

Cross-Carpeting, Poverty of Party Ideology and Democratic Paralysis in Nigeria: Focus on the 2019 General Elections

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ABSTRACT

The practice of cross-carpeting appears to have become a trademark of party politics in Nigeria. The magnitude and impudence at which political leaders defect to and from political parties to secure nominations among other selfish interests leave one wondering the place of ideology among political parties and the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. In view of the above, this paper examined cross-carpeting, poverty of party ideology and democratic paralysis with focus on the 2019 General Elections in Nigeria. Content Analytical Design was adopted while the Elite Theory guided the study. Findings revealed that the massive party defections by political gladiators in the 2019 general elections in Nigeria were symbolic as it witnessed in its magnitude, members of the ruling party defecting to the opposition party and vice versa; poverty of party ideology significantly orchestrated the wave of cross-carpeting witnessed in the 2019 general elections; lack of internal party democracy influenced the dimensions of defections in the 2019 general elections; and that the dimensions and impudence at which political leaders defect to and from political parties to secure nominations among other selfish interests paralyzes democracy in Nigeria. Hence, it was recommended that political parties should retrace their ideological bases for the healing and advancement of democracy in Nigeria; political leaders should eschew the cross-carpeting behaviour and channel efforts towards democratic advancement; and there is every need for citizens to withhold support for leaders with self aggrandizement in the guise of cross-carpeting.

KEYWORDS: *Cross-Carpeting, Party Ideology, Democracy, Democratic Paralysis.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The practice of carpet-crossing, defection or party switching appears to have become an undying phenomenon in party politics in Nigeria. Cross-carpeting, otherwise known as party defection, party switching, floor-crossing, party-hopping, canoe-jumping, decamping, party-jumping (Fashagba 2014) is a situation where politicians cross from one political party to the other due to myriad of reasons such as personality clash, power tussles, intra-party conflicts, disagreement on party's position on an issue, realization of one's personal political ambition, and divergent views on the operations of a political party's philosophy or ideology (Awofeso and Irabor, 2016). Nneli (2014) lamented that from 1922 that Nigeria started experimenting with representative and political party democracy, through the rest of the colonial era, First Republic, Second Republic; Third Republic up till the present Fourth Republic, political party defection has been a reoccurring issue within the Nigerian polity. However, since the advent of the Fourth Republic the incidence of defections has taken a wild turn, with politicians jumping boat at will and at the slightest provocation, so much so that there have been individuals who had at different times belonged to at least five different political parties within the same republic. Testifying to the assertion above, Olanrewaju, (2015) averred that Carpet- crossing by Nigerian politicians is dated back to the First Republic particularly in 1951, a decade to Nigeria's independence in the defunct Western Regional House of Assembly. For him, it was an overnight affair when several members of the defunct National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC), led by the late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe decamped to the Action Group (AG), led by late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, purposely to deny Zik and his party, the majority in the Western Region House of Assembly, which he required to form the government in Western Region. With that decamping, AG was able to form the Government in the region. Also, in that same first Republic, another Premier of the that same Western Region of Nigeria, Ladoke Akintola left the then Action Group in a crisis rooted more in personality clash but explained as personal principles and his conviction to advance the Yoruba race into the Nigeria's mainstream politics to form UNDP and enter into an alliance with Northern People's Congress (NPC) (Adejuwon, 2013). Subsequent republics were not exempted from carpet-crossing. For instance, in the old Ondo State during the Second Republic, Akin Omoboriowo, the then Deputy Governor of United Party of Nigeria (UPN) led government of Michael Ajasin defected and joined the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) to become its gubernatorial candidate (Okparaji, 2010).

Explaining this long history and the consolidation of the trend in Nigerian political system, Mbah (2011) cited in Awofeso and Irabor (2016) observed that cross-carpeting has become an increasingly permanent feature in the Nigerian democratic experience. In fact, for over a decade now since the country returned to democratic governance (1999), cross-carpeting has become one of the greatest challenges confronting Nigeria's democracy. The common practice has been for politicians to cross-carpet to other parties with promises of election tickets if they fail to secure party nominations during their own party's primaries. Some who felt disenchanting or denied of a level playing ground, cross-carpeting to participate in the election, with some still having the intention of returning to their parties (Awofeso and Irabor, 2016).

The political calculation in the country took a dramatic turn by 2013 with the formation of the All Progressive Congress (APC) through the merging of four political parties- Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), All Nigerians Peoples Party (ANPP) and Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) - formed just to garner more supporters over the Peoples Democratic Party in the build up to the 2015 general elections (Joseph, 2014), which also coincide with the formation of New PDP (led by a former leader of the party, Kawu Baraje). This development according to Eberé (2014) led to the defection of five former PDP governors- Murtal Nyako (Adamawa); Abdulfatah Ahmed (Kwara), Rabiú Kwankwaso (Kano), Aliyu Wammako, (Sokoto) and Chibuike Amechi (Rivers), to the APC ahead of the 2015 general elections; and the governor of Imo State, Rochas Okorocha in the same vein cross-carpeted from the All Progressive Grand Alliance to the All Progressive Congress (APC). Eleven PDP senators; Senator Bukola Saraki (Kwara Central), Umaru Dahiru (Sokoto South), Magnus Ngei (Rivers South), Wilson Asinobi (Rivers West), Bindawa Muhammed (Gombe Central), Aisha Jummai (Taraba North), Mohammed Ali (Borno South), Mohammed Shaba (Kwara North), Abdulahi Adamu (Nasarawa West) and Ibrahim Abdullahi (Sokoto East), as well as thirty-seven members of the House of Representatives all cross-carpeted from the PDP to APC. Moreover, with the mantle of political power turning to the APC after the 2015 general elections, politicians continued to cross-carpeted to the party in a bid to further their political career (Awofeso and Irabor, 2016).

The 2019 general elections witnessed the highest wave of inter-party defections in Nigeria's political history. On July 24, now known as "Mass Defection Day," 15 senators defected from the ruling All Progressive Congress to the Opposition People's Democratic Party whereas the Senate President, Bukola Saraki also defected a week later, weakening the APC's majority in the National Assembly (Albright Stonebridge Group (ASG 2018). This was a peculiar pattern in Nigeria; in fact, many of those that defected from the APC had previously left the PDP to join the APC during the 2015 campaign cycle. Now, the PDP, as the former ruling party and only viable opposition to the APC in 2019, welcomed back its former members.

