

Intra-party conflict and conflict resolution mechanisms within the two dominant political parties in Ghana

Abdullah Tamimu Belko

Institute of Social Science, Istanbul Commerce University Örnektepe Mah. İmrahor Cad. No: 88/2
Beyoğlu/Istanbul

E-mail: tamimbarry@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The efforts to develop democracy and political party systems in Ghana and in most part of the African continent which have been witnessing a plethora of intra-party conflicts has undergone several transformations which made the intra-party conflicts occurring within the political parties gained certain criticality. This paper would explore the patterns of conflicts and cooperation within the two dominant political parties in Ghana's fourth republic democratic dispensations, capitalizing on how the parties keep their unity and why they conflict. Having considered political parties as an endogenous product of both intra-party and inter-factional competitions, greater focus would be on the party's organizational structures and the inbuilt mechanism for conflict resolutions. The paper is based on a single country case study which embraces several instances of intra party conflicts within the rank and files of the two dominant political parties in Ghana's fourth republic. It revealed that the inefficiency of the disciplinary committees within the political parties to amicably settle the grievances within the parties in conjunction with the gross deficiency of internal democracy are the main culprits that explain the internal conflicts within the two dominant political parties in Ghana.

KEYWORDS: Political parties, intra-party conflicts, party structures, conflict resolutions, intra-party democracy.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper would explore the patterns of conflicts and cooperation within the two dominant political parties in Ghana's fourth republic democratic dispensations, capitalizing on how the parties keep their unity and why they conflict. Having considered political parties as an endogenous product of both intra-party and inter-factional competitions, greater focus would be on the party's organizational structures and the inbuilt mechanism for conflict resolutions.

Many scholars in the field of political science focused on the assumption that political parties are unitary actors, and most studies capitalized on this notion as the unit of analysis. That's notwithstanding, political parties play vital roles in representative democracies, parties mobilize and interact together within the electoral market as well as in the legislative circles in their quest for maximizing votes and coalitions.

Political parties in their quest for maximizing their rewards engage both cooperative processes (e.g. building coalitions) and conflict processes (even the most cohesive coalition's face internal strife). Hence, the contention here has to do with the dynamics of intra-party conflicts in conjunction with intra-party democratic principles vis-à-vis the organizational structures of political parties when it comes to handling and resolving internal conflicts.

The conflict dynamics within political parties is a real world puzzle which would help us to understand the trends, nature and the genesis



of such conflicts as well as the inbuilt mechanism employed by the political parties in handling such conflicts.

Political parties have been acknowledged as the forces that shaped democracy in Ghana (Debrah and Gyima Boadi 2005). Political parties made it possible for voters to make choices amidst divers competing programs and ideologies driven by the parties manifestoes and campaign messages. That notwithstanding, political parties in Ghana also provided a legislative cohesion and are also responsible for the mobilization and the entrenchment of political education and also served as a platform for recruiting and training party members and leaders in Ghana. Ghana returned to competitive politics in 1992 after the long decades of experimentations with varying political forms. The fourth republic of Ghana was marked by two important democratic landmarks. First, the fourth republic constitution has witnessed a relatively stable period of democratic continuity and the efforts towards changing Ghana into a functional liberal democracy. An instance central to this development is the regular conduct of national elections which led to the peaceful alternation of political power among the dominant political parties thus the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic party (NPP). Second, irrespective of the roles of political parties in the consolidation of democracy in Ghana, their inner circles are plagued and bedeviled with internal conflicts and factionalism which in most cases leads to party split and decamping.

The paper is based on a single country case study which embraces several instances of intra party conflicts within the rank and files of the two dominant political parties in Ghana's fourth republic. It focuses on the fourth republic democratic dispensations in

Ghana initiated after the introduction of the 1992 constitution.

2.0 Causes of Intra-Party Conflicts

Firstly, it must be said that conflicts are inevitable in any sphere of human collaboration and interference. As Toyin (2014: P. 248-268) observed that in political struggle, when men and organizations are in conflict they tend to employ different kinds of weapons. During intra-party conflicts, it is sure that some factionalism will occur that is party members may take sides and when this happens; the party is on its way to self-destruction.

