



Conflicting ideologies and defection of members in nigeria's multi-party system: implications for democracy

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Abstract. Inter-party defection is now a perturbing political culture among members of political parties in Nigeria. This obnoxious phenomenon also refers to as decamping, cross-carpeting or political harlotry has been perceived to be the result of lack of political ideology and internal democracy on the part of the political parties. This has indisputably affected intra-party politics on the one hand and the polity of the country on the other hand. It has also created a credibility problem on the part of the politicians as well as fear of the sustenance of democratic principles in the country. This study, therefore, is an effort to juxtapose the link between conflicting ideologies and defection of members of the multi-party system in the country. The reasons or politics behind inter-party defection and the consequences or implications on the sustenance of the smaller and less-dominant political parties as well as democracy in Nigeria are also of significance considering the large numbers of the Fourth Republic political parties in the country. The study also examined the historical origin of party politics and relates the same to intra and inter-party conflicts in the country. To achieve these, the study adopted the combination of Historical and Exploratory research designs of data. The study adopted the Frustration-Aggression theory to discuss and explain the phenomenon of conflicting ideologies of politicians and their inexplicable party defections. The study found that lack of internal democracy in the political parties and lack of differences in ideologies among all political parties in Nigeria are among reasons responsible for these defections and dearth of democratic values in Nigeria. Among other things the study recommends that the fourth republic political parties in Nigeria should as a matter of urgency rise up to the expectations of the citizenry through coherent and effective political ideologies, as well as ensures that they emphasize the promotion of internal democratic principles.

Keywords: Defection, political ideology, manifesto, conflict, political party, multi-party system, democracy, nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that one of the major institutions of any democracy is a political party. Like actors in a democracy, they must be responsive, accountable, and must play an intermediary and mediatory role between the electorates and the government. The heart of every political party is an ideology which serves as the central activity of the party. In affirmative to this notion, Nnoli (2003) cited in Omotola (2009: 614) opines that party ideology is a very crucial aspect of politics that is not only adopted to guide the actions and programmes of a political party but to also guide the judgement of the individual party members. Omotola (2009: 612) on the other hand argued that political ideology serves as a powerful instrument for conflict management, self-identity as well as a mobilization instrument to political parties in both developed and developing democracies of the world. In the light of this, Shively (1997) defined party ideology as an organized set of ideas about politics that help to streamline the actions and inactions, as well as objectives and programmes of a political party. For Nnoli (2003) it is a systematized and interconnected set of ideas about the socio-economic and political organization of society as a whole. In other words, the most important or propelling force or vehicle of any democratic system is a proper and workable party ideology.

This, unfortunately, has been relegated to the background by the Nigerian system. The manner at which party politics is practised in Nigeria has left doubt in the minds of the observers of Nigerian politics

(Nnoli, 2003: 177; Anthony et al., 2017; Ogbo et al., 2017; Emmanuel et al., 2017). The question of whether the Nigerian political parties imbibe the global culture of clear stated political ideologies and manifestos, thus, arises. Over the years Nigerian politics have been crisis-prone and political parties were organized along regional and ethnic lines, the consequence of which is lack of internal democracy and a well-defined political ideology. It is imperative to note that right from the post-independence years, the first political parties were organized along ethnic lines. For instance, the Northern People's Congress (NPC) of 1951 was opened to all people of Northern descent whether as individuals or as a union. On the other hand, the Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Action Congress (AG) and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe's National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC), although, with later day's national outlooks also gained supports along the regional and ethnic line (Obiajulu et al., 2016: 98-99).

This political culture indisputably has been inherited by the fourth republic political parties, particularly those of the two dominant parties, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Considering the manners in which they pilot their intra-party affairs, particularly their internal democracies which involve party primaries and conventions respectively has subjected the activities of the entire multi-party system to questioning. With this, most critiques have argued that the fourth republic political parties are not different from the political parties of the first and second republic. This is evident in their failure to observe the rules of internal democracy just like the first generation political parties. The consequence of this is internal frustration which the consequence is the mass defection of the aggrieved party members from one party to another and which is simply defined as a situation in which one can voluntarily give up his or her membership of a political party or disobeying, abstaining or voting against the directives of the party leadership (Paras, 1979; Daniyan-Bagudu et al., 2017; Suryasa et al., 2019). It has been argued that the only option left for the aggrieved party members is defection or decamping from one party to another. Mbah (2011) cited in Edet (2017: 1) argued that defection among the political parties is not only a norm but also an increasing and perturbing phenomenon or feature in the country's democracy since independence. In the same manner, Nwanegbo et al. (2014) also in Edet (2017) argued that it is one of the major challenges confronting the nation's democracy.