At this juncture, one is poised to ask; where is the place of party ideology among Nigerian political parties? In a democracy, political ideologies are the oil that grinds the wheels of successful political parties and their activities. Ideologies serve as the roadmap that guides a party's quest for control of the apparatus of government. It acts as a recipe for dishing out piquant manifestoes to the electorates in a bid to garner their votes during election. Ideology functions as a means of self-identification, as an instrument of conflict management, as a prescriptive formula and as a mobilization and unifying force. Nigerian parties, despite their pretence through party manifestoes, do not have clear cut political ideologies. As a matter of fact, there appears to be poverty of party ideologies among them. Unlike what is applicable in advanced democracy, party ideology is one of the major determinants for the electorates to select the candidate of their choice for any elective positions, in Nigeria, forces of identity particularly, ethnicity and religion, vote buying appear to have taken the place of ideology in Nigerian political system.

The persistency, ubiquity and growth of cross-carpeting in Nigerian political process provide a bleak future on the sustainability of democracy in Nigeria. It appears to have implications on quality of governance, peace, stability and the challenge of sustenance of Nigeria's democracy. One could propose that political party defection also militates against stability in governance in the sense that, it allows for people of different backgrounds to become part of a government. Due to the fact that political party defection is not viewed in the negative light especially by the receiving or favoured political party, individuals of different mindsets, personalities and thus conflicting ideologies are easily accepted into a party and in some cases become part of an existing government regardless of their background which could have some possible impacts on the government of the day.

Statement of the Problem

Political party defection since the 4th Republic has been a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerian politics. Individuals jump boat at will and at the slightest opportunity or provocation, confusing themselves and the electorate with certain laughable reasons for their actions. In 2013, five governors (from Adamawa, Kano, Kwara, River, and Sokoto), 37 representatives and 11 senators left the PDP and joined the All Progressives Congress (APC), giving life to a newly created opposition party. Many of the same individuals that left the PDP in 2013 were the same people who in 2018 returned to the same PDP to the extent

that 15 senators, 37 representatives, and three state governors left the APC and joined other political parties particularly the PDP.

So, why do Nigerian politicians bounce between political parties? Political parties in Nigeria, and in other parts of the African continent, tend to lack ideologies and explicit messages that separate them from each other. Because of the country's tribal, religious and geographic divide, political parties are driven by personalities as opposed to ideologies. For example, in the United States, political parties are defined by their platforms or manifestoes as they are called in Nigeria. As such, if a Republican candidate comes knocking at your door, you have a sense of where he or she stands on the current critical issues (Barnes, 2018). That is not the case in Nigeria

One begins to wonder whether the incessant political party defections in the Nigerian polity would not seriously undermine the concept of ideological politics within the country because if such is in place, individuals like Governor Rochas Okorocha would not have been a card carrying member of about four different political parties (PDP, ANPP, AA and APGA) at different points in time within a space of 11 years (Nwanegbo, Odigbo and Nnorom, 2014).

In a nutshell, one can rightly posit that an ideology succinctly describes what politician stand for, it is his life blood, ideology here refers to that set of economic cum political beliefs strongly held by members of a political party be it People Democratic Party or All Progressive Congress, with which the party hopes to arm itself with in order to tackle socio-economic issues if voted into power. Political parties are just constitutionally recognized platforms for elevating our light-fingered leaders into vantage positions of authority, from where they loot and stash away unquotable figures in Swiss accounts while the masses wallow in penury. The rampant and incessant political party defection could be said to have led to serious strife and the existence of unhealthy politics amongst Nigerian politicians. This is due to the fact that once an individual decamps from one political party to another; his or her hitherto party members perceive him or her as a cheat or an enemy.

It was in view of the background above that this paper was poised to examine the nexus between cross-carpeting, poverty of party ideology and Democratic Paralysis in Nigeria with focus on the 2019 general elections.

Objectives of the Study

This paper generally aimed at examining the nexus between cross-carpeting, poverty of party ideology and Democratic Paralysis in Nigeria with focus on the 2019 general elections. Specifically, the study was aimed at:

1. Determining the factors propelling the incidence of cross-carpeting in Nigerian democracy particularly in the 2019 general elections.
2. Establishing the nexus between poverty of party ideology and cross-carpeting in Nigerian democracy.
3. Examining the effects of cross-carpeting on democratic consolidation in Nigeria.
4. Suggest possible strategies for curtailing the incidence of cross-carpeting in Nigeria

II. METHODOLOGY

The method adopted for the study was content analytical design. Relevant literature on cross-carpeting, party ideology and democratic consolidation in Nigeria were reviewed from available sources, namely; journals, internet materials, newspapers and magazines.

Theoretical Foundation of Analysis

This paper is firmly rooted on the elite theory. The elite theory as popularised by Vilfredo Pareto, Wright Mills among others and Gaetano Mosca in 1968 (Omodia, 2009 cited in Afowose and Irabor, 2014). The elite theory runs contrary to the democratic theory (rule by majority) and proposes that, in every society there exist a few individuals that dominate and rule the society, and who always strive to maintain the said dominance. The core of the elitist doctrine therefore, is that there may exist in any society a minority of the population which takes the major decisions in the society. No doubt virtually explains the Nigerian electoral cum political system, considering the fact that most political parties that exist in the present democratic dispensation could either be classified as cadre or elite parties, which manipulate the sentiments of the masses for the selfish objective of acquiring economic base.

The issue of cross-carpeting in Nigeria could be explained using the elite theory especially when one views it from the view point of James Meisel, cited in Afowose and Irabor, (2014) who in his analysis outlined the consciousness, cohesion and political conspiracy of the elites in every society as the pivotal elements, that has ensured they retain their powers and dominance in such societies. The Nigerian elite, who mainly constitute the political leadership, exhibit the above characteristics as related cross-carpeting in the sense that, they know each other, are properly integrated and always work towards achieving unity in most of their actions, to ensure that they retain power. Therefore, they see political party defection as a veritable tool to be used to ensure the maintenance of their power and hold on the Nigeria society. This probably explains the reason, why majority of

Nigerian politicians either advise themselves or are advised by other elites to decamp at each "necessary" point in time, in order to join the ruling party for example, and ensure that they do not lose power.

Furthermore, cross-carpeting at times comes up as a result of wrangling within a political party structure. Due to the fact that members of the "inner core", who could be likened as the godfathers and patrons within a political party, are the ones who take key decisions and in some cases lord them over, at the lower cadre elites (outer fringes). Situations could be found, whereby some members of the later group would decide to leave a political party due to the activities and domineering attitude of these godfathers in the party.

