

Internal Democracy and Conflict Management within Political Parties in Nigeria: A Historical Evaluation of the Osun State People's Democratic Party (PDP)

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Abstract

The study investigated how internal conflicts within Osun State Peoples' Democratic Party developed over time, and the management strategies used in addressing the conflict. In addition to this, it assessed the impact of these strategies on electoral victory in 2023 Osun State gubernatorial election. This is with a view to shed light on the impact of internal party conflicts, particularly those stemming from primary elections on party cohesion and electoral success. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study, qualitative method of data gathering via in-depth interview was employed, data gathered was thematically coded, categorised and subjected to qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis to establish answers to the research objectives. Purposive sampling techniques was used in selecting

the participants. Academic works, official newspaper publications and advertisements relevant to the study were also analysed for contents. The study revealed that absence of internal democracy within Osun State PDP triggered intra-party crises in the 2014, 2018, and 2022 governorship primaries, while violence, intimidation, and manipulation of party rules played major role. Although, the party has constitutional provisions for free and fair elections, but their inability to apply these provisions intensified conflicts which made some key members to exit the party. However, the national working committee adopted another strategic approach in managing their conflict before the 2023 gubernatorial election, by appointing neutral officials that mediated on the conflict. This prioritized electoral viability, eventually securing victory for the party in the 2023 gubernatorial elec-

tion.

Keywords: Conflict, Conflict Management, Democracy, Internal Democracy, Political Parties.

Background to the Study

Democracy as a political doctrine sees the protection and enhancement of the freedom of the individual as the central problem of politics. In the famous words of Abraham Lincoln, President of United States of America from 1861-65, democracy simply means government of the people, by the people, for the people. When applied to the operations of a political party, democracy within a party would mean the application of democratic ideals to the running of the party the same way it is applied to governance. In this sense, while political parties are vehicles for fostering the democratic ideal, their internal activities are expected to be democratic, hence the term, internal democracy.

In his analysis of power and manipulation by the ruling elites and counter-elites, Lasswell (1936), described politics as the struggle to secure the power to decide who gets what, when and how. In this struggle there is bound to be conflict. However, Kinseller & Rousseau (2009), believe that conflict created due to the competition among groups or among members could be regulated and managed by democratic

political processes and that democratic political practices can facilitate the resolution of conflict when a political system is challenged from within due to conflicting preferences. The understanding here is that democracy is a tool for conflict management and resolution.

Conflict is an age-long phenomenon in human relations and dates back to the farthest of human civilization. Consequent upon this, human beings from civilization to civilization, have been known to clash over one issue or the other. Conflict could exist within or among group members for a variety of reasons and one of such reasons could be struggle for leadership of the group. Several authors such as Coser (1956), Burke et al., (2009), Thomas (1992), Pruitt (1998), Von Uexkull et al., (2016), and Gambo (2022), have viewed conflict from various perspectives. For example, conflict is seen as an opposition among social entities directed against one another (Wright, 2019 and Siregar, 2022). Opposition here is to be understood as a process by which social entities function in the disservice of one another. Although not all oppositions can be regarded as conflict, the way opposition is used in this sense is better understood when contrasted with the word “co-operating”. It is presumed that when one is not co-operating, he is opposing and the situation if not well managed, could result in conflict.

The management of conflict invariably

falls on the shoulders of specific individuals or authorities who often are not parties to the conflict. In the family unit, conflict among siblings is resolved by the parents. In the society, conflict, especially legal ones are resolved by the legal authorities such as courts of law. In the instant case, the management and resolution of conflicts arising out of primary elections should fall squarely on the shoulders of the concerned political party, if party cohesion is to be sustained. Odigwe (2015) opines those conflicting interests and ramblings in the Nigerian present political parties is attributed to a lack of internal democracy in Nigeria political parties. While empirical studies on previous researches had shown that internal party conflict arising from lack of internal democracy constitutes the main factor for the intra-party wrangling rocking the fabrics of the Peoples' Democratic Party of Nigeria (Ojukwu, & Olaiya, 2011; Gambo, 2022; Moliki, 2022; Moliki et al., 2025). This study however, investigated the impacts these internal party conflicts—particularly those stemming from primary elections— has on party cohesion and electoral success. The rationale for selecting Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) in Osun State is because the party had witnessed occasions of internal rancour, especially before the 2023 governorship election in the state. An understanding of how the management of such conflicts, influence the party's 2023 gubernatorial electoral victory, it of im-

portance to this study. In view of these, the objectives of this work are to:

- i. examine how internal conflicts within the Osun State People's Democratic Party evolved over time, and what management strategies have been employed to address them.
- ii. assess the Implication of these strategies on electoral victory in 2023 Osun State gubernatorial election.

