared Peter Obi the Governor of Anambra State in 2006, APGA had already suffered leadership crisis leading to litigations. The crisis between its then national chairman, Chief Chekwes Okorie on the one hand, and its late national leader, Dim Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, and its 2003 Anambra State gubernatorial candidate, Peter Obi on the other hand, eventually led to the emergence of Victor Umeh as the national chairman of the party. This was the genesis of all other crises in the leadership tussle in the party (Aniche, 2018a).

APGA has also been characterised by crisis of internal party democracy in the congresses (primaries) and conventions (election of party executives), often leading to numerous litigations and petitions, and in extreme cases, factionalisation, defections, carpet-crossings, and decampments. These cases or instances of party factionalisation and lack of internal democracy often manifest in the form of imposition of candidates and party executives, parallel executives, parallel primaries, sham primaries, manipulation of delegate list, multiple candidates, etc, arising from administrative and organisational disagreements at different levels of the party. While our focus is on Anambra State, it is important to highlight that though structurally decentralised, the administration of the party is in practical highly centralised, with the major decisions of the state, local government and ward levels subject to the approval of the National Executive Committee. Thus, there is need to highlight the national administrative structure of the party which ultimately has serious implications for the party's existence and fortunes in Anambra State. Article 9 of the Constitution of the party therefore provides the principal organs of the party.

The figure below shows the vertical structure of the principal organs of APGA, from the ward level to the national level. And in line with Article 8 of the party's constitution, the party has five levels of organisation, namely, (a) Ward, (b) Local Government Area, (c) State, (d) Zonal, and (e) National. It could be deduced from the structure that the highest decision making body of the party is the National Convention. The administration of the party and its day-to-day affairs lies with the Executive Committee at each level of the organization. Hence, Article 9(1a) of the party's constitution provides that "each Executive Committee shall implement the policies of and shall be accountable and report to the Congress or Convention of its level. Hierarchically, Article 9(1b) of the party's constitution stipulates that "in all respects, party hierarchy shall ascend correspondingly from the Ward to National Level". This ultimately defines the power structure of the party and the individuals who administer the party affairs.

**Figure 1:** THE STRUCTURE OF THE PRINCIPAL ORGANS OF APGA



*Source: Designed by Author based on 2003 Constitution of APGA*

The organs listed above comprise of powerful substructures and individuals who take decisions on behalf of the party. However, the administration of the party is the primarily the function of the Executive Committee at different levels of the party organisation. Although the constitution provides a decentralised administrative structure for the party, section 14(1) maintains that "the administration of the party shall be supported, facilitated



and strengthened by a bureaucracy.” It is under this guise that the State Executive Committee responsible for the administration of the party at state level is mandated to generally administer and implement decisions of the State Congress or directives from the National Executive Committee (Article 11(5b) of APGA Constitution). This often time leads to conflict of interest between those who administer the party at state level and those at the national level. Thus, the subordination of the lower administrative structure of the party to a higher administrative structure is partly responsible for the administrative infringement and internal party crisis bedevilling the party.

As observed by Mike (2016), a major shortcoming in all the major parties in the Fourth Republic is indiscipline and lack of respect for party structure which has more often than not resulted in factionalisation within the parties. The level of meddlesomeness and infringement on the administration of APGA by vested interests continue to derail the party. Often time, these vested interests lay claim to the leadership of the party, thereby leading to different factions administering the party at the same time. It is through this compass that we view the first major crisis in the party, as the national chairman – Chekwas Okorie fell out with the national leader and 2003 presidential candidate of the party – Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu over who decides what happens in the party. This led to the suspension of Chekwas Okorie as the National Chairman of the party and the emergence of Victor Umeh as the new national chairman of the party. Rejecting his rejecting his suspension and pronouncing it illegal, Chekwas Okorie refused to relinquish his position, thus the emergence of two factions with separate national leaders in the same party. The litigation surrounding this crisis dragged to the level the Supreme Court, which eventually culminating in Chekwas Okorie and his faction leaving the party, paving way for full recognition of Victor Umeh as the national chairman of the party (Aniche, 2018a).