Conceptual Clarifications

Concept of Cross-Carpeting

There seems to be a lack of consensus among scholars on the concept of cross-carpeting (Omilusi, 2013). Cross-carpeting is known by different nomenclatures such as "party defection", "floor-crossing," "party hopping," "dispute" and "canoe-jumping". On the other hand, defection could be seen as an act of swapping. Thus, party defection is the act of switching from one party to another.. For instance, Fashagba (2014) used the term 'political defection' in place of cross-carpeting. He defined political defection as a situation in which a legislator switched from his original party to run either under another party or as an independent candidate. The definition above though captured the action of cross-carpeting but is shortsighted in the sense that it only referred to legislators being the defectors.

Relatedly, Blunt (1964) as cited in Afowose and Irabor (2014) defined party switching in place of cross-carpeting as any situation in which a member of a legislature who had been elected on a certain party platform changed his political allegiance before a next general election. In this regard, political party defectors are usually regarded as political prostitutes without political principle, morality, conscience and lacking in political ideology to champion the cause of leadership for the wellbeing of the society and political development of the country. Like the preceding definition, Blunt limited defectors to legislators and this is a parochial notion. Of a truth, legislators, executives including the masses cross-carpet.

Concept of Democracy

Although many definitions have been given but there is no agreement on definition. According to Schumpeter (1947) cited in David (2014), democracy means that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to govern them. By this, democracy implies conducting elections and choosing leaders that will represent the majority. Precisely, democracy is seen as a political system that is characterized of periodic and free elections in which politicians arranged into political parties that engage themselves in a competitive polls to ensure a standing government, where the political right will enable all adult citizens (18 years and above as it applied in Nigeria) to vote and be voted for. Furthermore, Huntington (1991) in Mohammed (2016) sees democracy as a political system which is considered democratic because the most popular candidates are chosen through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population are qualified to vote. This promotes political participation of all adult members. The full participation of the people during electioneering gives the new government a legitimate foundation to govern. Any government against this background will not enjoy legitimacy which gives every government a political support from the people because it is deemed rightful since the support emanates from the people. However, if democracy is all about to choose who should govern the people; then, election is one paramount way to select.

Therefore, democracy is seen in this paper as a form of government that has to do with the involvement of the people, in the governing process of their society directly or indirectly through their elected representatives. For a government to be described as democratic, the following tenets should be observable within the polity; supremacy of the law, equality before the law, maintenance of the basic and fundamental rights, free and fair periodic elections, tolerance of opposition, transparency and accountability in governance, freedom of press, high political participation, protection of minority rights and disadvantaged groups and a strong institutional system of checks and balances.

Political Party

Political party is a more or less organized group of citizens, who act together as a political unit and profess or share general opinions on public issues. Members of this group exercise their voting power towards a common end and seek to control the reins of government. By way of definition, Azelama (2002) cited in Badejo and Obah-Akpowoghaha (2015), described a political party as "an organised and registered interest group with a membership that have reconcilable ideas on how the state should be governed, who seek to capture the machineries of government by constitutional means and govern according to their ideas". Highlighting the importance and functions of political parties in a democratic system Omodia and Egwemi (2011), pointed out that "political parties are saddled with the responsibility of recruiting competent individuals for political

leadership through periodic elections, educating the electorate through political rallies and the dissemination of information about government policies as well as, serving as a vehicle for the articulation and aggregation of the interests of the people", thus functioning as the pivot upon which the entire political process revolves. They went further to emphasize that political parties constitute the heart of democracy, for the more vigorous and healthy they are, the better assured is the health of the democratic process and thus, there can be no meaningful democracy, without a proper functioning political party system.

Political Ideology

Political ideology refers to a general term that has within it, terms like ideals, ideas, attitudes, sentiments, slogan; along with varying degrees of commitment to action for the realization of the ideals or ideas. People sometimes view political ideology as the moral basis for the pursuance of their political goals and aspirations. An ideology is basically a philosophy or set of principles that underlies a political program. It consists of the shared beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions that cause a certain group of people to come together and develop advocate specific political programs. Nnoli (2003) cited in Badejo and Obah-Akpowoghaha (2015) observers that ideology is a very crucial aspect of political party, not only by serving as a cognitive structure for looking at society generally and providing a prescriptive formula, that is, a guide to individual action and judgment, but also as a powerful instrument of conflict management, self-identification, popular mobilization and legitimization. The ideologies of a political party are put down in writing called party manifesto (or blueprint or action plan). The manifesto is a statement of the goals and principles the party promises to pursue if voted into power. As a contract with voters, the manifesto spells out the party's perception of the country's problems and states how the party proposes to address problems and help achieve the collective aspirations of the nation if elected. Another essential characteristic of a political party is the membership base. A political party recruits people who are committed to its ideology and principles and who will be able to participate in party governance, policy formulation, and campaigning. Members of parties are able to shape the ideology and policies of their parties (Olanrewaju, 2015).

In a democratically matured climes, political ideologies are the oil that grinds the wheels of successful political parties and their activities. Ideologies serve as the roadmap that guides a party's quest for control of the apparatus of government. Ideologies act as a recipe for dishing out piquant manifestoes to the electorates in a bid to get their votes during election. Ideology functions as a means of self-identification, as an instrument of conflict management, as a prescriptive formula and as a mobilization and unifying force. Nigerian parties, despite their pretence through party manifestoes, do not have clear cut political ideologies (Olanrewaju, 2015); consequently, the parties have found it extremely difficult to emphasize politics of issue. Rather, their mobilizations of population forces have been largely driven by ethnicity, religion and influence of money politics. These forces, more than anything else, also determine the pattern of electoral victory of the parties. In a nutshell, the poverty of political ideology that has come to envelop Nigerian parties over the years, coupled with its attendant crisis and contradiction, has been of dramatic effect not only on the parties, but also on the entire project of national rebirth, integration and sustainable democracy and development. Right from independence, the country has had political parties with ill-defined ideological, rather than improving on the structure of our established political parties, they have continued to diminish political parties in the country.

Interrogating the Place of Party Ideology in the Context of Nigerian Political Parties

Ideology has been regarded as the most important vehicle of any political party and the absence of ideology in Nigerian parties is of great concern (Olaitan, 2014). Political parties are no longer after the doctrine, myths or beliefs; they refuse to offer anything special to differentiate them from other parties (Omoiya, 2012). Corroborating the view above, Eme and Ogbochie (2014) lamented that Nigerian political parties have many similarities than difference, the only difference being their names, logo, people don't go to polling unit with the mind of casting their vote base on party ideology because of lack of substantial political ideology and this factor is aiding the phenomenon of election deviation and vote buying (Awofeso and Olu, 2016).