Literature Review

Manifestations and Implications of Intra-Party Conflicts in Political Parties in Nigeria

Intra-party conflicts have generally become incessant in Nigeria Political Parties, and they come in varying degrees of magnitude and intensity (Olatunji, 2024). Jude & Ika (2013), opined that unresolved intra-party conflicts result in party factionalisation, instability, and degeneration due to movement of disgruntled members from one party to another. They maintained that, while political parties are responsible for aggregating the varying interests (conflicting ones inclusive), of their members in order to build a unified front for achieving party objectives, lack of internal democracy and paucity of ideology are two fundamental factors (out of several), which trigger intra-party conflict and obstruct party objective attainment. Abubakar & Ibrahim (2015) did a comprehensive review on intra-par-

ty crisis among political parties in Nigeria's fourth republic drawing on the experience of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). Their study did a historical assessment of intra-party crises in Nigeria dating back to the colonial period, the immediate post-independent period and the current democratic dispensation. They argued that intra-party crisis or conflict is an inevitable feature of party politics, given the fact that people of diverse nature populate political parties, and that, not minding their agreement to pursue the same goals in the same political party, their approaches differ. Quoting several intellectual works such as: Aleyomi (2013), Ikedima (2019), Attama (2022), Oseghale (2024), Olatunji (2024), Okron (2025), they identified the factors responsible for intra-party conflicts in Nigeria democratic system to include: paucity of ideology, absence of internal democracy, incumbency factor, goal incompatibility, godfatherism, and politics of self-interest among others. The authors grouped these factors broadly into two as poverty of ideology and lack of internal democracy. In agreement with Aleyomi (2013), they affirmed that the process of nomination and imposition of candidates lead to intra-party conflicts, and that this reflected in the 2003 and 2007 general elections which were characterized by long legal battles over nomination of candidates at the primaries. Commenting further they claimed that the PDP has had to contend with series of intra-party crisis in the past

years, citing the party's split into two in years 2000 and 2013 respectively. They claimed that "the inability of the party leadership to resolve the crisis led to the defection of five out of seven aggrieved governors, and several National Assembly members to the opposition party (APC) in 2013, and a subsequent loss of the party at the 2015 general election. The study proffered that, in addition to ideological revamp, political parties need to adhere to the spirit of internal democracy, particularly in the election of party leaders and the selection of candidates that represent the party during general elections. The authors recommended a US-style candidate selection process.

Awofeso et al., (2017), confirmed that, as it is in intra-group conflict generally, so it is in intra-party conflict, and that intra-party conflicts since Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999, has witnessed an unprecedented level of decampment of politicians, from one party to another, due to lack of viable mechanism of conflict management process. The study listed several factors which it identified as being responsible for this phenomenon, among which is manipulation of primary elections. The authors proposed that conflicts when they arise within a political party must not be allowed to escalate, and that efforts must be made to ensure that they do not degenerate and

become destructive. Aniche E.T. (2017) upheld the submissions of Awofeso et al. (2017), that intra-party conflict is the cankerworm causing the distress of the PDP. He argued that the functions of political parties in Nigeria generally and the PDP in particular, have been hampered by internal crisis which undermine their “recruitment function. He opined that the non-resolution of conflicts arising from the candidate’s emergence procedure via primary elections, and the consequent actions of aggrieved factions/individuals, have resulted in party fractionalization.