The next major crisis in the party occurred in 2013 as the disagreement between the party’s major stakeholders over the possibility of the party merging with other major opposition parties in the country degenerated into factionalisation of the party. after the 2011 general elections in Nigeria, the major opposition parties in the country decided to form an alliance and merge into a mega party that could unseat the ruling Peoples’ Democratic Party at national level. While Peter Obi (then Governor of Anambra State) was opposed to such merger, Rochas Okorocha (then Governor of Imo State) supported the merger. This set the tone for the dispute that would tear the party into two factions, Eventually, the Okorocha faction with the support of Senator Annie Okonkwo (then Senator representing Anambra Central), decided to merge with other political parties (e.g. the Action Congress of Nigeria, the Congress for Progressive Change, the All Nigeria Peoples Party, and the new PDP) to form a new party called All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2013. This constituted a major setback for the party because it lost control of Imo State including its members in the Imo State House of Assembly who decamped to APC.

The APGA crisis worsened after the death of its charismatic national leader, Dim Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. Just before the 2013 Anambra State Gubernatorial Election, the party was embroiled in yet another leadership crisis that culminated in the ouster of Victor Umeh as the National Chairman. Having fallen out with the leadership of the party, a section of the party stalwarts led by Chief Maxi Okwu began to plot the removal of the National Chairman and his Executive Committee from office. Thus, they challenged the legality of Chief Victor Umeh’s stay in office beyond the party’s constitutional requirement. In the ensuing drama, the aggrieved faction elected Maxi Okwu as the national leader and approached the Federal High Court Abuja on 19 August,

2013 seeking an order directing Victor Umeh and his officials to vacate their offices forthwith as well as directing the INEC to recognise him (Maxi Okwu) as the authentic National Leader of the party. The crisis deepened when the ousted National Chairman, Chief Victor Umeh and another factional leader of the party, Alhaji Sadeeq Masala, insisted that they were still in charge. The duo dismissed the appointment of Chief Maxi Okwu as the interim National Chairman and Alhaji Sanni Shinkafi as National Secretary by the National Caucus. They also approached different courts and got separate injunctions mandating the INEC to recognise the leadership of their various factions as authentic leadership of the party. This led to submission of multiple candidates to the INEC under the platforms of APGA. The Federal High Court sitting in Awka ruled that INEC accepted the two governorship candidates from APGA. It was not until the court vacated its order that a final candidate was selected (Aniche, 2018a).

In a bid to resolve the leadership crisis, the National Convention of the APGA was held in Awka, Anambra State on June 6, 2015 electing Victor Oye as the National Chairman of the party for a four-year term in office. However, on October 5, 2016, members of the National Working Committee (NWC), in a meeting allegedly called by Oye, moved a vote of no confidence against him. They expelled Oye from the party for alleged financial misappropriation and appointed the then National Vice Chairman (South East), Ozo Nwabueze Okafor as the Acting National Chairman. They also extended their expulsion to Deputy Chairmen of the party for the North and South, Alhaji Abubakar Adamu and Mr Uchenna Okogbuo, respectively. Thus, another round of internal crisis and factionalisation of the party. Two days after the expulsion of Oye from the party, the masterminds of the expulsion went to the Federal High Court to get a legal backing for their action and to compel relevant stakeholders, including INEC, to stop further dealings with Oye and accord recognition to Ozo Nwabueze Okafor as the Acting National Chairman of the party. Unfortunately, while the matter was yet to be adjudicated upon, Okafor died in January 2017, paving the way for the appointment of Martin Agbaso to continue in that capacity (Centre for Democracy and Development, nd).

Subsequently, some members of the National Working Committee (NWC) loyal to Agbaso suspended Victor Oye as the National Chairman of APGA. Following from this, the group set up a seven-man committee to investigate Oye. However, Oye refused to appear before the Committee, and the Agbaso faction took the matter to court in Abuja, asking INEC and the police to stop Oye from parading himself as the national chairman of the party. Victor Oye was then suspended from his role as National Chairman based on accusations of constitutional breaches. These accusations included running the party as a personal property, behaving like an overlord and acting as if the party is a personal enterprise (ThisDay, October 27, 2016).

He was equally accused of running the party's finances alone without the treasurer and preventing the National Financial Secretary and National Auditor from carrying out their constitutional duties. Oye was accused of taking unilateral decisions in the day-to-day running of the party without the involvement of the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party, contrary to Article 12(3) (a) of the party's constitution. Oye was also accused of not involving the NWC in making the electoral regulations which govern the nomination of candidates in contravention of Article 12(3)(c) of the party's constitution. The primary elections in Kogi, Edo, Bayelsa and Ondo elections were cited as examples of his infraction of article 12 (3)(c), which says that the NWC shall be responsible for providing guidelines for elections. Victor Oye was also alleged to have given APGA tickets

to non-members of the party without recourse to the constitutional provisions on applying for a waiver through the NWC in violation of Article 24 (8) (a) (b) of the party constitution and equally accused of suspending the Edo Executive Committee arbitrarily (APGA Constitution, 2003).