There is, therefore, no doubt that the actions and inactions of the party hierarchies, as well as the jettisoning of political ideology and national interest for selfish gains, are tantamount to political harlotry among most political parties in the country. Suffice therefore to state that defection from one political party to another has been complicated by the Nigerian political slogan that says; "*in politics, there is no permanent enemy but permanent interest*". Participants, thus, do not see defection as a problem since the participants' belief that there is no enemy but permanent interest in politics. Michael (2013: 82) argued that the rising magnitude of selfish desires to rule and occupy political offices couple with the parochial interests and the occasional indiscipline; weak cohesion and internal democracies; as well as high headedness and handedness of party leadership across party line have also complicated this *regime of defections or cross-carpeting* in the political history of the country, particularly in recent times.

Michael (2013) while x-raying the Nigeria situation also opines that since the returns to a democratic government on May 29, 1999, there have been different clogs in the wheel of the democratic system in the country among which are the hereditary viruses of *money politics, godfatherism and selfish interests*, all of which characterized the first, second and third republics party politics in Nigeria. These factors no doubt have been inherited by the fourth republic politicians at the federal, state and local government levels. The implication of this as noted earlier is defection from one party to another by those who feel that they have been sidelined. Undoubtedly, this has become a perturbing phenomenon in our contemporary history and need to be eliminated through the total observance of internal democracy and respect for the rule (Michael, 2013: 82).

Reiterating this notion Aniche (2017:22) opines that the present political parties in the country have been hampered by the crisis of internal democracy. On a general perspective, the credibility of the election process has been undermined by the political parties and politicians alike who refused to play by the rule. Furthermore, the credibility of general elections over the years is characterized by a high level of electoral malpractices and violence evident in the 2015 general elections. Indisputably, election processes in the country are also characterized by numerous litigations some of which have subjected the judiciary into disrepute, he argued. Some analysts of these events have argued that one of the chief factors of intraparty conflict, the consequence of which is defection or decamping from one party to another, is the manners in which ward, local government, state, regional and national congresses, a routine exercise adopted to elect party leadership at each of these levels are conducted. Also of note is party primaries conducted periodically to elect party candidates for elective positions in the country. Since these processes following party congresses and primaries are dominated by selfish desires of political hierarchies and Godfathers who are hard bent on imposing their family members, political allies, and

godsons and daughters above the interests of other party members, the consequence is the nuisance called defection or cross-carpeting.

Recent studies have shown that post-election matters have also contributed to intra-party wrangling, conflict and defection. On the other hand judicial decisions against another and in favour of another have also promoted immediate mass defection to the newly favoured party in the country in recent time. This is evident in the controversial Tuesday 14 January 2020 Supreme Court ruling in favour of the ruling party, the All Progressive Congress (APC) Governorship candidate in Imo State, Senator Hope Uzodinma against the candidate of the People Democratic Party (PDP), Emeka Ihedioha; the Bayelsa state Supreme Court judgment which hosted the Governor-elect on the platform of APC, Mr David Lyon twenty-four hours to his inauguration and in favour of the candidate of the PDP, Mr Douyi Diri, and significant others, all of which led to what some political analysts describe as *unnecessary defections and political harlotry* (Sobechi, 2020; Halimah, 2020). The researchers, thus, argued that the fate of the parties in the country is now subjected to the whims and caprices of these group of people, hence the defections from one political party to another with slightest excuses.

The Nature of the Problem

Whatever the case may be, it is imperative to note that the success of any political party either in the developed democracies such as the United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK) or in developing democracies such as that of African States lies in internal democracy and respect for the wishes, opinions and aspirations of party members irrespective of their status or level of involvement in politics. This can only be achieved by a total comprehension of the party ideologies, manifestoes and respect for the party constitutional provisions on the one hand, and on the other hand, the gentleman agreement entered into by the party hierarchies, all of which are often abused in the Nigerian system. Considering the above position, it becomes necessary for political parties in Africa, particularly in Nigeria to device means to maintain their political ideologies and manifestoes since these can help to avert the intriguing intra-party experiences that have ushered in disaffections and the nuisance call defections among party members and which are synonymous with the Nigerian multiparty system of the old and the present.

Suffice therefore to state that the First republic political parties were no different from the fourth republic political parties. The fact that the NPC has a conservative posture and was an elitist party, and the AG, as well as the NCNC, demonstrated a progressive and welfarist posture did not change the perception of ours whether these political parties of the old had political ideologies. The absence of a written statement that comprehensively and publicly describes their policies, goals, intentions, or motives may lead to anarchy and disrupt internal democracy of any political party. Be that as it may, it has been very difficult to point out a clear distinction in actions and inactions of the political parties of the first, second, third and fourth republics. Most importantly, their ideological orientations are more or less the same.