Methodology/Theoretical Framework

Descriptive research design was adopted for this study. Qualitative method of data gathering via in-depth interview was employed to establish answers to the research objectives, while purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the participants. Key officials of the organs of the PDP who are involved in the conduct of the relevant primary elections were interviewed, this includes: Former National Secretary, Former State Chairman, Former State Secretary of Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDD), a Governorship aspirant in 2014 primaries, a Governorship aspirant in 2018 primaries, a Governorship aspirant in 2023 primary election, The (3) party elders in Osun State – one per senatorial district, a long standing party member, INEC office Osun State

Desk responsible for party monitoring. The interviews were conducted for Party officials in their various offices after securing relevant permissions where necessary while aspirants were interviewed in their places of choice. All respondents were adequately briefed on the subject matter and the need to cooperate with the researcher. Prior appointments were always be made to secure interview sessions. Data collection spread over a few weeks during which all target respondents were interviewed. Qualitative data gathered was thematically coded, categorised and subjected to qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. Relevant academic work and official newspaper publications and advertisements relevant to the study were also be analysed for content.

The Theory of Communicative Action propounded by Jurgen Habermas in 1984, was applied by Chilton et al., (2005) in their paper “Habermas Theory of Communicative Action as a Theoretical Framework for Mediation Practice”, They argued that even in conflict, people possess a human relationship that makes mediation possible, especially because they are rational creatures. This relationship, they continued, gives reliable ground from which the mediator can operate. They then identified Habermas Theory of Communicative Action “as the best suited for application to mediation”. Habermas Theory is about

“talking things out”, while mediation is also about “talking things out”. They argued that Habermas’ positions bear on both the process of mediation and the responsibility of the mediator which help to disentangle the complexities that bring conflicting parties to impasse. For political parties generally, and for PDP Osun State in this study, Mediation should be the cornerstone of its conflict management mechanism, and this theory will be very appropriate in handling its activities.

Findings/Discussions

1. Examine how internal conflicts within the Osun State People’s Democratic Party evolved over time, and what management strategies have been employed to address them.

Ojukwu and Olaifa, (2011) maintain that inability to ensure internal democracy is the main factor for the intra-party wrangling rocking the fabrics of the PDP in Nigeria. Kura, (2011) observed that there had been instances where the judiciary had to intervene to redress injustice related to primary elections in the PDP; while Katsina, (2016) claimed that absence of internal democracy is the main reason for the fall of the PDP nationally. While responding to interview questions, an interviewee who was one of the 2014 governorship aspirants claimed that the gov-

ernorship primary election of the PDP in Osun State in 2014 was bitterly contested:

Among the original aspirants were myself, late Senator Isiaka Adetunji Adeleke, Senator Iyiola Omisore, Senator Olanmi Akinlabi, and Hon. Oluwole Oke. I left the party before the primaries because it became obvious that there would be no internal democracy, and because the state working committee of the party, was compromised.

He also complained of the violent disposition of another major aspirant:

The attack on the person of Senator Isiaka Adeleke by another aspirant who had a reputation for violence, was a signal that the primary was going to be violent. The action was capable of intimidating my own supporters too and I needed to protect them and myself.

A long-standing party member claimed that Senator Isiaka Adetunji Adeleke (now late) also withdrew from the contest about 24 hours to the primary election:

The primary election was

programmed to be violent. As one of the aides to the late Senator, I can confirm that the senator's reason for withdrawing was because one of the aspirants was desperate and determined to be mean and kill in order to secure the ticket at all costs. Supporters of the aspirant and those of late Isiaka Adeleke clashed at a hotel in Osogbo where the aspirants were meeting with the electoral panel from Abuja for pre-election consultations.

According to *Daily Post* (2014), Hon Oluwole Oke a former chairman of house of representatives committee on defence, was another aspirant that withdrew, with the allegation that the state chairman Alhaji Gani Olaoluwa was working for Senator Iyiola Omisore (an aspirant). An interviewee, who was a former state secretary of the party confirmed the newspaper's report. According to him,

This was true, Hon Oluwole Oke withdrawn from the race in 2014 alleging the chairman of working for an aspirant.

An interviewee who was originally an aspirant in this primary election agreed that he did not participate be-

cause he feared for his life. He said:

As a former chairman of the party in Osun State, I understand the workings well enough to know when manipulation was in the offing. It is true that the PDP has enough provisions in its constitution to ensure internal democracy, and that if manipulation and other human factors such as bribery and parochial loyalty were avoided, these provisions will guarantee flawless, free and fair primary elections. But the PDP governorship primary of 2014 in Osun State was designed to ensure the emergence of a candidate already anointed by the party machinery at the national level and the frustration made me and my supporters to decamp from the party, and I know that my exit affected the party's final result at the governorship election negatively.