It was based on all these perceived constitutional breaches that Victor Oye and two other national officers were suspended, heralding the factionalisation of APGA by the Agbaso faction. The resultant effect was the emergence of two factions contesting for the leadership of the party. The two factions, one led by Chief Victor Oye and the other led by Chief Martin Agbaso, each announced different dates for the party's primaries for the nomination of the APGA candidate for the 18 November 2017 governorship election in Anambra State. This party factionalisation with parallel primaries and parallel/multiple court judgements and injunctions nearly cost Governor Willie Obinano his re-election on November 18, 2017 (Centre for Democracy and Development, nd).

With Anambra State being the major foothold of APGA, the factionalisation of the party has continued to destabilise the administration of the party in the state, with litigations and counter litigations leading to different factions laying legitimate claim to the leadership of the party. As opined by the Centre for Democracy and Development (nd), Anambra APGA has remained in disarray. Both factionalisation and the turbulent state executive resulted in numerous litigations in courts. At some point, the crisis led to two different High Courts in Anambra State sitting in Awka and Nnewi respectively giving restraining orders stopping Chief Martin Agbaso from conducting the 2017 governorship primary election in the state, and from parading himself as the National Chairman of the party. However, the Agbaso group, supported by a purported National Working Committee of APGA, maintained that Chief Agbaso remained the party's acting National Chairman. Their argument was based on the validation of a High Court's order of mandamus by the Appeal Court in Enugu, which led to the sacking of the former chairman, Victor Oye. On 22 May 2017, the Enugu High Court, presided by Justice Ozoemenam, announced Agbaso as the Acting National Chairman of the party. In a swift reaction to that judgment, Dr Victor Oye stated that the ruling of the Enugu High Court on the dispute is not binding since the order issued on 22 May sacking his leadership of the party's National Working Committee did not make him a party in the lawsuit. Hence, Dr Victor Oye and his National Working Committee approached the courts in Awka and Nnewi to stop Agbaso and his group from performing any role on behalf of APGA. The Nnewi High Court granted an interlocutory injunction restraining Agbaso and three others from taking any steps towards organising, conducting, or holding any congress or primary election in the name of APGA for the purpose of nominating any gubernatorial candidate of APGA for the governorship election in Anambra State. The court had also earlier declared that the only members of the party's NWC were those headed by Chief Oye. This set the tone for the protracted leadership crisis in the party which lingered until the 2023 general election.

### **Other Factors Responsible for Factionalisation of APGA**

It has been established that APGA has over the years experienced internal crisis leading to the emergence of factional groups within the party. Being rooted in Anambra State, the activities, administration and performance of the party is often assessed within this scope. Beyond the leadership and personality clashes highlighted earlier, there are other factors predisposing the party to factionalism:

Firstly, the organisational structure of the party makes the lower administrative strata of the party subservient to the central authority. Although the structure of the party as a whole provided for a decentralised administration, article 11(5) of the constitution of the party provides for an administrative structure in which the national leadership of the party overshadows the state, local government and ward structures of the party. Hence, every administrative crisis in the party affects the affairs of all structures of the party, and every factional grouping of the party stems from this arrangement. This view is supported by the responses from all the discussants in our focus group discussion. 100% of the discussants agreed that “the administration of the party at state level is grossly affected by the national leadership of the party” (Field Survey from FGD, 2024). It was observed that the national leadership of the party could override any decision taken by the state or local government executive council. In doing this, members of the party at the state level feel neglected and sometimes form parallel groups to advance their own interest.

Again, the party maintains a system that permits gross violation of its constitution. One of the major factors raised by the discussants is the gross violation of the provisions of the constitution by the leadership of the party. 85% of the discussants opined that the administrative and leadership crisis in the party stem from gross violations of party constitution and formal decision making processes of Anambra State chapter APGA during primaries. They also affirmed that there was external encroachment or interference with the internal workings of the party organisation in Anambra State, leading to imposition of candidates and party officials. They stated that there were gross irregularities in the primaries because the primaries were not conducted in accordance with party guidelines for primaries. Specifically, one of the discussants opined that this non-implementation of party guidelines manifested in two different forms:

We realised that the delegate list which originated from ward congresses were manipulated and falsified with impunity by the party hierarchy to favour their preferred candidates. Most of us were surprised that after the ward congresses had elected party delegates, the names on the lists that eventually came out were completely different from what played out during the congresses. The state leadership of the party and the leadership at national level manipulated the delegate lists to ensure that the delegates would be people in their own camps, who would eventually vote for their preferred candidates during the primaries. Secondly, we had cases where the names of people who did not win the primaries were forwarded to INEC as authentic party flag bearers (Field Study from FGD, 2024).