Mustapha and Isah (2018: 116) argued that issue such as political ideologies and party manifestoes have been given little or no attention despite the pretentious posture of having the tags *conservative, progressives, liberals, socialists and populists*, among others on these multi-parties. Since they share common features which is an ethnic-regional ideology and which is targeted at capturing and consolidation of power and influence in their respective regions, there is, nothing distinct between the first, second and fourth republic political parties especially in their desperation to capture power at all the levels of governance without a clear manifesto and ideology compared to what is obtainable in developed democracies. This was what Omotola (2009: 622) refers to as the *reincarnations* of the moribund first republic political parties. This is what we refer to as a pandemic that is extremely difficult to eliminate in the case of the Nigeria political parties of the fourth republic. The consequence of this is defection from one political party to another.

In their attempt to highlight some of the problems of the first generation political parties and complementing Omotola (2009) standpoint, Obiajulu et al. (2016) linked the failure of the first generation political parties in the country, particularly the first republic parties to the politics they played as well as their inability to obtain national outlook cum the fact that none of them was able to gain clear-cut majority when elections were held, the consequence of which was an unstable Federal Government (Obiajulu et al., 2016: 18). For this reason, there seem not to be a clear difference between the political parties in the country over the years compared to what is happening in the country at the moment. In other words, this problem is likely to manifest in our contemporary political environment considering the actions and inactions of the leadership of the fourth generation political parties. The actions and inactions of the party leadership are likely to promote intra and inter-party conflicts within and amongst the political parties in the country.

Scholars and analysts of the Nigerian phenomena have associated these Plethoras of problems of intra and inter-party conflicts or crises to the attitudes of the leadership of the political parties. Also of pertinence is the fact that the orchestrators of the intra and inter-party crises in the country in recent time are the political cabals, elites, leaders and most importantly, the judiciary that is now seen to be partisan. In other words, party leaders who are in the centre of the crisis in their political parties are expected to adopt an aggressive and sustained system of social mobilization at all level of party politics to avoid ill ideological barriers to political participation, massive litigations instituted by aggrieved party members on the one hand, and on the other hand, the occasional defection from one party to another by the aggrieved party members, all of which have been identified as perturbing problems in the country's fourth republic multiparty system, unfortunately the reverse is the case here. When these processes are adopted party programmes can address all forms of crises occasioned by their presence but the question in the lips of observers and critiques of the Nigerian issues is when will the party leaders learn to adopt workable and sustainable party manifestoes and ideologies?

Also identified as a problem are the contradictions associated with the multi-party system in the country. Apart from intra and inter-party activities, the civil society and the judiciary have a lot to do in the system, unfortunately, these expectations are fallacies judging from the manner the judiciary has been *coerced* by the leadership of the ruling party in the country, the APC, to uptown election victory to their favour. This has bedevilled the Nigeria system and has resulted in confusion and mass defection from one political party to another since no one wants to remain with the losing side and be denied what they refer to as the "national cake". The most amazing problem here is the seemingly faulty electoral laws, electoral malpractices, corruption, ethnic and regional politics, godfatherism and judicial summersaults or abracadabra, all of which have also bedevilled the system and have been identified as the major bane to our nascent democracy. Suffice therefore to state that the plethora of problems highlighted above are unavoidably present in Nigeria's multi-party system and party politics and have bedevilled the multiparty system in the country over the years. This study, therefore, offers to examine these issues to account why they persist and plaguing the political system, and recommended useful solutions to the occasional conflict of ideology and mass inter-party defection of members of the multi-party system in the country's democracy.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the reasons behind intra-party conflicts and inter-party defections among the multi-parties in Nigeria while relating same to conflicting or absence of party ideologies and manifestoes, as well as the implications of these activities to the development and sustenance of democracy in the country. While the specific objectives are:

- (i) To examine the historical foundations of political party and democracy in Nigeria's pre and post-independence politics.
- (ii) Examine the nature of political parties ideologies that encourage easy defections from one political party to the other without difficulty in adjusting in their new party, and
- (iii) Examine the reasons for conflicting ideologies, intra-party conflicts and inter-party defections among the multi-parties of the fourth republic.

To this end, the following research questions are raised to give direction to the study:

- (i) To what extent has the historical foundation of party politics and democracy in the country impacted the operations of the fourth republic political parties?
- (ii) To what extent have political parties' ideologies encouraged easy defections from one political party to the other?
- (iii) What are the reasons for conflicting ideologies, intra and inter-party conflicts, and defections among the multi-parties of the fourth republic?

METHOD OF THE STUDY

The study adopted the historical design which qualitative and explorative, to examine the historical foundation of party politics, as well as the reasons behind the defection of members of the multi-party system on the one hand, and relating the reason behind party harlotry, decamping or defection to the ineffective application of internal democracy and ideologies among the political parties of the fourth republic on the other hand. The implication of these to the development and sustenance of our nascent democracy is also of pertinence. This presupposes that historical research design is effectively utilized through relevant data derived from the extant literature. In other words, secondary sources such as textbooks, journal articles, internet sources, and other relevant methods were utilized.