Sartori (1976) further adds that factionalism which has often been seen as sources of intra-party conflicts do occur when power groups within the party are totally devoted to manipulation of power in decision-making. In the opinion of Gupta (1979), factionalism in political parties can be attributed to the existence of factional groups in a given political party whose *raison d'être* is competition over the material resources within the party. He also claimed that factions within political parties are inevitable irrespective of the political system of the day. However, this paper is contending that the absence of a viable crisis management and conflict resolution mechanism, within political parties answers to most of the reasons why intra-party conflicts escalate. The causes of intra party conflicts can be classified into two categories based on the nature and mode of manifestations of the conflict. The possibility of intra-party conflict and its origin can be juggled between two key contrasting concepts thus; Factionalization and Party Cohesion as well as Party Unity and Elite Bargaining.

2.1 Factionalization and Party Cohesion



Significantly, intra-party disputes have been influenced by the relationship between leaders, middle-level activists and party members on a radical level (Zariski, 1965). This, in turn poses a challenge to party unity in general (Rahat et al, 2008; Katz, 2001) and such occurrences in legal conflicts lead to the removal of some candidates who have pioneered negative influences over the political parties; resulting in the mistrust among members, breaking the unity of the party as a whole, and intense animosity in the party (Adetula 2016).

That notwithstanding, most of the arguments under this category pointed to the existence of patronage-clientele's relations and corruption within political parties as the bases through which conflicts manifest.

Okonkwo and Unaji (2006) employing the observation and secondary data as a methodology concluded that intra-party conflicts in Nigeria is largely caused by favoritism, unequal sharing of resources and the lack of centralized authority which in turn paved way for an ideological in-play of policies, as it was also captured in the works of Shale and Matlosa (2008:13).

That notwithstanding, Rubin et al (1994) agreed with Shale and Matlosa (2008) on the assertions that intra party conflicts are caused by the existence of favoritism and imbalance in resource allocations within the party, but went on to contradict them on the third component, for him intra party conflict is caused due to the existence of excessive concentration of power at the Centre instead of the lack of it as argued by Shale and Matlosa (2008). In the same vein Okonkwo and Unaji (2006) concluded that in Nigerian politics, key issues such as that of weak institutions within the political parties makes it very porous for internal wrangling's to manifest with a slightest disagreement and such disagreements can generate factions

within the party if measures not taking. Similarly, in their work Ichino and Nathan (2012) also outlined the frequent instances of vote buying, clientelism, patronage-driven expenditure; high priority on immediate gains over party policies, candidate's self-financiers among others is what leads to internal conflict in emerging democracies.

On the contrary, Chabol and Daloz (1999) and Lindberg (2003), focusing on party leadership in explaining this, they claimed that when party leaders are corrupt and focus on stealing from the poor, while building on their power. These political leaders take advantage of the political power to grant friends and families' offices and positions. In the end, these leaders create a situation where the powerful and the weak exist, something that Clapham (2003) describes as patron-clientelism.

These leaders in return for the benefits allotted to friends and families, they receive immense support in return that helps legitimize their political positions. The support goes a long way in influencing decision-making, which largely leads to factional alignments especially, when going for political party positions. The cycle continues, where the beneficiaries use their provided resources to assist their allied political leaders to gain political mileage. In the end, according to Thomson (2010) and Clapham (2003), allowing political leaders to take full control of the political activities.

However, Mitchelitch (2010) denoted that factional disparities in growing democracies and their anticipation towards partisanship are expectant to the resources they would potentially have access to given the clientele nature within the party and these deepens the cracks in the party for it mostly breeds unfairly competitions within the party. In line with this Sartori (1971) over emphasized on the role of patronage, asserting that factions



of principles retains ideological elements only for its instrumental purposes and that at the long run they would transform to factions of interest, Better (2005) shared the same view. While Passigli (1972) argued on the contrary that factions of convenience might comply or violate the ideological framework only when their leaders mandate is falling. Having discussed the patron-client trap above, it's worth noting that the distribution of resources or 'sharing the national cake' as it's called is very pivotal to either strengthen or separate political parties. According to Zariski (Kollner and Basedau, 2005, p. 1-27 cited Zariski, 1960: 33) party heads are supposed to follow the normative vision of the party so that at the end everyone achieves the same objective and feels the same level of happiness. However, unfortunately, things get really complicated when the party heads apply apathy and prefer to divert the party's resources to their constituencies that is prioritizing them at the expense of the other party members. He thinks that this could generate a fuse which might lead to an explosion.