This view is corroborated by the response from one of our interviewees who is a major stakeholder in APGA. According to him,

The outcomes of party primaries in Anambra State were determined by money inducement and factional interest within the party hierarchy or executive particularly the state chairman and his faction. Once you do not belong to his clique, you would stand no chance of winning the primaries no matter how popular you are in the party (Field Study from KII, 2024).

In view of the constant factionalisation of the party and the administrative structure of the party which, most candidates who represent the party in different electoral contestations are hardly the choice of party members. They are often time the candidates hand-picked by party moneybags. This explains why there are usually countless petitions in court, challenges the legality of APGA's internal process of choosing their candidates. This is in tandem with the view of Abba and Babalola (2017) who argued that political parties in Nigeria do not conduct acceptable primary elections where candidates contest and merit their positions through party primaries and conventions; rather, some political parties use voice affirmation or elite consensus for selection. Often, such selected candidates turn out to be highly dysfunctional and antithetical to good governance and, most times, this renders candidate selection process less credible (Abba & Babalola, 2017). This process is often fraught with controversies and usually leads to violence and incessant litigation. Consequently, such less credible and less acceptable process of nomination predisposes the parties to internal crisis, factionalisation and sometimes decampment by disgruntled members. To assessing this view in relation to APGA, all our discussants were of the view that lack of internal party democracy APGA's primaries accounts for increasing number of election petitions against the party. According to one of the discussants,

In the past elections, we had cases of "illegal" substitution of candidates. Unfortunately, the aggrieved members bypassed the party internal mechanism for settlement of disputes and headed straight to court. Most members do not explore the internal arrangement of the party for settlement because they consider it as ineffective and a mere waste of time. In fact, those who tried to explore that option were told to accept the party's decision in good faith because of the doctrine of party supremacy. It is constituted and teleguided by the same party cabal who manipulated the process through imposition of party candidates and party officials, and forced stepped down (Field Study from FGD, 2024).

Corroborating the above, another discussant averred that,

Although the party's constitution provided internal mechanism for resolution of conflicts but such mechanism is usually cosmetic in practice. The party hierarchy rarely follows it; rather, they use their personal bias to issue statements and instructions to the aggrieved parties. When questioned, they will tell the aggrieved individuals to accept the decision because the party is supreme. It is obvious in the past few years that the reconciliatory committee was neither effective nor functional. The aggrieved party had option of decamping, suing the party or abiding by the decision of the party. There was so much impunity (Field survey from FGD, 2024).

Even some of the APGA past executive members and stakeholders interviewed believed that there were cabal within the party usurping the formal decision making apparatus, mechanisms, and processes from the principal party organs constitutionally empowered to make critical and important decisions for the party. The members of the Governor's cabinet constituted themselves into a cabal interfering during the party congresses and conventions thereby undermining party officials in the discharge of their

official duties. According to one of the former House of Representatives aspirants whom we interviewed,

Some of them (Governor's appointees) were not even originally members of the party. They were not even politicians and had not contested election to test their popularity. They were the so-called technocrats or professionals who were appointees of the governor. They became members of the party on the account of being appointed commissioners and political advisers and special assistants. They were the ones that tried to hijack the party from some of us who had been with party from the beginning and suffered for the party. The governor failed to rein them in (Field survey from KII, 2024).

Describing the process of candidate nomination by most political parties in Nigeria, Egwu (2014) averred that a greater percentage of those that emerge from party primaries are products of imposition, consensus and compromise with state governors and godfathers playing decisive roles. Some of the APGA stakeholders interviewed attributed parallel APGA congresses and conventions in Anambra State and lingering/prolonged litigations against party congresses for election of principal organs of Anambra State APGA to lack of internal democracy in electing party executives. As opined by a former local government party chairman,

If we are being sincere to ourselves, we have to admit that our great party we have barrage of court cases after most of our congresses. This is partly because most of our congresses are overshadowed by factional leadership of the party at different levels, with every faction holding a parallel congress where important decisions are taken. What happens after these congresses is that each aggrieved faction goes to court to seek legitimization of its leadership (Field survey from KII, 2024).