Theoretical Discourse

The study adopted the *Frustration-Aggression* theory since frustration from a system can lead to aggressive behaviour from those who feel the brunt of the actions of the privilege few who coincidentally control party affairs on the one hand, and since the problems associated with the multi-party system in the country's history is presumed to be *Systemic* on the other hand, hence the defection from one political party to another.

Frustration-Aggression Theory

As was proposed by Dollard et al. (1939) and modified by Miller and his colleagues in 1941, as well as Berkowitz in 1969, Frustration-Aggression (FA) hypothesis posits that the occurrence of aggressive behaviour in some cases leads to some form of aggressive behaviour. The theory, thus, tends to justify the reasons for aggressive behaviour among individuals or group of individuals in the society of men (Dollard et al., 1939). In truism, aggressive behaviour presupposes that there is the existence of frustration and the existence of frustration leads to aggression. According to Dennen (2005) frustration is used not only to refer to the processes of blocking one's goal attainment but to also refer to the reactions that follow the blocking of one's expected goal.

From this standpoint, it is obvious that blocking of one goal can lead to frustration which can equally lead to aggressive behaviour toward the source blocking one's expected goal. It is important, therefore, to note that aggression manifests in many areas in our society. For instance, aggression manifest in domestic front as domestic violence, abuses of one's fundamental rights, school bullying, war situations, as well as in one's participation in socio-political activities, etc. The actions and inactions of members of the multi-party system in Nigeria, for example, can also result in some forms of disaffections among members. The consequence of this is the multiple problems that are likely to escalate to conflict situations as evident in the case of Nigeria where litigations and defections are last resort. Moreover, the extent to which one is frustrated is base on the extent to which his or her expectations are hindered or blocked by another. The strength of this theory, therefore, lies in the assumption that frustration breeds aggression and that the reason why people behave the way they do is that their expected goal is blocked by another, which can be an individual, group of individual, institutions, organization, etc.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Concepts of Democracy and Multi-Party System

The term "Democracy" is of Greek origin derived from a Greek word "Demokratia" which means, "rule by the people". This implies that the term is used to describe a system or form of government in which the people exercise the authority of government, as well as that which permits the sharing of authority among them in line with constitutional provisions. It, thus, emphasizes freedom of assembly and speech, inclusiveness and equality, membership, consent, voting, right to life and minority rights. This shows that democracy takes two major forms; first is direct democracy in which the people are directly involved in deliberations and in deciding their faith; and secondly, indirect or representative democracy in which the people elect their representatives to deliberate, legislate or decide on issues affecting the people by the provisions of the constitution of the land often exercised in a parliamentary or presidential democracy (Watkins, 1970).

According to Schumpeter (1961) cited in Omodia and Egwemi (2011: 271), democracy is that institution that is involved in the arrangement used in arriving at political decisions and are also used in realizing the common good of the people and that which enable the people to decide on issues through elections. Simplistically, democracy is seen as that form of government that permits the majority to exercise their powers within the framework of the constitution of the land. This is what scholars refer to as liberal democracy in which both the majority and minority interests are articulated and exercised through freedom of speech and association, etc. (Palmer, 1959). In the word of Abraham Lincoln of the United State of America (USA) (1809 – 1865), it is the government of the people by the people for the people. This means that democracy is that form of government that allows the people to elect their leaders who are also answerable to the people and the laws of the land. It is also that form of government in which the people choose those to represent them by voting. The researchers, thus, see democracy as the organization of a state in a manner that guarantees equality before the laws of the state and which everyone is treated equally and has equal rights. It is strictly associated with that form of government in which the supreme power of the state is in the hands of the people and is exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system and the constitution of the land rules.

Multi-Party System

Section 229 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) specifically defines a political party as an association or a platform organized to canvass for votes in support of a candidate or candidates for elections into the following offices; the office of the President of the Federal Republic, the office of the Governor and Deputy Governor of a state, members of the Legislative houses and Local government councils. In other words, party system may not be the conduct of government base on the number of political parties alone, but the size of the system in which it is practised determines the form or types the system adopts. Extant literature reveals that the size of Nigeria as an independent political entity and as a country, with diverse ethnic nationality as well as a country with different federating units encourages a multiparty system, purposely to accommodate these differences and the political interests of this group of people. This has been argued to be the best system for a country like ours which has over 500 ethnic groups, many languages and estimated population of over 166.2 million people as at 2012 and an estimated population of 204, 778, 789 people as at 26 March 2020 (1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic; Nigeria National Bureau of Statistic, 2020). Although these factors have also being reputed in some quarters as a yardstick for the form of the party system to be adopted what matters is the adoption of the best and workable democratic practices.