A leader in late Senator Isiaka Adeleke's senatorial district, queried him on why he withdrew from the primary and left the party. According to her, he replied her in his native Yoruba language: "mama, won

na mi, ha, won na mi”, meaning, “mummy, I was flogged, ha, I was flogged”. She continued that:

the late Senator Isiaka Adeleke busted into tears while narrating his experience and that he fled the party to preserve his life. In such an environment, no number of constitutional provisions can guarantee internal democracy especially when the culprit was not sanctioned by the party hierarchy.

In addition to the provisions of the country’s Constitution and the subsisting Electoral Act (2022 as amended), the PDP Constitution (Constitution of the PDP As Amended 2017), allows its National Executive Committee (NEC) to formulate guidelines and regulations for the nomination of candidates for election into public offices at all levels. It also gives details of those to be responsible for the preparation for and conduct of such congresses including those who are eligible to vote. In the instant case i.e. 2014 governorship primary election, the guidelines contained the following noteworthy provisions in order to ensure the observance of internal democracy; Gubernatorial Screening Committee, Gubernatorial Screening, Appeal

Committee, State Electoral Panel, Procedure for voting, Gubernatorial Electoral Appeal Panel.

The former Acting State Secretary at the time in question stood in for OlaOluwa Gani, the State Chairman of the party during the 2014 governorship primary. While responding to the interview questions on behalf of the then chairman, he stated *inter alia*:

The elaborate procedure prescribed by the party were followed in the 2014 governorship primary election, culminating in the emergence of the PDP candidate then. Internal democracy was transparently demonstrated during the primary election and the emergence of the candidate cannot be faulted.

The former the national secretary of the party supported the aforementioned claim. In the contrary, a former state secretary claimed that the 2014 primary was a sham.

Any claim of observance of internal democracy in its conduct, can be likened to saying that an individual is well fed simply because he/she has a variety of food stuff at home while refusing to cook or eat. In a

community full of crimes, can the people be said to be law abiding simply because they have laws that prohibit crime in their statute books? Granted that we have these provisions to guarantee internal democracy, the strategic operators of the system frustrated its implementation and those who get aggrieved due to such frustration seek self-help.

He then narrated his experience:

I was the state secretary of the party before the 2014 governorship primary election. By virtue of paragraph 46(1) of our constitution, I exercise the same functions at the state level, as the national secretary exercises at the national level. Among these functions is the keeping of all records of the party and in the case of primary elections and congresses, such records include delegates' lists. It is true that our party has detailed provisions in its constitution and other guidelines to ensure internal democracy. However, a particular aspirant in that

primary wanted to win at all cost and that meant subverting those provisions. Prospective delegates were put on secret oaths to vote for the aspirant in question. This I refused to do. I also refused offers of money from the agents of this aspirant who wanted steps to be taken to facilitate the alteration of delegates lists. When I saw that the forthcoming primary was going to be manipulated, I wrote a petition to the national headquarters to call attention to my observations. The result was that I was suspended as the state secretary for one month, while the primary was only a couple of weeks away. I was suspended on/or about the 10th of March while the primary was to hold 5th of April. That is what I call strategic manipulation. The rest is history.

The reference to INEC's role was taken up with the INEC official in charge of political parties and primary elections in Osun State INEC office. As far as this official was concerned:

INEC only observes par-

ties' primaries and congresses to ensure that the provisions of the Electoral Act are complied with. Parties make their own rules governing their own primary elections. The role played by INEC is to ensure that parties obey their own rules. Once they follow their own procedures INEC is satisfied. As for PDP, they have very good provisions to guarantee internal democracy, but it is common knowledge that they always manipulate their own rules. When this happens, there is nothing that INEC can do, since they own the delegates list which is like INEC's voters' register.

A respected leader of the party from Osun East Senatorial District feels that:

it ought to have been clear to the party that the then candidate, that the primary was manipulated for was going to lose the election, and that the primaries should not have been manipulated in his favour. The same individual had, in earlier times, benefit-

ted from the generosity of party members who voted him to become a senator even while he was in prison and had no opportunity to campaign; but showed no gratitude to the teeming party members especially through thank you visits when he got out of prison. His violent propensity coupled with high level manipulation subverted the intention of the party's regulations to guarantee internal democracy, and party members as far as I know, showed their discontent at the ballot box.