Unlike what is applicable in advanced democracy, party ideology is one of the major determinants for the electorates to select the candidate of their choice for any elective positions ,in Nigeria, forces of identity particularly, ethnicity and religion ,vote buying appear to have taken the place of ideology in Nigerian political system. Eme and Ogbochie (2014) asserted that Nigeria parties seem to be bereft of clear ideological commitments upon the relegation of politics of issues to the background across the various republics and its place the ascendancy of identity or money politics. Undoubtedly, political party is one of the most complex and critical institution of democracy or what Omotola (2013) called Makers of democracy and neither democracy or democratic society are thinkable without them base on their functions and responsibilities, with the absence of ideological base.

Basically, Nigerian political parties are not driven by any substantial ideologies and the party agendas are *sin qua non* to democratic consolidations, the agendas of parties suppose to influence the decision of the

citizens at the poll but reverse is the case. In Nigeria political system, party ideologies have been bastardised; religion and ethnic sentiment have become fundamental factors. Whatever the case, it is imperative to note that at the very heart of success or failure of political party is the important question of political ideology. The emergent political parties from the mid 1920s reflected the dominance of the nationalist movements by a combination of petit-bourgeois middle class and proletarian strata of the country's social structure yet the logic of competitive party and electoral politics and unfading ethno-federal political structure in the country meant that the emergent political parties must have speculated ideologies as part of their electoral strategies unlike the current fourth republic (Olaitan, 2014).

There were symbiotic relationship between a number of political parties during 1950 and 1960. Although class and ideology division seemed not to have been significantly salient element of social structure of Nigeria, there is a sense in which the emergent party system in the 1950s and 1960 reflected class and ideological differences, most of the Nigerian parties during this period was what might be characterized as elite parties, with the exception of the Northern Element progressive Union (Stanley, 2015). Infact, one can rightly posit that an ideology succinctly describes what politician stand for, it is his life blood, ideology here refers to that set of economic cum political beliefs strongly held by members of a political party be it People Democratic Party or All Progressive Congress, with which the party hopes to arm itself with in order to tackle socio-economic issues if voted into power. Sadly, in Nigeria, political parties are no longer than a cabal of kleptomaniacs who are united by their sordid motives of looting the nation's treasury. Political ideologies are largely alien to Nigerian political parties which are utterly bereft of any modicum of a sense of direction (Aba, 2013), political parties are just constitutionally recognized platform for elevating our light-fingered leaders into vantage positions of authority, from where they loot and stash away unquotable figures in Swiss accounts while the masses wallow in penury. Hence, we have opposition parties who are just groups of disgruntled elements itching to have a bite at the national cake. This lack of ideology and a sense of direction accounts for why carpet-crossing is the order of the day in Nigerian political setting.

The idea of carpet-crossing and counter carpet-crossing that have become the order of the day in Nigerian politics should not be done without due recourse to party's ideology as this will be tantamount to dining with the devil with bare fingers, joining political party should be determined by parties and political ideology. The current political landscape in Nigeria has demonstrated high level of indiscipline and lack of ideology, where politicians change party as if they are changing cloths. The structure of political party has allowed for little democratic space, this indiscipline and lack of clearly defined ideology have not provided for full blown internal democratic practice within parties and if there is any issue that needs to be addressed within all political parties in Nigeria, it has to be the lack of discipline, internal democracy and ideology.

Nigeria's Democracy since 1999: Catalogues of Political Defection

Nigeria's return to democratic governance in 1999 raised optimism that democratic practices and inherent qualities embedded in it would help to fastrack Nigeria's development trajectory. This hope tends to be becoming a mirage. Nigeria since 1999 appears to have been engulfed with series of confrontations, ethno-religious conflict, economic instability, militancy, terrorism and political squabbles. These crisis that rocked major political parties from 1999 till date instigated multiple political party defections in this fourth republic. These defections as noted earlier were mainly to secure party platform or nomination to contest elections. The fact that most of the defectors especially from the ruling parties at the national and state levels later returned to their various parties lend credence to the above assertion. However, there is no indication that the recent exodus in the ruling party would align with what seems to be a noticeable awful character of Nigerian politicians or that there is any "chance of return" at least for now. This is because both defectors and highly placed individuals in the ruling party stand at different extremity with none of them ready to compromise. With this move, number of defection cases has continued to occur and appeared to have overwhelmed the numbers prior to the present republic. . For example, Nigeria's current president, while he was never a member of the PDP, did move between various political parties in his quest to become the number one citizen of Nigeria. In 2003 and 2007, he contested for president as the candidate of the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP). In 2011, he was the presidential candidate of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), which he founded, and in 2015, he won the APC presidential primary in the fall of 2014 and was elected president in the March 28, 2015 elections. Records of the major defections in the Nigeria's political landscape since the commencement of the fourth republic are stated below:

Table 1: Highlight of cross-carpeting from 1999 to 2018 in Nigeria

Name	Initial Party	Party Defected to
Ikedi Ohakim (former governor, Imo State)	Progressive People's Alliance (PPA)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
Theodore Orji (Abia State governor)	Progressive People's	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)

	Alliance (PPA)	
Rochas Okorocha (Imo State governor)	All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA)	All Progressive Congress (APC), prior to this, he has defected to many parties (initially he started as PDP member)
Chris Ngige (former governor Anambra State)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressive Congress (APC)
Achike Udenwa (former governor Imo State)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) (but has returned to People's Democratic Party (PDP)
Chibuike Amaechi (River State governor)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressive Congress (APC)
Chinwoke Mbadinuju (former governor Anambra State)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Alliance for Democracy (AD) (but has returned to People's Democratic Party (PDP)
Alhaji Attahiru Bafarawa (former governor Sokoto State)	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
Muritala Nyako (former Governor Adamawa State)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressive Congress (APC)
Rabiu Kwakwanso (former Governor of Kano State)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressive Congress (APC)
Abdulfatah Ahmed (Governor of Kwara State)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressive Congress (APC)
Aliyu Wamakko (former Governor of Sokoto State)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressive Congress (APC)
Ifeanyi Ararume (Former Gubernatorial Candidate in Imo State)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) (but has returned to People's Democratic Party, PDP)
Isa Yaguda (Former Governor, Bauchi State)	All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
Alhaji Mahmud Shinkafi (former Governor of Zamfara State)	All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
Ibikunle Amosun (Governor Ogun State)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Nigerians Peoples Party (ANPP) to Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) and presently All Progressive Congress (APC)
Segun Oni (Former Governor of Ekiti State)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressive Congress (APC)
George Akume (Former Governor Benue State)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) presently known as All Progressive Congress (APC)
Femi Pedro (Former Deputy Governor of Lagos State)	Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN)	Labour Party (LP)
Segun Mimiko (Governor Ondo State)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Labour Party (LP) but has recently returned to Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
Late Funsho Williams (Former Gubernatorial Candidate Lagos State)	Alliance for Democracy (AD)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
Iyiola Omisore (Former Deputy Governor of Osun State)	Alliance for Democracy (AD)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
Orji Uzo Kalu (Former Governor of Abia State)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Formed, the Progressive People's Alliance (PPA) but has since returned to (PDP)
Saminu Turaki (former Governor of Jigawa state)	All Nigerians Peoples Party (ANPP)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
Atiku Abubakar (Former Vice President)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) but returned to PDP and now in APC
Late Chuba Okadigbo (Former Senate President)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Nigerians Peoples Party (ANPP)