Köpke (2018) argues in favor that keeping the majority or the best resources to ones 'self might lead to a revolt within the party and if the internal rules and regulations are not properly regarded, it could lead to a breakaway of the members. Even though it is obvious that political parties in Asia, Africa and some parts of South America are very heterogeneous in nature considering their ethnic, tribal and religious diversities which mostly influence patronage and clientele's relations, none of the above arguments captured that.

2.1.2. Party Unity and Elite Bargaining

Taking into account the conflict behavior as a bargaining process provides a clear path to the bargaining challenges party elites

encounter. In a multiparty setting, the challenges in bargaining occur when the party elites need to agree with a parliamentary process. However, actors or stakeholders still need to agree on account of the most applicable terms that represent them fully (Sjöblom 1968, P. 272). For the purpose of clarity, the bargaining challenge can be clustered into two groups, thus; (i) the interaction challenge in a party and (ii) the party's bargaining power.

Apparently, the relations in a party can be affected by core extreme conflicts of interests and individual differences in the party. However, for the primary objective of this thesis, where the main attention is directed towards the excessive conflicts of interests, the intra-party conflicts is used to imply to intra-elite, (for example, in the parliamentary group) and the follower of the elite (for example elite contra party associates) conflict that arise from a union that leads to the destruction of the party's unity and strength. Hirschman (1970) in his seminal work highlighted that the operational framework, which brings about internal tension, as an intra-party conflict, entail the following: (i) the perception of the elites of the intra-party rivalry as a move to alter their union's action and (ii) the trends of the organizational decline, for example, the withdrawing of party associates.

However intra-elite disputes may be characterized by a rise in the number of resignations by the elite group with the exit and voice alternative available or even by disagreements in parliamentary proceedings, and appeals directed to elite associates with the aim of transforming the party approach, for example, the voice alternative.

Whiles bargaining power in this sense implies the ability of a party to foster cohesion among its associates. Schelling (1960) asserted that creating a strong unity bond in a party boosts



the value of its actions, for example, when carrying out threats from an intra-party perspective, the authority of the party is tested to the extent that the elite associates can withstand conflicts and disputes arising in the party. Moreover, in the parliamentary circles, the voice and exit alternative have a high impact on the party's ability to bargain. In contradiction to this (Moar,1990; Schneider &Ferie, 2015) also emphasize that dedicating time and resources to address the internal conflicts lowers the elite's bargaining power and command in relations to the elite's views on the validity of the threats offer a correct outline of the intra and inter party changing forces. However, it can be argued that in rare cases, the elites who continue to experience conflicts employ strategic approaches and countermeasures in the parliamentary process to provide the best solution or the bargaining challenges experienced. In this regard, they will have to foster party unity, which would help build on the much-needed cohesion.

On the contrary, Moar (1992) shifting the argument to party leadership argued that, the strong relationships discussed are characterized by the leadership process in the party, how the leadership fosters unity and cohesion in the party and ultimately the impact of these elements on the actions that the party will take. Intra-party relationships not only tag along with a democratic process but also an administrative process. Based on these factors, the institutionalization of the party that influences the elite's chance of coping with the internal disputes turns out to be an overruling component in the correlation between the intra-party conflicts and bargaining power. Interestingly, this argument neglected the impacts of the organizational frameworks of political parties within which the party elites function as a variable in a correlated behavior.

Sven Groennings, a leading scholar in party conflicts, indicates that the strength of an organization helps enhance the power of a party as a coalition player. When a party is more united, it has high chances of remaining strong in an alliance. A priori hypothesis that, a party became weak as a result of a factional dispute will experience challenges creating a coalition policy, leads to the hypothesis that, the higher the disputes in a party, the lower the likelihood to unite, even when the disputes is not related to the coalition policy. (Groennings 1968; Panebianco 1988) argued that a party with a weak central power can easily coalesce with another party having the same features than a party with controlled set of principles and rules, tagged along with the reasoning that a well-unified alliance can pose a major threat to the weak party union.