In a multiparty system, there are more than two political parties in the system and all of them are often recognized by law. It is a general belief that there is the absence of dictatorship in a multi-party system and that multi-party system guarantees the rights of individuals and protects the government. For these reasons, Dibia (2012: 97) posits that a multiparty as a form of party system encourages more than two political parties contesting for political power in a country. To him, this form of party system enhances and widens the scope of political education; encourages respect for the rule of law and may give rise to a coalition government. Such arrangements are all recognized by the law of the state and encourage better party organization through competition. Mazi (2007:325) sees it as that which is made up of more than two major political parties and that which is characterized by competition amongst more than two political parties. This means that a multi-party system allows multiple political parties to exist and to have equal opportunity to gain control of the government separately or in the coalition.

This means that there is no limit to the number of political parties that can take part in elections in a state that adopted the system. In other words, there is the likelihood or possibility that having multiple political parties that can take part in national elections and with each of these parties having its views, ideologies and manifestoes. A system such as this is likely to have many political parties in control of the government of the state and work together for the good of the state. Brazil, Denmark, Finland, Germany, India, South Africa and Nigeria, etc., are pertinent examples of states that practice multi-party system. Nigeria of the old practised coalition government, but it beats our imaginations to describe the Nigeria system of the present as such. Notwithstanding Nigeria in recent time practice multi-party system since her return to democratic rule since 29 May 1999, after a long period of military rule.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Historical Foundation of Political Parties and Democracy in Nigeria

The development of party politics in Nigeria like every other democracy in Africa dates back to the days of the struggle for political independence from the British colonial authority. This implies that political party formation has always been with the Nigerian system. Complementing this standpoint Mustapha & Isah (2018) opine that Nigeria which was under the British colonial rule from 1914 to 1960 experienced the first regime of party politics cum western-styled parliamentary democracy. The manifestation of this regime of party politics was witnessed under the political activities of amalgamated Nigeria, particularly in 1922 and 1923 when elections and a political party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) was formed (Mustapha & Isah, 2018: 117).

The country's politics has taken place within a framework of a federal, presidential and representative democratic republic in which executive power was exercised by the government while legislative power was in the hands of the National Assembly: the Senate and the House of Representatives in independence in 1960 up to the present time. The nation's politics have also experienced *diarchy (anarchism)*, a form of political arrangement that is partly *dictatorial and partly constitutional* and which is associated with *the military government*. The term "Diarchism" is used to describe a form of government in which the supreme powers of the state is vested in the hands of two groups of people, i.e., the men on uniforms (*military men*) and those on muftis (*civilians*). It is also the sharing of power between the military personnel and the civilians in government (McLean & McMillan, 2010).

Dibie (2012: 95) sees the party system as the conduct of government based on the number of political parties within the system. This means that party politics or democracy is completely different from a military government. Elaborately, Adetayo (2015: 1) opines that party system has been a source of interaction among the political parties in electoral, parliamentary and governmental arenas in the country's post-independent era. Nwankwo (1982) cited in Taiwo (2016: 120) sees the party system as that which consists of effective groupings of society politically to control the apparatuses of government. There is, therefore, no doubt that democracy has come to stay in the country but among the various forms of party systems such as one-party system and two-party system; the multi-party system has dominated the country's party politics since her independence. Since the political party is an association of like-minded persons determined to win public office and to conduct the affairs of the state according to their collective vision, participation has been an interesting phenomenon in the country (Adebayo, 2019).

Johari (1989: 424) sees a political party as a key organization in a party system. Section 229 of 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) has also specifically defined the political party as the organization that preoccupies itself with soliciting for votes during elections into various political offices. From the 1940s when the nationalists started to agitate for the inclusion of Nigerians in the governance of the indigenous people of the country, party politics has taken multiple dimensions and divergent development. The Nigerian case has always witnessed a multi-party system. Dibie (2012: 97) defined a multi-party system as a system with more than two political parties contesting for political power in a country. On 24 June 1923 the first political party, i.e. the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) was formed by Sir Herbert Macaulay to advance the case of the nationalists in their inclusion in the colonial government and to also promote democracy in the country.

This was made possible by Sir Clifford Constitution of 1922 which succeeded the 1914 Lord Lugard Amalgamation Constitution. This party successfully won three seats in the Lagos Legislative Council in 1922 and all the seats in the elections of 1923, 1928 and 1933. Among the first generation parties in the country were the Action Group (AG) formed by Obafemi Awolowo, and Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) formed by Samuel Akintola in 1935 and also featured prominent characters like Ernest Okoli and Dr C. Vaughan. Nnamdi Azikiwe, H. O. Davis and Obafemi Awolowo later joined the movement which later became a full-blown political party and competed fervently with NNDP, particularly in the 1960s (Meredith, 2005). Though these parties could not be said to be national parties since their activities were restricted to Lagos but at the end of the Second World War, new political parties with national outlooks emerged and replaced NNDP and NYM. Among these were the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the Action Congress (AC). Some minority parties also existed alongside the major political parties such as the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), Dynamic Party (DP) and Borno Youth Movement (info@nigerianscholars.com).