Late Harry Marshal (Former PDP Zonal Leader)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Nigerians Peoples Party (ANPP)
Timipre Silva (Former Governor of Bayelsa State)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressive Congress (APC)
Tom Ikimi (PDP Chieftain)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressive Congress (APC) But has returned to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
Aminu Waziri Tambuwal (former Speaker House of Representatives)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressive Congress (APC)
Dr. Bukola Saraki (Former Senate President)	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)

Source: Adapted with Updates from Nwanegbo, Odigbo and Nnorom (2014)

Highlight of Cross-Carpeting of National Assembly members in the 2019 General Elections

Name	Initial Party	Party Defected to	State
Dino Melaye	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Kogi
Rabiu Kwankwaso	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Kano
Lanre Tejuoso	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Ogun
Shaaba Lafiagi	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Kwara
Rafiu Ibrahim	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Kwara
Barnabas Gemade	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Benue
Abdulazeez Nyako	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Adamawa
Monsurat Sunmonu	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Oyo
Usman Nafada	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Gombe
Suleiman Hunkuyi	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Kaduna
Ibrahim Danbaba	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Sokoto
Ubale Shittu	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Jigawa
Isah Misau	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Bauchi
Suleiman Nazif	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Bauchi
God'swill Akpabio	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressive Congress (APC)	Akwa Ibom

Source: adapted with updates from Barnas (2018)

Understandably, it could be stated that the above zigzag political roaming tends to be permissible specifically for the executive arm of government under the 1999 constitution. Experiences have shown that the general impact on the stability of the system is terribly monumental especially when it disadvantaged the ruling party. For, instance, over several members of the APC P in the National Assembly defected to the PDP. As a result, the APC appeared to have been overwhelmed by the probable loss of its members to the PDP. On its part, the ruling party tends to explain this as heroic, milestone and landmark decision. However, in 2015, defections from the ruling party to the opposition party have generated enormous tensions. The exodus of thirty seven (37) members of House of Representatives and eleven (11) senators from the then ruling party (PDP) was matched with rancor and litigations. Since parties are the creation of the most influential individuals in collaboration with allies, the processes of conducting party affairs and regulating the behavior of members have remained hugely

conflictual. Arguably, it could be stated that the present trend may prosperously augment the size and growth of opposition party, but it is still vague whether this growth could be translated into good leadership or to be sufficient enough to check and condition the action of the ruling party. What is incontrovertible is that both the opposition and government parties are bereft of ideology and are therefore not rooted on any major foundational belief. The fact that both the abandoned and recipient parties are identical in virtually every attributes indicates that the movement may persist yet the leadership gap may correspondingly broaden. In fact, such exodus has remained ubiquitous over the time. The experiences in the first republic and subsequent republics where internal party conflicts resulted to defections lend credence to the above assertion. Essentially, defections in Nigeria have been more conflictual and indeed, seem unable to promote democracy and good governance. This is really one of the predicaments of democracy in Nigeria over a decade.

Factors Propelling Cross-Carpeting in Nigerian Democracy

Lack of viable party ideology in Nigeria is a serious *raison d'etre* for cross-carpeting. The PDP, Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the All Progressive Congress (APC) and among other parties in recent times continues to exert authority with the large numbers of decampers, especially in the battle for supremacy. Of course, these choices could be strongly influenced by a large number of politically motivated reasons. Policy disagreement, politics of godfathers, tribal and regional sentiments and personal conflicts are but a few of such peccadilloes (Bakare, 2013).

Poverty of party Ideology

In time past, we usually witness the occasional parliamentary cross carpeting, but in the present day, it is like a virus. The alarming rate of defects to another party cringes on the lack of strong party political ideology. Political parties in Nigeria are not driven by any ideology other than making money. They all claim to be democratic just to deceive the public. Yes, majority carries the vote, but it must not be a majority made up of zombies or illiterates (Badejo and Obah-Akpowoghaha, 2015). It is obvious that one cannot play honest party politics in Nigeria unless he is ready to discard some principles that may not go well with his party. Unfortunately there are some principles one cannot part with, even after becoming a member of a political party because Nigeria's democracy is still fashioned towards military mentality and tied with regional interest. One may have decided not to lie or be involved in rigging elections. As far as Nigeria politics is concerned, politicians find delight in lies. It is anti-party to proclaim that opposition party is performing well even when it looks so obvious. Despite all pretences to the contrary through their manifestoes, as much as the superficial classifications as the "left" and "right", "progressive" and "conservative", Nigerian parties seem to be bereft of clear ideological commitments. Whatever the case, it is important to note that at the very heart of the success or otherwise of political party is the important question of political ideology (Omotola, 2009 cited in Awofeso and Irabor, 2016). The ideological principle of political parties in Nigeria is all about politics of 'winner takes all' syndrome.