However, most of the arguments above centered mostly on party coalition formations within parliament in their quest to understanding intra party conflicts in parliamentary bargaining, and surprisingly neglected the role of the grass root within a party as most of their argument focused on party elite and bargaining as a unit of analysis and this render their explanation of internal conflicts within political parties very narrow. That notwithstanding majority of the literature also investigated the causes of factionalism, addressing the topics analyzing the role played by patronage-clientelism, party leadership and party resources as well as their impacts on coalition bargaining as the culprits for the existence of conflicts within political parties. Although a handful of them acknowledge the role of intra-party conflict management, none of the literature paid much attention to it as well as how it would affect the degree of internal conflicts within the party.

Summing up, despite extant scholarly works dealt with the root causes and examined the



implications of intra-party conflicts. Many studies addressed the topic analyzing the roles played by membership engagements and relations within the political parties in their day to day functions and their quest for maximizing payoffs.

This current study is in the contention that, the lack of prudent conflict resolution mechanism and the non-existence of intra-party democratic principles within the structures of political parties largely explain why internal conflicts occur within political parties. Substantially, this current study will explore the general patterns and the dynamics of conflict and cooperation process within political parties and how they are impacted by intra-party democracy and the conflict resolution mechanism within the parties.

3.0 Discussion and Findings

The introduction of democracy in Ghana during the post-colonial period came with the formation of political parties with different ideologies, mostly motivated by Eastern and largely Western political ideologies. Apart from this in the case of Ghana and most cases in post-colonial Africa, the development of party systems was born out of the struggles towards the end of colonialization and the high growth of tensions among national movements like the Aborigines Rights Protection Society in 1898. Through this movement, political parties such as The United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) was formed.

Dr. Kwame Nkrumah broke away from the UGCC to form the Conventions People Party (CPP) which stood the elections and succeeded in gaining political independence for Ghana. After independence, the party system in Ghana has been witnessing some modifications and transformations which are as the results of military coups and interruptions in democratic processes within

the country an instance which mostly led to political instability. In 1992, Ghana regained its multi-party democratic status after the ban on multi-party democracy following the pressure mounted on the then PNDC by pro-democracy activist groups.

It has to be noted that the constitution in 1992 did not only use in multi-party democracy, it also criminalized the establishment of a one party and also any form of unconstitutional overthrow of a democratic government. Even though, multiple parties participate and contest elections in Ghana only two dominant parties thus the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) have been alternating power throughout the Fourth Republic and this made them very powerful. However, even though those two political parties dominate the political landscape of Ghanaian politics it is worth emphasizing that they face a lot of internal managerial problems which sometimes lead to instances of conflicts.

Even though some of the conflicts which occur within this political parties can lay claims on instances like the deficiency of inter-party democracy, patron-client relations, the paucity of ideology, ethnic related issues and party leadership as the cause of conflicts within this political parties. I contend that majority of these conflicts occur due to the managerial structures of the parties and their attitudes and capabilities towards conflict management with the parties.

In view of this, the research would include the structure, the organizational characteristic and membership drive of the two dominant political parties in Ghana's Fourth Republic in understanding intra-party conflict dimensions as well as the inbuilt mechanisms for resolving such conflicts.



3.1 Organization Structure of the two Dominant Parties (NPP and NDC)

The constitution of the NDC made provisions regarding its membership and executives. The party hierarchy at the national level is headed by the party's Chairman, two vice-chairpersons, the general secretary, a national organizer, a research officer, national treasurer, women's organizer, men's organizer, youth organizer and a propaganda secretary at the nation office in Accra. That notwithstanding the party structure nationwide consists of the National Executive Committee, the Regional Executive Committee, and the district coordinating committees, the constituency committees and the ward committees.

The NDC executive staffs mostly run on voluntarily basis with the exception of the drivers, secretaries and bodyguards even though the party sometimes compensates them from time to time. The (NDC Constitution, 2005) mandates the NES with the functions of carrying out the policies and programs of the party as well as the duty of presenting to the National Assembly the outline of the party activities and account statements. The party also throughout its regional branches made provisions of Council of Elders, disciplinary committees and some other bodies such as the Tertiary Educational Institution Network, the *Varanda* boys and girls youth clubs.