When asked if the party constitution does not provide adequate mechanism for resolving most of the internal disputes and grievances of members, all the responses from both FGD and KII reveal that the party's constitution made provision for dispute resolution. However, over 85% of the responses added that aggrieved members are not usually willing to explore this option before going to court because of a clause in the constitution which emphasized on "party supremacy" which indirectly gives the National Executive Committee the powers to take unilateral decision on any issue, including substitution of names of candidates after ward, local and state congresses. "So invariably, those who perceive the leadership not to favour their interest would simply approach the court rather than waste their time going through the internal process of conflict resolution in the party" (Field survey from FGD, 2024).

#### **Nexus between party factionalisation and APGA's electoral fortunes in Anambra State**

Internal factionalisation of a political party portends great consequences for the electoral fortunes and survival of the party. It has the potency of keeping parties together and successful at last just as it could lead to party volatility and fragmentation (Chambers & Ufen, 2020). Though APGA has had chequered history of internal crisis, the party has continued to enjoy great success in all the gubernatorial contests in the state, winning every of such election since 2006. Despite the intra-party crisis that led to the faction of Chekwes Okorie leaving the party, Peter Obi still won his re-election bid in 2010 and went on to hand over to another APGA candidate – Willie Obiano in 2014. Notwithstanding the

power tussle between the Victor Umeh and Victor Oye factions as well as between the latter and Martin Agbaso's factions, Obiano successfully completed his eight year tenure and handed over to another APGA candidate – Charles Soludo in 2022. The import of this is that party factionalisation has not had any negative impact in APGA's electoral fortunes vis-a-vis gubernatorial elections in Anambra State.

However, while the party has enjoyed great electoral success in the governorship elections in the state, it scarcely has had any positive outing in the senatorial elections in the state. Drawing from available evidence in the last three general elections in the state, the party has performed abysmally in the three senatorial contests in the state.

**Table 1:** PERFORMANCE OF APGA IN SENATORIAL ELECTIONS IN ANAMBRA STATE BETWEEN 2015 AND 2023

| Year         | APGA     | PDP      | Others   |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|
| 2015         | 1*       | 2*       | 0        |
| 2019         | 0        | 2        | 1        |
| 2023         | 0        | 0        | 3        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>4</b> |

**Source:** *Compiled by researcher from INEC website*

\*PDP initially won the three seats until the Appeal Court nullified the election of one and APGA won the re-run.

The table reveals that despite the dominance of APGA in Anambra State, it has continued to struggle to win the mandate of the people to represent the state in the upper chamber of the national parliament. The opposition parties in the state have dominated the state's senatorial elections. As could be deciphered from the table, APGA won one seat while the PDP won the remaining two. It is germane to emphasise that originally, the PDP won the three seats in 2015 but the appeal court ruled that the candidate of the party for the Anambra Central Senatorial Zone, Uche Ekwunife was not properly nominated by the party, hence not qualified to contest the election. A rerun was therefore ordered by the court in which APGA's candidate, Victor Umeh was declared winner.

In 2019, APGA lost in the three senatorial zones, while the PDP won two. The table shows that "others" (other political parties) won the remaining one seat. Available data shows that this one seat was won by Ifeanyi Uba of the Young Progressive Party (YPP). Interestingly, prior to the party primaries, Ifeanyi Uba was a major stakeholder in APGA and was poised to capture the party's ticket to contest the Anambra South Senatorial District election. However, the incumbent Governor, Willie Obianor and the national leadership of the party preferred Bianca Ojukwu. Frustrated by the imposition of a candidate on the zone, the Ifeanyi Uba faction left the party and joined the YPP where he eventually won the Senatorial election. This also mirrors the negative impact of leadership meddlesomeness and factionalisation of a party on its electoral fortune.

In the 2023 general election, APGA also lost the three senatorial seats, with the Labour Party under the influence of Peter Obi winning two seats (Anambra North and Anambra Central) while the YPP under Ifeanyi Uba retained the seat for Anambra South. Though some practitioners attribute the success of the Labour Party to the influence of Peter Obi, it is important to point out that Obi was a member of APGA, and a governor of Anambra State under the platform of APGA between 2006 and 2014. It has been argued that part of the reasons Obi left APGA revolves around the internal party crisis in APGA as well as his

frosty relationship with his immediate successor – Willie Obiano. Thus, losing the influential Peter Obi and his supporters has indirectly affected APGA’s electoral fortunes in the national legislative elections.