Unscrupulous attitude of Politicians

The unfaithfulness of some politicians to philosophical level of their party is another reason for cross carpeting. In advanced countries, many sign up to one party or the other as students or as young professionals, trade unionists or whatever. And they usually continue to be members of the same party for the rest of their lives. They doggedly stick with their party through thick and thin. They stay despite occasional or regular conflicts with fellow party members. They stay even when they think their party has made mistakes. They stay even if their party does not provide them with the advancement they feel they deserve. According to Okolabah (2011), many stay because they see their parties as the bigger picture and any disappointments or tensions that their parties inflict on them as the smaller picture. This could only have happened in advance countries like US and UK where politicians would never have an illusion of moving to other parties because other parties cannot satisfy them on a philosophical level (Okolabah, 2011). In Nigeria, the complete reverse is the case. Most Nigerian politicians are cantankerous losers. Most are bad tempered who are always complaining and feel entitled and relieved to prestigious jobs in perpetuity. Cross carpeting comes very naturally to them even when they are founding fathers of various parties they flounce off to join a new party. The truth is that many who have found it expedient to dump any party will opportunistically flock back if the party they dumped wins the election. This is where politicians play politics with defection. Nigerian grandees specialize in this kind of aggressive, shame-free jockeying for eternal relevance; and some, to be fair, do not even have to do any jockeying at all. On reflection, we could criticize politicians for behaving like spoiled sports stars who have no serious plans for developing the nation. But one could vividly understand why they are so lamentably fickle, mobile, ruthless and shallow. Nigeria is not a place that encourages good behaviour or deeply held convictions. This is a country where decent and potentially productive folks are oppressed and excluded. People who try to cling to ethical codes are regarded as mad, daft or suicidal (Aleyomi, 2012). Therefore, the development of

dishonest traits in some politicians resulting in the tainting of good and credible democratic practice is a serious underlying problem with political party defection.

Lack of party internal democracy

Another important reason for party defection is lack of party internal democracy. Intra party democracy signifies the active participation of all party members to contest any position both within the party and for public offices. Since 1999 when Nigeria joined the comity of democratic states, political parties have faced the problem of nondemocratic practices. The expectation generally is that since the country has embraced democracy, its political parties must be democratic not only externally, in their goals but also democratic internally in their organizational practices and behaviour (Mbah, 2011 cited in Fashagba 2014). Political parties across the nation take advantage of conflict in opposition parties, internal rancour, power tussle and bitter rivalries to woo disgruntled members to their fold, while others take advantage of a weak or lack of virile opposition to strengthen existing members and win bystanders desirous of changes and development (Bakare, 2013). This is the Nigerian situation, keenly handled the Nigerian way. Political parties are one of the institutions that carryout and actualize the democratic principles in any organized democratic society. They have to perform a number of 'institutional guarantees' to effectively discharge what is expected of them in any democracies (Aleyomi, 2010). Intra- party democracy is one of the institutional requirements. Before a country can be sanitized and developed, there must be a number of internal sanitation and development in the prospective parties that look forward to form government in such society. Internal democracy describes a wide range of methods for including party members in party deliberation and decision- making. Some advocates for intra-party democracy argue, on a pragmatic level, that parties using internally democratic procedures are likely to select more capable and appealing leaders, to have more responsive policies, and, as a result, to enjoy greater electoral success. Some, moreover, converge on the premise that parties that "practice what they preach," in the sense of using internally democratic procedures for their deliberation and decisions, strengthen democratic culture generally (Abia, 2013).

Constitutional ambiguity and loophole

Constitutional ambiguity and loophole is another serious reason for party cross-carpeting in Nigeria. In the last decade of democratic governance in Nigeria, the country has witnessed series of carpet crossing, with politicians jumping from one party to the other especially to the ruling party, the PDP. This development has generated heated debates on whether the constitution should allow carpet crossing or not. The 1999 constitution did not address the national question and other nagging issues pertaining to Nigerian federalism simply because Generals Abacha and Abubakar did not intend to put in place a democratic government based on popular consent (Mbah, 2011 in Fashagba 2014). While Abacha was looking and drafting 1999 constitution *ab initio*, for self succession, Abdulsalam Abubakar saw it as a mechanism for quick handover to civilian elected democratic government. Be that as it may, the process that culminated in the drafting of 1999 constitution ignored the structural issues that have bedeviled the country's ability to enthrone a truly accountable, transparent and democratic political order (Mbah, 2011 in Fashagba 2014). Consequently, it produced a draft that was full of ambiguities, which have led to the increasing rate of party defections immediately it came into operation, in May 29, 1999 (see sections 68(1) and 109(1) of the 1999 constitution).

There are various lacunas in some sections in the 1999 constitution that have provided an escape root for politicians to 'party switch' anyhow. Section 68 (1) (g) of the constitution states a member of Senate of House of Representative may vacate his seat if:

being a person whose election to the House was sponsored by a political party, he becomes a member of another political party before the expiration of the period for which that House was elected; Provided that his membership of the latter political party is not as a result of a division in the political party of which he was previously a member or of a merger of two or more political parties or factions by one of which he was previously sponsored. (1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria cited in Awofeso and Irabor, 2016).

Notwithstanding the above constitutional provisions, the last part of the section gave an escape root and platform for many politicians to cross-carpet since there are always divisions within the political parties. The ambiguity of the constitution caused defections among Nigerian politicians to be on the increase, with the greatest casualty being the opposition parties. After all, the 1999 constitution does not have a perfect definition of crisis or division that could cause defection or cross-carpeting.

In a nutshell, politicians defect to another party to prosecute their political ambition. This situation is so peculiar because politics is primarily concerned with the sharing of huge scarce resources which makes the struggle for state power brutal among various competing groups.

Effects of Cross-Carpeting on Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

Awofeso and Irabor (2016) adduced that cross-carpeting no doubt has telling effects on the process of consolidating democracy, especially when it affects state and federal elected political office holders. This trend is fast making caricature of democracy in the Fourth Republic and seriously belittles the spirit of opposition parties. Until the recent formation of the APC in 2013 strengthened by the defections of five aggrieved governors and other parliamentarians from the then ruling PDP, cross-carpeting right from the inception of the Fourth Republic had always been in the direction of the ruling party. A development that had led to the further fragmentation of opposition parties where defectors emanated from. This often breeds the emergence of new political parties that lack strength and focus to compete reasonably in the polity. In other words, incessant cross-carpeting weakens opposition parties which have a telling effect on democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Frequent cross-carpeting among the political actors leaves the electorate with no alternatives to choose from when it comes to ideological bloc. As such, the character composition of parties is no more different- the only difference is of nomenclatural relevance (Ilo, 2015). Consequently, parties developed ideologies only to win election and form new government. This gives the ruling party opportunities to operate without constructive criticism. Moreover, Adejuwon, (2013) argued that in extreme cases of cross-carpeting where number of public representatives who defected are significantly high, such shifts of allegiance have led to the collapse of democratically elected governments, such as in Lesotho in 1997. As such, cross-carpeting of elected office holders who do not resign the first platform for coming to political position do not add value to the process of democratic consolidation.