From available evidence on the 2014 PDP governorship primary election in Osun State, the following could be deduced, the primary election was marked by internal conflicts, with violence and manipulation influencing the process despite constitutional provisions for democratic procedures. The removal of the state secretary and intimidation tactics contributed to major disruptions, leading to the exit of key party members, including late Senator Isiaka Adeleke, who later won a senatorial seat under APC. Ultimately, the PDP candidate who emerged from the contentious primary lost the governorship election, highlighting the long-term impact of internal party struggles.

The governorship primary election of 2018

The PDP governorship primary election of 2018 was generally expected to be smooth by most party members. This optimism was informed by the fact that, the generality of members felt that the exit of Senator Iyiola Omisore from the party, meant an end to arm twisting and the dawn of a new era in primary elections since he was perceived as the king, and only kingmaker, in the party. His reputation gives credence to this assertion especially as he recorded his first senatorial victory while in prison. Indeed, that Senator Iyiola Omisore left Osun PDP for the forces against which he was in contention, remains a mystery to some observers as he was expected to eventually win the war of wits in the two years of congress controversy that engulfed Osun PDP.

A former state chairman of the party, explained the events leading to the primaries.

When the state executive called for aspirants to signify their intention to contest the 2018 governorship election, the field was crowded with about sixteen (16) individuals. Among them were: Hon. Albert Adeogun, Prof Adeolu Durotoye, Dr

Ayoade Adewopo, Barr Kayode Oduoye, Akogun (Dr.) Lere Oyewumi, Senator Segun Bamgbetan, Senator Kola Ogunwale, Hon Adejare Bello, Senator Akinlabi Olasunkanmi, Senator Ademola Adeleke, Barr. N.O. Oke (SAN), Alhaji Fatai Akinbade, Waliyu Adebayo Oladosu, Hon Gbenga Owolabi, Dr Akin Ogunbiyi and Engr. Jide Adeniji. The state executive promised a level playing ground in the process and that every interested person will have the opportunity to contest.

These aspirants became the main financiers of party programs, while each expected that he will clinch the ticket. As financial commitment grew into hundreds of millions of naira, the list of aspirants started to dwindle. He stated further that:

Senator Ademola Adeleke was nominated as the party's candidate while Dr. Akin Ogunbiyi immediately protested that his votes were stolen. A divisive and highly acrimonious post primary election conflict immediately ensued. Several individuals and groups went to court to challenge

the result, and one of the most outstanding grounds of this challenge was that the candidate, Senator Ademola Adeleke did not possess the required minimum qualification to contest as governor. This was in addition to the challenge of votes stealing levelled by Dr. Akin Ogunbiyi. The conflict continued right into the election, which the party was declared to have lost.

The office of the National Organising Secretary (NOS) of the Party, is responsible for organizing primary elections. This confirmed that, in picking governorship candidates in Osun PDP as in other states of the federation, party guidelines are issued from the national headquarters of the party. A 2018 Governorship aspirant maintains however that,

the guidelines are normally read side by side with conventional practices of the party in the state. Hence the party talks of C & C, i.e. Constitution and Convention. The way the C & C works in Osun PDP is that, on this matter, the state party chairman functions only as the eye of elders of the party.

He is expected to identify suitable, sellable and credible aspirants for the state elders to deliberate upon, from whom, trusting his judgment, a candidate will be picked and put forward for the process of primary election. I adopted this approach when I was the State Chairman of the Party. With the backing of late Chief S.M Afolabi, who we all accepted as a credible central leader, we picked a candidate and won the election. In using this approach, we lay all information on the table. We do not intimidate, we do not manipulate and we do not impose. We negotiate with everyone involved.

The party elders interviewed in this work confirmed that:

In 2018 primary election, it was Senator Ademola Adeleke that the state chairman told the elders to endorse, only for him to move the machinery of the party in support of Dr Akin Ogunbiyi later without getting back to the elders. It is rumoured that the state chairman in the first instance drew the Adeleke

family into the governorship race with a promise to give Senator Ademola Adeleke the ticket, only for him to reverse his decision in favour of Dr. Akin Ogunbiyi at the last minute without further consultation with the state elders. This about turn is what led to the allegations of bribery later levelled against him. Meanwhile, the matters raised in the court litigations against Senator Ademola Adeleke had exposed him to so much public ridicule such that his supporters and those of Dr. Akin Ogunbiyi still do not see eye to eye long after the elections. Even now all efforts at bringing both of them together continue to fail.