Even though the executives in the party from the national level through to the ward are elected through elections, the power of the candidate approval is rested within the NEC. They have representations and offices across all the ten regions in the country. The regional structure of the party is same as that at the National level, it is made up of five executives, the chairperson, the vice-chairpersons, the secretary, an organizer, a

women's organizer, men's organizer, youth organizer and a propaganda secretary.

The regional executives are elected at the National Congress in an electoral college made up of five members from each constituency consisting of executives and party members within the region. The party structure at the constituency level is also headed by the constituency chairperson followed by a vice-chairperson, a secretary, an organizing secretary, a men's organizer, a women's organizer, a youth organizer, paid staffs (drivers and bodyguards) and volunteers. It must be also noted that the mode of selecting the executives at the constituency level also follows the same model as in the national and regional, the only difference is that the participations in the primaries at the constituency level is restricted to only selected members in most cases the chairperson of the ward within the constituency.

However, the criteria for selecting a parliamentary at constituency level differ from that of the party executives. Article 43 of the NDC constitution posits that before a candidate be accepted to contest as a parliamentary candidate on the ticket of the party, first of all that candidate has to be a member of the party residing in the constituency, be without a criminal record and to be of sound mind. That is withstanding the aspiring has to file a nomination which is mostly opened a month and after the candidate then go under the vetting to determine whether the candidate is qualified or not, and after all this then the primaries among the contestants is organized with an electoral college consisting of two members from each polling station within the constituency. Below him constituency structure of the party is the zone-level party organization, made up of the ward and the grass root membership bank of the party.



The structure here is made up of a chairperson, a secretary, a women’s organizer, a youth organizer and a treasurer and their mode of selection into office follows the same procedures as that of the National, Regional and Constituency Organizational structures of the party.

Whiles the organizational structure of the NPP stipulated in its constitution which vested some powers and functions to certain membership portfolios. The procedures for electing party executions in various positions and offices within the party are enriched in the article 5(2) of the party’s constitution.

The party is structured base unit, constituency, overseas, regional and national. The mode for appointing members to the various positions within this structure is through elections (primaries) which takes place once annually. The national level of the party is occupied by National Executive Committee (NEC) which is made up of the Chairperson, three vice-chairpersons, a national general secretary, a national organizer, a communication officer, electoral research officers, a *nasara* coordinator, men’s organizer, women’s organizer and youth organizers, all these members are stationed at the national headquarters of the party (NPP Constitution, 2009, Article 9).

The NEC controls the national affairs of party and in line of their actions they delegate some of the functions to the regional executives within the ten regions of the country and the regional executives then also delegate the authority to the constituency executives with 230 constituencies in the country.

Beside all these structures within the party, the article 14 of the NPP constitutional also made provisions for some structures such as the National Youth Wing and the Tertiary Educational Schools Congress and some regional constituency and unit wings such as the Young Elephants. That is

notwithstanding, in the article 15 of the party’s constitution made provision for the national Council of Elders with the structure of the organization.

The decision making within the party is manned by selected committees such as the finance, national executives, constitutional, organizational, research, disciplinary and vetting committees. The party only makes salary provisions for staff such as secretaries and drivers. Apart from that all the other members within the party hierarchy from the national level through to the unit level of the party are engaged on voluntary basis. The comparable analyses of the two parties are summarized in Table 1.

**Comparable Analysis of the
Organizational Structure of the NPP and
NDC**

NPP	NDC
National Executive	National Executive
Chairperson	Chairperson
Vice-chairpersons	Vice-chairpersons
General secretary	General secretary
Treasurer	Research Officer
National Organizer	Treasurer
Communications Officer	National Organizer
<i>Nasara</i> Coordinator	Communications Officer
Electoral/Research Officer	Women’s Organizer
Women’s Organizer	Men’s Organizer
Men’s Organizer	Youth Organizer
Youth Organizer	Propaganda Secretary
Council of Elders	National Council
Disciplinary Committee	Council of Elders
Finance Committee	Disciplinary Committee
Paid Staff	Finance Committee
Volunteers	Paid Staff
	Volunteers