Another twist that further weakens the consolidation of democracy is the motivation for cross-carpeting among elected political actors that lack philosophical backup. This tends to promote money-bag politics rather than ideological oriented political parties. According to the News Magazine of February 2014, cited in Barnes, (2018), “mouth-watering” offers of money were outlined for the legislators that cross-carpeted to the APC in the build up to 2015 general elections. According to the report, the then ruling PDP was said to have promised US\$ 2 million to each senator who returns to the PDP, US\$ 1 million to each member of the House of Representatives and US\$ 10 million to each 'leader' who abandoned the APC for the PDP. Although, this is considered a rumour in some quarters, one cannot completely dispel issues like this in any polity that is not ideologically driven, where possession of political power is viewed directly as economic empowerment. Arising from the above, building strong opposition parties under such circumstances becomes very difficult; hence consolidating democracy in such polity becomes a mere wishful thinking.

Increased Voter Apathy

Cross-carpeting tends to accelerate the level of voter apathy in a population. People refrain from voting in subsequent elections if previous or current polls are ‘won’ through vile means like rigging, false declaration of losers as winners, and bribing of electoral officials. The general feeling among Nigerian voters is that their votes do not going to count. Whether they voted or failed to vote, ‘winners’ must emerge through ‘politicks Nigeria style’. This trend is dangerous for the maturity of Nigeria’s democracy.

Lack of Legitimacy for Government and Political Office Holders

In a country like Nigeria that is democratising, frequent recourse by politicians to fraud to win elections defeats the *raison d'être* of elections as the basis for legitimising the occupation of political office, and the exercise of political power and authority that accompanies it. Elected political office-holders who won elections through rigging will, for instance, be lethargic about accountability to the electorate or voters. This apathy results from the notion that they bought their way through money and were not voted into office. This tendency illustrates why ‘the much anticipated “democracy dividend”, whether construed as improvements in governance, stability, or economic welfare, has not materialized’ since 1999 (Aluaigba, 2016). No doubt, there has been concerted grumbling among Nigerians voicing their dissatisfaction with the performance of their elected public officeholders such as the “Revolution Now” protest attempted by some Nigerians.

Induced Corruption in Governance

The Nigerian experience has shown that when the contest for elective positions by politicians is perceived as an investment – the returns of which must be recouped once they win elections and enter office (Ilo, 2014), there is a tendency for heightened larceny from the public treasury. It follows that democracy dividends can never be delivered to the electorate, because money meant for public projects is diverted into private pockets as rents, pre-bends and rewards to ‘godfathers’ who sponsored the public office-holders. This pattern indubitably will jeopardise Nigeria’s quest for a consolidated democratic heritage.

Civil Disobedience and Political Unrest

Cross-carpeting ignites political protests. Such protests can – either rapidly or slowly – degenerate or metamorphose into full-fledged anarchy. This leads to a momentous political crisis that threatens the unity of Nigeria. Studies have shown that violence, vote buying, negative use of money and so on are impediments to transitioning to a viable democracy, and are anathema in a country that is serious about consolidating its democracy (Aluaigba 2010).

Political Violence

Electoral violence has remained a feature in Nigeria's political landscape. This deadly act has taken the lives of innocent citizens, youth corps members who worked as ad hoc staff, and officials of the INEC. Relatives fight and kill each other because they have different political supporters; friendship between friends has gone sour because friends suddenly cannot tolerate each other because of different political choices. Nseabasi (2010) asserted that these have led to the wanton killings and destruction of properties worth millions of naira. Political actors who use the vulnerable members of the society usually mastermind such acts of violence to perpetrate such evil acts. This has brought disunity, hatred and enmity amongst members of the same locality who once lived happily together. Hence, this militates against the consolidation of democracy. In a nutshell, the devastating effects of cross-carpeting on Nigerian democracy cannot be overemphasized.

Strategies for Curtailing the Incidence of Cross-Carpeting for Democratic Advancement in Nigeria: Need for Imbibing Strong Party Ideology

The concepts of democratization have been extensively debated in the literature over the years. The effective functioning and sustenance of such a society largely depends on the institutionalization of key elements that discourage party defection and enthrone political stability. It also requires an open, free, and independent press that provides alternative sources of information, education, and socialization while holding the government accountable for its actions and inactions.

The issue of party defection or cross carpeting is becoming a serious threat to democracy in Nigeria and must be faced squarely. According to Smith (2012), one cannot be disgruntled over the end of the story without having been disgruntled at the beginning over the poaching of politicians because of the purchase of votes. Often, he who sowed wind ends up reaping a storm. Nigeria does not need insecure individuals or so called politicians with many tricks up their sleeves to promote personal agendas and self patronage at this point in time when the country is at the phase of its 'Next Level Agenda' but needing people with integrity and sincerity of purpose exhibited in their conduct to garner the respect of the people to moving the nation forward. When any one political party moves this far poaching or close to elections accepting members switching from another party, it makes it nearly impossible for the political system to deal constructively with the country's diversities which is affecting unity. It is morally questionable, and will always leave a bitter taste in the mouth of our politics, but it seems individuals have chosen between survival and extinction from the political and social landscape for self-preservation.

Despite such moves creating chaos and mistrust in our politics, there is no political will among the parties and the system to amend the law and disable such changing of party jerseys. Today, the public (Nigeria electorates) does not expect much from politicians, hence moral condemnation is unlikely as a sanction. That is why the leaders of parties must foremost take responsibility for personal policy and take care who they recommend in joining their fold ensuring it is not with hidden agendas. All these can be achieved considering the following suggested strategies:

Maintaining internal Party Democracy

It is abundantly clear that lack of internal democracy among the Nigerian political parties is one of the reasons inhibitive to democratic consolidation as discussed in the previous section of this work. The ideological thesis that human beings are equal is the basis of democracy. The acceptability that every man is equal will facilitates the workability of internal party democracy. The essential elements of internal democracy which include equal participation among party members especially the involvement of all ranks and files in the party's policies, as well as representation at party activities; inclusiveness and institutionalization that demonstrates the degree to which internal decisions and procedures are formalized are lacking within the Nigerian political parties. Besides, the assumption is that internal democracy in political parties thrives more in societies that strongly uphold democratic principles and ethos. For a state to be democratic with the practice of a true multiparty democracy there is need for some accepted criteria which have been put forwarded by Dahl (1971) cited in Nwanegbo, Odigbo and Nnorom (2014) to include: civil and political rights, fair, competitive, and inclusive elections. To him, countries that meet these criteria are called 'polyarchies', but they are more commonly referred to as liberal democracies. Be that as it may, there is need for a provision and sustainable internal democracy in all registered political parties in Nigeria. This will not only secure the future of Nigeria's

democracy but also knit high-quality ideology in the party that will streamline the incessant rate of cross carpeting among politicians.