These parties, though, were formed to awaken the peoples' consciousness toward the struggle for political independence; unfortunately, this marked the beginning of ethnic political consciousness among the major and minority ethnic groups in the country. In this respect, Mustapha & Isah (2018: 119) categorically listed the first republic political and ethno-religious parties or groups in the history of the country to include: the Action Group (AG); Afenmai Progressive Congress (APC); Alliance Youth Front (AYF); Awo National Brigade (ANB); Borno Youth Movement (BYM); Calabar-Ogoja Rivers State Movement (CORSM); Calabar Emancipation League (CEL); Common People's Party of Nigeria (CPPN); Communist Party of Nigeria (CPN); Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN); Dynamic Party (DP); Eastern Nigeria Liberation Movement (ENLM); Eastern People's Congress (EPC); Ghana-Nigeria Socialist Groups (GNSG); Habe People's Party (HPP); Ibadan Crusaders of Freedom (ICF), Ijumu Progressive Union (IPU); and significant others. In a like manner, Mustapha and Isah (2018: 119) citing Mohammed et al. (2018) also listed the followings as the political parties that existed in the country's Second Republic (between 1979 and 1983): Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP); National Party of Nigeria (NPN); Nigeria Advanced Party (NAP); People's Redemption Party (PRP) and Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). These parties like the first set of parties in Nigeria lack party cohesion and clear political ideologies. The only difference between these Second republic political parties is that they have national spread with little regional and ethnic affiliations.

There is, therefore, no doubt that the third and fourth republic political parties inherited some of their practices from these first-generation political parties in the country; since some of these parties, if not all, experienced one form of intra-party conflict or another since their formations. Regionalism in outlook, ethnic sentiments and defections from one party to another are not eliminated in the system even in this present time. The Third Republic political parties (1989 to 1993), though a two-party system designed by the military government led by General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (rtd) transition programme to hand power over to democratically elected government were not different from these first

republic political parties in manifesto and ideology. The regional affiliation was not completely invisible but there were, amazingly, better party cohesion and ideology unlike the first generation political parties (Nwankwo, 1993).

According to Nwankwo (1993), the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) would have been the best bet for the country's democracy because both parties were widely embraced by Nigerians as well as the international observers after a long period of the military government in the country. The nullification of the June 12 general elections in the country and the subsequent incarceration of the self-acclaimed winner of the presidential election under the platform of the SDP, Chief M. K. O. Abiola dramatically ushered in tremendous changes in thought, opinion, ideology and political culture of the indigenous people. Also as a consequence was the era of another military dictatorship led by Gen. Sani Abacha after the dethronement of the Interim National Government (ING) led by Chief Ernest Shonekan installed by Gen. Ibrahim Babangida on 27 August 1993 (Nwankwo, 1993).

In 1993, this powerless government was dissolved when General Sani Abacha seized power on 17 November 1993 and dramatically established his regime's transition programme that never saw the light of day because of his demise in 1998 (New York Times, 1993). Mohammed et al. (2018) opine that Abacha's transition programme ushered in another regime of political parties: the Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN); Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM); National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN); and the United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP). In his bid to reinstate democratic rule in the country, the de facto President of Nigeria and Gen. Sani Abacha's successor, Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar (1998 – 1999) in 1999 established his transition political parties among which are the All People's Party (APP); Alliance for Democracy (AD); People's Democratic Party, among others. In 2015, the number of political parties in the country has not just increased in number but has dramatically introduced another dimension into the country's political arena (Mohammed et al., 2018).

However, the following are some of the current Nigerian political parties of the Fourth Republic: the Accord Party (AP); African Action Congress (AAC); Advance Alliance Party (AAP); Advanced Nigeria Democratic Party (ANDP); Action Alliance (AA); All Blending Party (ABP); Alliance of Social Democrats (ASD); Alliance for a United Nigeria (AUN); Advanced Congress for Democrats (ACD); Allied Congress Party of Nigeria (ACPN); Allied People's Movement (APM); African Democratic Congress (ADC); Alliance for Democracy (AD); All Grassroot Alliance (AGA); All Grand Alliance Party (AGAP); Alliance for New Nigeria (ANN); Abundant Nigeria Renewal Party (ANRP); African People's Alliance (APA); All Progressives Congress (APC); Advanced Peoples Democratic Alliance (APDA); All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA); Action Peoples Party (APP); Better Nigeria Progressive Party (BNPP); Coalition for Change (C4C); Change Nigeria Party (CNP); Congress of Patriots (COP); Democratic Alternative (DPP); Freedom and Justice Party (FJP); Fresh Democratic Party (FRESH); Grassroots Development Party of Nigeria (GDPN); Green Party of Nigeria (GPN); Hope Democratic Party (HDP); Independent Democrats (ID); Justice Must Prevail Party (JMPP); Kowa Party (KP); Labour Party (LP); Legacy Party of Nigeria (LPN); Liberation Movement (LM); Mass Action Joint Alliance (MAJA); Modern Democratic Party (MDP); Masses Movement of Nigeria (MMN); Mega Progressive People's Party (MPPP); Movement for Restoration and Defense of Democracy (MRDD); National Action Council (NAC); National Conscience Party (NCP); National Democratic Congress Party (NDCP); National Democratic Liberty Party (NDLP); and Nigeria Elements Progressive Party (NEPP).