Party factionalisation also impacted the electoral outcome of the APGA in the House of Representatives election in Anambra State. The table below shows the electoral fortunes of the party in the eleven (11) House of Representatives Constituencies of the State between 2015 and 2023.

**Table 2:** PERFORMANCE OF APGA IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ELECTIONS IN ANAMBRA STATE BETWEEN 2015 AND 2023

| Year         | 2015      | 2019      | 2023      |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| APGA         | 2         | 5         | 4         |
| PDP          | 9         | 6         | 0         |
| Others       | 0         | 0         | 7         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>11</b> |

**Source:** Compiled by researcher from INEC website (2024)

Table 2 shows that despite producing the governor of the state since 2006, APGA did not perform well in the federal legislative elections. In 2015, the party won only two (2) out of the eleven (11) Federal House of Representatives constituencies in the state. The two constituencies it won were Anambra West/Anambra East Constituency and Oyi/Ayamelum Constituency as shown in the table below. It is important to note that the constituencies where APGA won were the primary constituency of the incumbent Governor, Willie Obiano. On the other hand, the PDP won the other nine federal constituencies.

**Table 3:** FEDERAL HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONSTITUENCIES WON BY DIFFERENT POLITICAL PARTIES IN ANAMBRA STATE BETWEEN 2015 AND 2023

| S/N | Constituency                       | 2015 | 2019 | 2023 |
|-----|------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| 1   | Anambra West/Anambra East          | APGA | APGA | LP   |
| 2   | Onitsha North/Onitsha South        | PDP  | PDP  | LP   |
| 3   | Ogbaru                             | PDP  | PDP  | LP   |
| 4   | Oyi/Ayamelum                       | APGA | PDP  | APGA |
| 5   | Aguata                             | PDP  | APGA | APGA |
| 6   | Awka North/Awka South              | PDP  | PDP  | LP   |
| 7   | Njikoka/Dunukofia/Anaocha          | PDP  | PDP  | LP   |
| 8   | Idemmili North/Idemmili South      | PDP  | APGA | LP   |
| 9   | Ihiala                             | PDP  | APGA | APGA |
| 10  | Nnewi North/ Nnewi South/ Ekwusigo | PDP  | PDP  | APGA |
| 11  | Orumba North/ Orumba South         | PDP  | APGA | LP   |

**Source:** Author’s compilation from INEC website (2024)

Unlike in the Senatorial District election where it won no seat (see table 1 above), APGA experienced an improved electoral fortune in the House of Representatives election in 2019, winning five (5) out of the eleven (11) available seats. Though the party lost Oyi/Ayamelum which it had hitherto won in 2015, the 2019 election marked a milestone



in the party's electoral fortune as it was the first time the party won such number of seats in the federal parliament. Table 3 shows that the party was victorious in (a) Anambra West/Anambra East Constituency, (b) Aguata Constituency, (c) Idemmili North/Idemmili South Constituency, (d) Ihiala Constituency, and (e) Orumba North/Orumba South Constituency. The remaining six (6) constituencies were won by the PDP while other political parties did not win anything. In the 2023 election, the party won only four (4) out of the eleven (11) constituencies – Oyi/Ayamelum, Aguata, Ihiala, and Nnewi North/Nnewi South/ Ekwusigo constituencies. This shows a reduction from the five (5) it won in 2019. The other seven (7) constituencies were won by the Labour Party.

For the State House of Assembly, Anambra State is divided into 30 constituencies. While the PDP controlled the State House of Assembly between 1999 and 2010, APGA has continued to win majority of the seats since then, as against its abysmal performance in the federal legislative elections. Until the 2023 general elections, APGA and the PDP had shared the 30 legislative seats in the state, with APGA being the dominant party. The result of the 2015 election shows that APGA won 27 out of the 30 available seats in the State House of Assembly while the PDP won the remaining 3.