Rule of Law and Freedom of the Press

There is also need for the rule of law, which includes the political equality of citizens and the protection of their rights not minding party affiliations (ruling or opposition parties); and the availability of an independent judiciary within a culture of respect for judicial pronouncements by the other arms of the state, particularly the executive. These are not as simplistic and straightforward as they seem because they require the existence of people with democratic mind-set, capable of managing these structures and institutions in line with democratic demands. But often, these requirements are grossly lacking, especially in developing countries including Nigeria. For example, the press is not only dominated by state-owned media. The rise of independent media, both print and electronic, has been unable to completely transform the political landscape (Omotola, 2013), although it had a positive impact on the political terrain. Media activities are still censored, and media practitioners have been constant victims of state violence through closure, seizure, and unlawful arrest and detention even under a "democratic" regime. Core political actors have also been known for the flagrant violation of rules in order to remain in power, as the 2007 general elections showed.

Imbibing social capital culture

It is also obvious that the Nigeria's political party lacks social capital culture and it may be difficult for any institution or party that lacks social capital to function maximally. Social capital is a mechanism for social harmony and peace building. The phenomenon refers to those stocks of social trust, norms and networks that people can draw upon to solve common problems. It also represents the degree of social cohesion in communities and associational life. The key elements of social capital include, social trust, mutual understanding, tolerance, cooperation, reciprocity and other networks of civic engagement that facilitate coordination and communication through which information about trustworthiness of other individuals and groups can flow, and be tested and verified. Social capital describes the relations that bind communities, parties through a sharing of trust together. It also emphasizes that for an institution such as political party to be orderly and prosperous; these basic norms must be embedded in the system (Ojukwu & Olaifa, 2011). Therefore, social capital culture is advocated and recommended to be infused into Nigeria's political system most especially, the political parties. This will not only encourage people to endure their parties but also limits (if not put an end to) political prostitutions.

Developing Strong Opposition Parties

No doubt, multi-party democracies need multiple parties, where one serves as the ruling party and others as oppositions as alternatives or even counterforce to the ruling party. This gives electorates opportunity to vote out irresponsible government's policies and conducts and vote in a more proactive and functional one due to the presence of alternatives. This can only be effectively achieved where there are credible opposition choices. Therefore, there is need for credible, coherent and tenable oppositions not numerous vanity parties with limited support. In a country where the opposition is very strong and acceptable, there would not be need for cross carpeting because it will build up the trust one has in his/her party. Not only that, when all the political parties are credible with strong internal democracy, party defection will be discouraged and atypical. Indeed, free and fair elections have to result in two turnovers of government before a state can be properly classified as a democracy. This showcases that pluralism is sincerely working and that both incumbent and opposition are committed to the rules of the political game, and, above all, that parties will be willing to concede defeat if that is the wish of the people. To secure democracy, a state requires more than one party with a realistic chance of being elected. However, democracy cannot be measured by the quantity of competitors alone but the quality of these parties is equally important.

Change of Attitude among Politicians

There is need for a neutral state whose institutions provide a 'level playing-field' on which political parties can compete fairly. The national interest (interest of all) should be the concern of a ruling party not the interest of the party. By winning an election, a party has the right to rule through the institutions that provide a level playing ground for all citizens. The issue of winner takes all politics in Nigeria should be abolished and embrace collective responsibility. This act will help to separate state from political party in a multiparty democracy and hence help to sustain democratic regime in Nigeria. The clear distinction between the state and the ruling party is yet to emerge in Nigeria. To ensure longevity of Nigeria's democratic system, there is need for the ruling party to guarantee free and fair elections and avoid manipulation of electoral process. The constitutions should not be amended solely to suit the interests of the ruling party. The state resources should not be used to bolster ruling party electoral campaign. All parties should have equal access to state-owned media

and in conclusion, the state security forces to strengthen democracy, and not to be used to intimidate the opposition.

In résumés, every political party should uphold political culture as an ideology. All the above strategies for democratic sustainability can be achieved through the idea of political culture. Political culture is the shared political ideas, attitudes and beliefs that bring about a society. By nature of man, all individuals have their own views and interests, but more stable societies usually have some general political principles held in common. Every individual should respect and defend the rules of the political game irrespective of party affiliation (be it ruling or opposition party) and there should be no abandoning of pluralism once in power. Also, the opposition should have respect for democracy and desist from abandoning democratic process if fail to win power. Nigeria's democracy should be linked with the liberal democratic ideology that will permeate the entire society. The respect for democracy and no deferral to a state that abandons the democratic process does not exclude the civil society. Democracy is a method of conflict resolution which is valued in institutions throughout both the state and civil society. Nigerian polity should have a replicate of this political culture if multi-party democracy is to survive.

III. CONCLUSION

From the analysis, it could be stated that one of the major challenges for sustaining Nigerian democracy in the fourth republic is the perennial defections arising from internal party crisis. With huge number of defections, the present republic is facing the problem of stability. This is mainly because of ideological deficiencies among parties and the drive by influential individuals to privatize a political party. Based on the above, this paper concluded that resolving the recurrent defection among party members or ending the persistent defection would demand rethinking and a paradigm change from the hitherto amalgam of political profit making allies representing political parties to erecting party systems that are ideological rooted.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations were therefore made:

1. Political parties should retrace their ideological bases for the healing and advancement of democracy in Nigeria;
2. Given the danger of democratic consolidation posed by the present stronghold on parties by the elites, parties need to be re-organized on the principle of all-inclusiveness rather than exclusion. This means that issues of monopolization of party decision making process, lack of internal democracy and indiscipline in parties have to be tackled.
3. Another pre-requisite to combat incessant cross-carpeting is to de-emphasize the excessive premium placed on political power. When politics becomes less lucrative, ideology will begin to gain popularity across the polity. This will keep political practitioners back on the track and guide against incessant cross-carpeting.
4. Political parties should be re-engineered from mere institutions for acquiring political power to entrenching democracy.
5. Political leaders should eschew the cross-carpeting behaviour and channel efforts towards democratic advancement.
6. There is every need for citizens to withhold support for leaders with self aggrandizement in the guise of cross-carpeting.

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