Others are Nigeria Community Movement Party (NCMP); Nigeria for Democracy (NFD); New Generation Party of Nigeria (NGP); National Interest Party (NIP); New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP); National Rescue Movement (NRM); National Unity Party (NUP); Peoples' Alliance for National Development and Liberty (PANDEL); People for Democratic Change (PDC); Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM); Peoples Democratic Party (PDP); Peoples Progressive Alliance (APA); Providence People's Congress (PPA); Peoples Redemption Party (PRP); Peoples Trust (PT); RE-Build Nigeria Party (RBNP); Peoples Coalition Party (PCP); Reform and Advancement Party (RAP); Restoration Party of Nigeria (RP); Save Nigeria Congress (SNC); Social Democratic Party (SDP); Sustainable National Party (SNP); Socialist Party of Nigeria (SPN); United Democratic Party (UDP); Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN); United Progressive Party (UPP); United Patriots (UP); United People's Congress (UPC); We the People of Nigeria (WTPN); Yes Electorates Solidarity (YES); Youth Party (YP); and Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) (Mohammed et al., 2018; INEC, 2018 Cited in Mustapha & Isah, 2011: 120-121).

A critical review of the fourth republic party politics shows that the number of political parties in the country has increased beyond what was expected by domestic and international observers. Rather than building on the beauty of the game of politics as well as on the key instrument that comes with a multi-party system, Nigeria's multi-party system of the present republic has orchestrated disaffections within and among the political parties. Internal democracy has been put to doubt by the activities of the leadership and members of the political parties of this republic. According to Mustapha and Isah (2018:

118), Nigerian political parties are supposed to be important to the internal development of the country on the one hand, and on the other hand an integral part of the political system and means by which the citizens participate directly or indirectly in their affairs, unfortunately, the reverse is the case here. This is evident in the intra and inter-party conflicts in the country in recent year in the form of defection. According to Malthora (2005) and Mbah (2011) cited in Mustapha and Isah (2018: 119), poor observation of internal democratic principles among the most popular political parties created inter-party defections as evident in party politics in Nigeria fourth republic. This seemingly regular defection from one political party to another was what they referred to *cross-carpeting, party-switching, floor-crossing, party-hopping, canoe-jumping, decamping, party-jumping* (Malthora, 2005; Mbah, 2011).

Nature of Political Parties Ideologies and Party Defection

Instances have shown that the recycling from one party to the other among Nigeria political parties of the old and the present is blamed on lack of efficient and effective party ideologies and manifestoes. So far there are no remarkable changes in ideologies and manifestoes between the colonial, post-independence, and the fourth republic political parties in the country. A close enquiry of party politics in Nigeria shows that the country's political parties of those of the first; second, third and fourth republics are no different in formations and patterns of relations with the public. According to Omotola (2009:612), being the first and most important vehicle of a political party, ideology in the form of the superficial classifications through party manifesto as "*left and right*", "*progressive or conservative*", all seem to be bereft of clear ideological commitments. Whatever the case may be, it is imperative to note that the success of any political party is its ideology since it is the medium through which political party's activity is centred.

Strickler and Davies (1996) cited in Omotola (2009: 614), argued that party ideology ultimately functions as:

Planks, that is, a single issue statement within the platform, and the actual ideological orientation of which is used as a bargaining chip in seeking party unity. "The platform thus connotes a statement of the official party position on a variety of issues".

Suffice therefore to say that, this is hardly the case with Nigeria political parties. Right from independence, political parties in the country have adopted ill-defined ideologies. Rather than improving on their respective party ideologies, they are engaged in the recycling of ideologies, hence the difficulties in emphasizing issue-based party ideologies, the consequence of which is defections from one party to the other (Simbine, 2005). As stated earlier in this study, the faulty foundations of these political parties, undeniably, is largely responsible for the seemingly ideological impotency of the political parties in the country. For instance: the First Republic political parties, precisely the NPC, NCNC and AG, etc., were ideologically defective, a virus that was transferred to the successive republics in the country's democratic experiences. While the NPC appeared to be *Conservative and elitist*; the AG and NCNC appeared to be *Progressive and Welfarist* predicated upon *Socialist ideology*. This made it very difficult for an analyst to describe the actual ideologies of the political parties of this epoch (Dudley, 1993; Olaniyi, 2001 cited in Omotola, 2009: 623). Similarly, the Second Republic parties; the NPP and GNPP, etc., motivated largely by ethnic politics and competition for power appeared to be *Liberal* in ideology with a strong belief in *Mixed Economy*, while the NPP appeared to be *Conservative* with much emphasis on *Laissez-faire* (Free market economy) with huge interest for the already existing traditional institutions in the country (Omotola, 2009: 623).