**Table 4:** PERFORMANCE OF APGA COMPARED TO OTHER PARTIES IN THE STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS BETWEEN 2015 AND 2023

| S/N. | CONSTITUENCY     | 2015 | 2019 | 2023 |
|------|------------------|------|------|------|
| 1    | Aguata I         | APGA | APGA | APGA |
| 2    | Aguata II        | APGA | APGA | APGA |
| 3    | Ayamelum         | APGA | APGA | PDP  |
| 4    | Anambra East     | APGA | APGA | APGA |
| 5    | Anambra West     | APGA | PDP  | APGA |
| 6    | Anaocha I        | PDP  | APGA | LP   |
| 7    | Anaocha II       | PDP  | APGA | APGA |
| 8    | Awka North       | APGA | APGA | APGA |
| 9    | Awka South I     | APGA | APGA | LP   |
| 10   | Awka South II    | APGA | APGA | APGA |
| 11   | Dunukofia        | APGA | APGA | APGA |
| 12   | Ekwusigo         | PDP  | PDP  | APGA |
| 13   | Idemili North    | APGA | APGA | LP   |
| 14   | Idemili South    | APGA | APGA | APGA |
| 15   | Ihiala I         | APGA | APGA | APGA |
| 16   | Ihiala II        | APGA | APGA | APGA |
| 17   | Njikoka I        | APGA | APGA | APGA |
| 18   | Njikoka II       | APGA | APGA | APGA |
| 19   | Nnewi North      | APGA | APGA | YPP  |
| 20   | Nnewi South I    | APGA | APGA | YPP  |
| 21   | Nnewi South II   | APGA | PDP  | YPP  |
| 22   | Ogbaru I         | APGA | PDP  | PDP  |
| 23   | Ogbaru II        | APGA | PDP  | PDP  |
| 24   | Onitsha North I  | APGA | PDP  | LP   |
| 25   | Onitsha North II | APGA | APGA | LP   |
| 26   | Onitsha South I  | APGA | APGA | LP   |

|    |                  |      |      |      |
|----|------------------|------|------|------|
| 27 | Onitsha South II | APGA | APGA | LP   |
| 28 | Orumba North     | APGA | APGA | LP   |
| 29 | Orumba South     | APGA | APGA | APGA |
| 30 | Oyi              | APGA | APGA | APGA |

*Source: Author's compilation from INEC website (2024) and Anambra State House of Assembly (2024)*

The table shows that apart from Anaocha I, Anaocha II, and Ekwusigo constituencies which were won by the PDP, APGA won the other 27 constituencies. In 2019, APGA maintained its electoral dominance in the state legislature, winning 24 out of the 30 available seats despite the internal party crisis in the party. The 2023 election saw APGA lose substantial number of seats to other parties in the state assembly election. The party merely managed to win 16 seats, the PDP won 3, Labour Party won 8 while the YPP won 3. The summary of the party's performance in the state assembly election is presented thus:

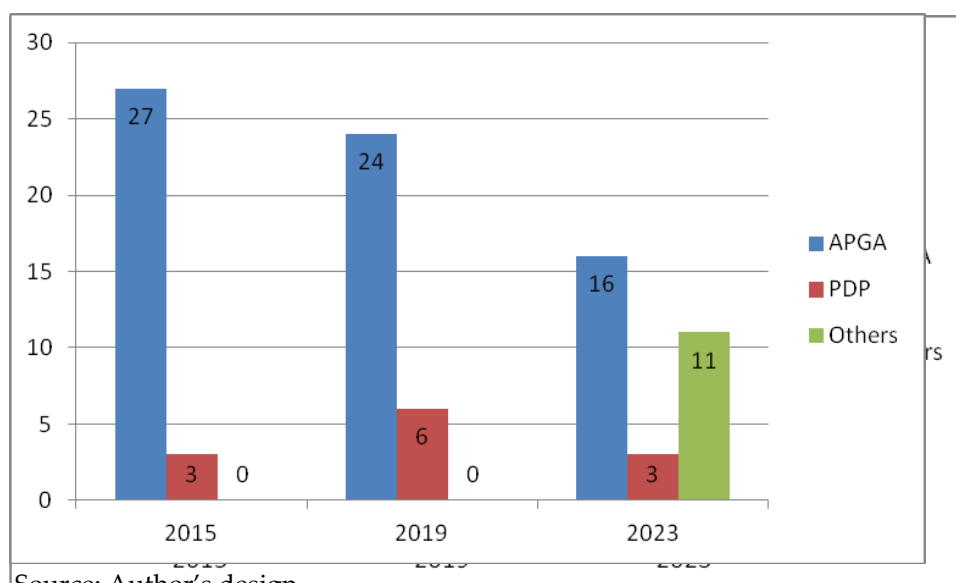
**Table 5:** SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE OF APGA IN THE STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN ANAMBRA STATE BETWEEN 2015 AND 2023

| Year         | 2015             | 2019             | 2023             |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| APGA         | 27 (90%)         | 24 (80%)         | 16 (53%)         |
| PDP          | 3 (10%)          | 6 (20%)          | 3 (10%)          |
| Others       | 0 (0%)           | 0 (0%)           | 11 (37%)         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>30 (100%)</b> | <b>30 (100%)</b> | <b>30 (100%)</b> |

*Source: Author's compilation by INEC website*

The table shows that APGA won 27 (90%) out of the 30 seats in the state legislature in 2015. In 2019, the party won 24 (80%) which showed a slight reduction from the figures it got in 2015. In 2023, the party lost more seats, merely managing to win 16 (53%) of the seats to retain its control of the House as clearly shown in the figure below.