<p>Regional Level</p> <p>Chairperson Vice-chairpersons Regional Secretary Regional Organizer Communications Officer <i>Nasara</i> Coordinator Electoral/Research Officer Financial Secretary Women’s Organizer Men’s Organizer Youth Organizer Council of Elders Disciplinary Committee Finance Committee Paid Staff Volunteers</p>	<p>Regional Level</p> <p>Chairperson Vice-chairpersons Regional Secretary Regional Organizer Treasurer Women’s Organizer Youth Organizer Propaganda Secretary Council of Elders Disciplinary Committee Finance Committee Paid Staff Volunteers</p>
<p>Constituencies</p> <p>Chairperson Vice-chairpersons Secretary Organizing Secretary Treasurer Women’s Organizer Youth Organizer Disciplinary Committee Paid Staff Volunteers</p>	<p>Constituencies</p> <p>Chairperson Vice-chairpersons Secretary District Organizer Propaganda Secretary Treasurer Women’s Organizer Youth Organizer Disciplinary Committee Paid Staff Volunteers</p>
<p>Unit/Wards</p> <p>Chairperson</p>	<p>Unit/Wards</p> <p>Chairperson</p>

Vice-chairpersons	Vice-chairpersons
General Secretary	General Secretary
Treasurer	Treasurer
Ward Organizer	Ward Organizer
Women’s Organizer	Women’s Organizer
Youth Organizer	Youth Organizer
Disciplinary Committee	Disciplinary Committee

Source: compiled from the constitutions of both parties.

Despite the similarities that exists given the two parties policy initiatives, structure and organization, a phantom of differences are obvious and worth discussion.

4.5. Administrative Deficit and its Impacts on the Political Parties

Political parties and their leadership despite their effort to strengthen administrative structures, is highly made impossible given the type of politics they engage in their quest for support and votes, and this accordingly created challenges within the system of the other parties. Narrowing on Ghana, a close study of the managerial and organizational criteria of political parties in itself answers why there are existence of quantum administrative setbacks within the political parties especially when it comes to the situations of handling intra-party conflicts. Hence, these administrative challenges faced by the political parties in Ghana can be related to the following:

1. The issues of internal democracy which captures topics such as party primaries and corruption.
2. Party conflicts managements, Party membership drives in conjunction with the party organizations.



3. Ideological Paucity and Ethno-regional centered politics.

3.2 Internal Democracy within the Political Parties in Ghana

The central issue in every democratic entity is adjudged on basis of how it shapes and manifests in conforming the administration of the entity in relation to their members, rules and policies.

This thesis is in contention that, the misappropriation and internal administrative problems facing political parties in Ghana generally is due to their failure to continually adhere to democratic practice on instances which manifests through the organizational structures of the parties.

Inter-party democracy denotes the organization and allocation of the power within the frameworks of political parties. Aryee (2002) added that when the policy making apparatus within a party is concentrated in the realms of the ordinary party members it might decrease the chances of power abuse and mishandling by the party officials and totally bare them from exploiting the power advantage at the expense of the ordinary party members.

The deficiency of internal democracy within the political parties in Ghana poses a great challenge to the administrations of those parties especially in the realms of participation and these causes a serious challenge to the management of the parties.

A close observation of the activities of the two dominant political parties in Ghana and their campaign and rally activities in relation to both the 2004 and 2008 election, depicted the subjection of the grass-root members in both parties to practically insignificant roles such as attending political rallies votes mobilizations, hoisting of flags and posters as well as voting. An instance which contradicts the core values if inter party such as the right

for members of a party to freely join or leave parties, contest elections, broad participation in decision making and freely express their view on issues within the party throughout its organizations without fair or favor.

3.3 Leadership selections (primaries)

According to Rahat and Hazam (2001), internal democracy within a political party can be measured through the party's commitments towards the promotion of democratic principles in its internal affairs such as the modes of leadership selections within the party among others. The selection of leaders to occupy the positions within a party is very crucial to the party's organization. The presence of an effective mechanism or system for free and fair selection of leaders within a party develops trust and confident among the party members hence the absence of excessive conflicts over election outcomes. On the other divide, as argued by Ohman (2002), the absence of internal democracy within a party's organization can led to the instances of low voter or membership support given the level of trust and confidence in the system. In conjunction with this Essuman-Johnson (1993) outlined that the major benchmark for internal democracy largely has to do with the criteria for choosing party leaders to occupy positions within the party organization and run the affairs of the party. In the NDC during the national leadership congress which took place in 2000, 2005 and 2006 respectively, demonstrated some instances of undemocratic mishandling of its affairs. In the 2000 elections most of the candidates presented by the NDC were contested by independent candidates who broke out of the party dissenting mostly based on issues relating to election malpractices and bias. The Anlo constituency in the Volta region which is a stronghold of the party, Victor Gbeho a



former minister broke out and stood as an independent candidate against the party's nominee KwasiSowu and won by a wide margin. Ghana Web News (2005), covered that election and political activities were marred by conflicts regarding the selections of candidates, defections, violent confrontations and some instances of harassment and bullying.