The facts which emerge from the 2018 Osun PDP governorship primary election, are that the party provided guidelines to uphold internal democracy, and unlike previous elections, aspirants did not experience intimidation or blackmail. However, party elders believed the state chairman mishandled the exercise due to personal interests, leading to internal discord and a damaged candidate image. Ultimately, the resulting conflict contrib-

uted to the party's loss in the election.

2. Assessing the impact of these strategies on electoral victory in 2023 Osun State gubernatorial election.

With 1,887 votes, Senator Ademola Adeleke won the governorship primary in the 2022 PDP primary election in Osun State, which was held in Osogbo City Stadium (Abubakar, 2022). However, since Dotun Babayemi won a parallel primary election at the WOCDIF Centre with 1,781 votes, this does not disprove that there is internal strife within the party (Vanguard News, 2022). Significant intra-party conflict resulted from the official party committee rejecting Babayemi's claim and acknowledging Adeleke's triumph. The Osun State High Court granted an injunction and revoked the procedure that resulted in Babayemi's candidature as the crisis worsened. Some disgruntled party members, such as Prince Adeogun, a former member of the Ife Constituency House of Representatives, and Hon. Wale Ojo, a former senatorial chairman, left the party after Adeleke emerged as the PDP flag bearer. These defections underscore the lingering division within the party. A former state secretary, during this interview asserted that:

There has been a protracted conflict result over the

issue of who will be the candidate, it was a split over from 2018 congress, then the issue of who will be the candidates, congresses and all, caused a big gulf within the party, so there were those they call the Adagunodo group and Sunday Ibis group. Sunday Ibis was the former publicity secretary of the party whose faction was backing the Adeleke dynasty, while the Adegunodo group were backing the other segment who later emerged and adopted Dotun Babayemi. But along the line when the national headquarters found that they could not reconcile all the group, they dissolved the state executive and brought in a care-taker executive headed by a non-Osun Indigene, it was under the leadership Dr. Akindele Adekunle from Ondo State. who was supposedly neutral. Invariable I will say that the use of an external agent was what helped to a large extent to pull several people together from the wearing factions. Secondly, the nation

headquarters take decision to support a candidature of the person they felt will win the election, because election has become money in Nigeria and they needed to assess what is your purse, you must have a deep pocket, and they decided to concede it for Adekele. It was purely the intervention of the National headquarters who brought a neutral care-taker chairman and a neutral care-taker secretary.

He further stated that:

Unlike some other people who came to Osun State to broker peace, The care-taker chairman that was sent by the national working committee after the 2022 primary election demonstrated reconciliation and approachable style, he mediated on the internal crises by fostering respect and acceptability, as far I know to all a sundry, he wanted to ensure a successful outing, I for one for instance, he dealt with me in a cordial manner than our colleagues members here that were indigenes, so that was a strategy that brought

people together.

This strategy appears to have been aimed at bridging divides, promoting a sense of belonging, and ensuring collective participation in the parties' activities. This aligned with the Habermas theory of Communicative Action which is of opinion that, in all conflict situations, the process of peaceful settlement must be transparent, procedural rules must be clear and un-ambiguous, open and known to all parties in disputes at all times.

Conclusion

The study reviewed that absence of internal democracy within Osun State PDP triggered intra-party crises in the 2014, 2018, and 2022 governorship primaries, while violence, intimidation, and manipulation of party rules played a major role. Although, the party has constitutional provisions for free and fair elections, but their inability to apply these provisions intensified conflicts which made some key members to exit the party. However, the national working committee adopted another strategic approach in managing their conflict before the 2023 gubernatorial election, by appointing neutral officials that mediated on the conflict. This prioritized electoral viability, eventually securing victory for the party in the 2023 gubernatorial election. The study recommends that if Political parties will attain electoral victory, especially if there is in-

ternal conflict, there is a need for them to apply a management strategy that will bridge divides, promote a sense of belonging, and ensure collective participation in the parties' activities.

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