**Fig 2:** GRAPHICAL SUMMARY OF THE ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE OF APGA AND OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE ANAMBRA STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS BETWEEN 2015 AND 2023



*Source: Author's design*

Drawing a nexus between factionalisation of political party and the electoral fortunes of the party, majority of our discussants maintained that a party's electoral success is tied to the level of unity in the party. One of the discussants who had worked as a former member of the State Executive Committee (APGA) opined that:

lack of internal party democracy has tremendous grave consequences and negative implications that may ultimately affect party's performances during general elections. Some of these negative or adverse consequences include party factionalisation, lack of party discipline, massive decampment, mass defection, imposition of unpopular candidates, parallel conventions, multiple congresses, multiple candidates, numerous litigations and election petitions (Field survey from FGD, 2024)

The discussant further argued that there was visible infringement of the internal party organisational workings of Anambra State APGA in terms of internal democracy and critical formal channels of decision-making during party conventions and congresses.

This infringement constituted a serious impediment on the performances of APGA in Anambra State elections. We could have easily won some of the Senatorial elections in the state if not for internal bickering and imposition of candidates. If you also check, the party's performance in the state assembly has continued to drop. The current Speaker of the House (Somto) won his first election under APGA in 2015, by 2019, he was forced out of the party by those who wanted to impose their own candidate on the party. He decamped to the PDP and won the election. Today he has become the Speaker under the PDP in a parliament with APGA majority (Field survey from FGD, 2024).

This view is also supported by the opinions generated from our KII. Accordingly, one of the key stakeholders interviewed opined that

There is a culture of impunity in APGA. Most of our (APGA) internal challenges come from the election of party officials and party delegates. The same cabal manipulates the process, imposes candidates on the delegates, forces popular candidates to step down. They also manipulate the election of the principal officers of the party in Anambra State, and this creates room for the numerous litigations against party congresses. As a result factionalisation, defections and decampments are still the order of the day (Field survey from KII, 2024).

This is why Omeje (2010) submits that internal party democracy is one issue that has consistently eluded Nigerian democracy because political parties have always been hijacked at all levels by powerful individuals who impose loyalist or sycophants as candidates for election. Lack of internal democracy, therefore, has been the bane of Nigeria democracy. It is a blatant rape of democracy to foist or impose candidates on political parties whereas the delegates have better choice or aspirant they could have chosen as candidates in general election. The implication is that this lack of internal party democracy in Nigerian political parties generally undermines the credibility of the entire electoral

process thereby making the entire process undemocratic (Egboh & Aniche 2012). This, therefore, predisposes the party to factionalisation with grave consequences for the electoral fortunes and survival of the party.

### **Conclusion**

Since its formation in 2003, APGA has had a chequered history of party factionalisation occasioned by lack of internal party democracy. The party hierarchy and political gladiators in the party are often embroiled in power tussle over who would determine what, when and how. This often manifests in desperate attempts by the party stalwarts to circumvent the formal structures of the party, hijack the party structure and leadership, and impose candidates on the party in total disregard for the party's constitutional provisions. This often culminates in incessant litigations, factionalisation of the party and sometimes decampments by some aggrieved factions. While this has not impacted negatively on the party's success in gubernatorial elections in Anambra State, it has continued to rob the party of expected victory in the legislative elections in the state. The party's performance in the state's national legislative seats has been abysmal while its control of the state legislature has suffered major electoral setbacks since 2015.

Efforts to end the incessant factionalisation of the party and improve the party's electoral fortunes can only be achieved if the powerful members of the party eschew their neopatrimonial character, ensure that the processes of selecting delegates and candidates for elections reflect the will of the majority. To continue to enjoy electoral success in Anambra State as well as to make any in-road into other states, there is need for APGA to fix the knotty issues in the party, entrench internal party democracy, review its constitution to allow for a more democratic process of addressing grievances rather than over-reliance on "party supremacy clause" which has so far been exploited by the powerful members of the party to further their personal interest.

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