Candidates based on their tribal (Ewe and Northerners) and their affiliations to party godfathers (the Rawlings faction and the AhoE divide). This led to the NDC losing its key members through defection and forming new parties such as evidenced by GusiTaanah (NRP), the then national chairman of the party Obed Asamoah resigning at the party's national congress held in Koforidua, followed by national women's organizer Frances Essiam who later joined the opposition and KwakuBaah (Ghana Web News, 2008). That notwithstanding similar instances relating to the lack of inter-democracy also manifested in the NPP which led to the instances of decamping and split (UGM, WeekoBrobbeY) also getting to the elections in 2005 certain cases of independent candidates contesting party nominees were recorded in many constituencies but the notable ones are in Suhum and Bekwai, reasons being that they are the party's stronghold.

3.4 Political Participations and Conflict Dynamics in Ghana

Both the NDC and the NPP have a similar structural problem which manifested differently within the actions and inactions of the parties. Most of the tensions in both parties are directed towards the preference of party elites together with their financiers and godfathers, and their quest to occupy dominant roles at every level within the party structures (Aryee, 2008).

In both parties there are evidence of priority being given to families, relatives and cronies of past political figures from the past administrations within different epochs of the country's political history, reasons being that such figures might come with connections and networks which would favor funding and sympathy from electorates and donors at large. However, the observation of this thesis gathered that, such people instead rise to the status of political godfathers and hence influence every decision and key appointments within the parties. That's notwithstanding, even though the two political parties harbor a growing army of capable members who also have the quest to represent the party in various levels within its structures, evidence has shown that it is almost difficult for them to do so without having any ties with the so called godfathers within the parties especially when the position in question is so sensitive.

Considering primary elections within the two dominant political parties in Ghana, clashes mostly occur when there is any electoral malpractice and irregularity. More so, in most recent cases most of the disagreements in the contexts of primaries and candidate selections within both the NPP and the NDC were charged towards the level of bias when it comes to party executives when it comes to supporting candidates. The party executives who double as the electorates instead of selecting or voting for the best candidate base on merit, they rather vote along their godfather's preferences making it very difficult for ordinary party member candidates to win an election within this two parties, an instance which in most cases results to resistance and clashes at all levels of the party administration.

However, due to the high cost and investments which candidates commit towards their campaigns, they consider any



unfair and undemocratic practices which lead to losing elections as equals to unfair financial loss. That's notwithstanding, in most cases the aftermath of such intra-party primaries mostly ends up with disputes and disagreements concerning both the results and the overall process of the elections.

This thesis gathered that, even though the disputing parties take their claims to the disciplinary committees to be redressed, majority of them prefer to resign from the party instead, and even those who pass through the DC of the parties' evidence has it that they seek redress at the high courts of the country as against the verdicts of the parties DC, considering the nature of godfatherism and judicial bias which interplay even within the confines of the disciplinary committees (Morrison,2004).

As the data from the African Elections Database ,2012 and that of the Ghana Electoral Commission (EC) suggests that, some of the member candidates after being meted with unjust either per the DC verdicts or the outcomes of primary elections resign from the party to contest as independent candidates against their former parties and the plethora of independent candidates to contest in both presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana's political history was recorded in the fourth republic and majority of them came from the two dominant parties thus the NDC and the NPP.

Sum up, this paper demonstrated that, even though political parties are the integral part and hence play a pivotal role in the realization of contemporary democracy, the study also stressed emphatically that in order to realize this political parties have to first of all ensure democratic practices internally. Political parties in Ghana face a lot of internal conflicts and wrangling's due to the absence of internal democratic practices which paved way for instances such as the existence of prevalent

corruption, patron-clientele based politics, ethical and tribal line of politicking, vote buying and election rigging which mostly results to internal conflicts and infightings.

Conclusions

This study has made a postmortem of the two dominant political parties in Ghana's fourth republic -democratic dispensations, examining the internal conflict process of the party's vis-à-vis the internal mechanism for managing these conflicts within the parties, all the trajectories have been carefully examined and discussed in the subsequent chapters. That notwithstanding, this paper demonstrated that, even though political parties are the integral part and hence play a pivotal role in the realization of contemporary democracy, the study also stressed emphatically that in order to realize this the political parties have to first of all ensure democratic practices internally. Political parties in Ghana face a lot of internal conflicts and wrangling due to the absence of internal democratic practices which paved way for instances such as the existence of prevalent corruption, patron-clientele based politics, ethical and tribal line of politicking, vote buying and election rigging which mostly results to internal conflicts and infightings.

However, this thesis having contended that conflict is inevitable in every social group, also explored the conflict resolution mechanism within the two political parties (NDC and NPP) in Ghana, concluded that, most of the conflict cases and grievances channeled through the disciplinary committees of the parties mostly end up in dissatisfaction of the grieved members due to the mistrust they have for the DC they intend challenge its verdicts at the higher judicial courts of the country even though the DCs have rooms for appealing of dissatisfied verdicts. In addition to this, this research also



gathered that intra party judiciary and democracy is very crucial and might be the Achilles heels of incumbent governments and political parties. There are no doubts that the lack of mistrust and hope that party members harbor against their parties regarding how the parties relate to their constitution especially when it comes to the issues of disciplinary nature and this make it common for most of the members and factions breaking away after every DC verdict pronouncement.

This paper also gathered that, the deficiency of internal democratic practices among the two dominant political parties in Ghana made it very difficult for the parties to build consensus after every internal election. Party executives are mostly the culprit suspects accused of going against the laid down rules and proceedings towards the attainment of internal democracy especially when it comes to the primary elections within the parties. The large number of splinter parties, dissent members and independent MPs which contested in the year 2000 and 2008 general elections beats testimony to this.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the course of the research due to some of the findings encountered the following recommendations are offered.

- Political parties must entrench internal democratic practices within their structures especially when it comes to voting and leadership selections within the parties. It has to be noted that intra party democracy don't end at only selecting of leaders or voting but rather includes the general processes of the selections from the printing of the ballot papers, campaigning, candidate registrations, voting and the vetting of the winner. The parties have to ensure that

fairness and equal participations are given to all the candidates irrespective of their gender, ethnic religion or affiliations.

- Aggrieved party members and executives should be encouraged to channel their grievances through the appropriate party structures such as the DCs for redress and advice. The political parties should also ensure that the members occupying the DCs at every level of the party's strata are well equipped and trained on conflict and dispute management and resolution in other to enable them deliver their task effectively without fear, bias or favor from any rank or member executive of the party. That notwithstanding, it would be more logical if the political parties make room for the aggrieved members and factions within the political parties to be able to employ the services of private legal practitioners and solicitors to handle their cases during any DC proceedings. Also, the organizational structure of the DCs should be enlarged to the status of an intra-party tribunals vested with the mandate to whip and judge all cases of grievances and conflicts among members and factions within the political parties from the grassroots to the national levels of the party strata, independent from any form of influence or manipulations from any quarters within or outside the party rather than a mere disciplinary committees controlled by the party's executive committees.
- Political parties should consider creating a form of fixed salary system for their executives and party officers in other to minimize the high rate of

bribery and corruptions that occur in all the ranks of the political parties from the primaries to the DC proceedings, The party financiers and the rich candidates in most cases take the advantage of the lack of fixed salaries for the party officers, this in a way give them the leverage to use their financial power in either buying the support or sympathy of the other party executives who double as delegates in the party's primary elections.

- Apart from the constitutionally recognized branches of the parties, both the NPP and the NDC have some proxy groups such as the “bamba boys”, “bolga bulldogs” and the “invisible forces” all for the NPP, whilst the NDC on the other hand have the “Azoka boys” “varanda boys and girls” and the “serial callers” all for the NDC. This study suggests that all this proxy groups should be incorporated and be integrated within the party's administration so that their activities can be monitored.

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