The failed Third Republic political parties, SDP and NRC were not different from the first and second republic parties in terms of the conception of party ideologies. Both political parties were pretentiously positioned to be a "*little to the left and a little to the right*" respectively. There was nothing different between them in terms of their postures. Indisputably, these seemingly faulty antecedents were inherited by the Fourth Republic political parties in the country. For example, while the PDP and the APP (ANPP), etc., were *status quo parties*, hence they appeared to be *Capitalist* and *Conservative* in dispositions respectively, AD was *Progressive* and *Radical* in disposition, but like the others, it fails to have clear policy position (Iyare, 2004: 92). Instances show that big parties or ruling parties including the PDP and APC often exhibit similar tendencies such as the absence of internal democracy that are detrimental to democratic governance, hence little or no understanding of the need for effective party ideology, and respect for internal structures of the party. Undeniably, it is obvious that leadership problem is not the only challenge that both PDP and APC is facing as the biggest parties in the country, they also suffer from the absence of coherent ideological principles could have direct or guide them. Aliyu (2016), argued that rather than the maintenance of coherent and consistent ideologies, the fourth republic political parties including the two giant parties, the PDP and APC, opt for the easier options for their convenience and at the same time causing intra-party conflicts, the consequence of which is defection from one party to the other.

Perceived Reasons for Intra and Inter-party Conflict and Defection among the Fourth Republic Political Parties

Literature has shown that several reasons abound for intra and inter-party conflicts and defection often time regarded as “party harlotry” in recent time. Scholars and observers of Nigeria's politics have had to argue that the origin of the problems or issues associated with the country's party politics is traceable to the era where the first political parties were formed. The nationalist movements of the colonial era, though, design to institute equal representation with the British officials were, unfortunately, regionalized and dominated by ethnic colourations. As noted earlier in this study, several groups that emerged in the country's quest for self-government orchestrated regional and ethnic consciousness, an affliction that is still visible in the country' nascent democracy after prolonging the military intervention in politics of the nation.

In addition to this phenomenon is the proliferation of multi-party system in the country as well as the consolidation of the state political and economic powers in the hands of a few dominant groups, the Hausa/Fulani extraction and their allies from the South, West and Eastern regions of the country. The dominance of the leadership of the country at the centre dominated by the Hausa-Fulani extraction is also a serious factor. Since political relevance lies solely on alliance and affiliation with the northern political elites without which the southern elites cannot in any way survive politically, it has impacted negatively on the aspiration of politicians from the south and minority ethnic groups in the country for the office of the president. In essence, alliance and re-alliance become the order of the day. In line with this popular perception, Mustapha and Isah (2018:119) have argued that the nation's politics in recent years is characterized by the poor observation of internal democracy more often than it was in the Second and third republic political parties. Similarly, Baba and Aeyinghe (2017) argued that the fourth republic political parties are not different from first, second and third republic political parties since they imbibe and inherited political dishonesty in character and orientation. Like the first generation political parties, the fourth republic parties also lack defined political ideologies. In other words, their ideologies are similar, encouraging easy defections.

These, no doubt, made the system in recent time dynamic in nature since changes can occur at any given time and in distinct dimensions. This was evident in the recent past alignment and re-alignment and the merger of the defunct Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) formally known as the Action Congress (AC); Congress for Progressive Change (CPC); All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP); and a fraction from the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) to form the All Progressive Congress (APC), the current ruling party in the country purposely to unseat the then ruling party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) (Mustapha & Isah, 2018: 127). This is what Michael (2013: 84) refers to as *self-styled defection or decamping* and which he said predates Nigeria's independence and is older than her sovereignty.

Elaborately, Michael (2013) argued that holding of elections is not the sole prerequisite for democracy but the responsibility of all adult citizens including the political class. To him, a matured democratic order which requires total compliance to the rules of the political game seems to be oblivion in the Nigeria case. The ability to represent the citizens and provide them with policy choices that demonstrate the ability of the political parties to govern the people also seems to be oblivion in the system. These disconnections as well as the decline in political activism and growing sophistication of anti-democratic forces have been identified as some of the reasons for defection or decamping from one party to the other. This is what he termed *Systemic behaviour* by the so-called *self-styled politicians* in the country (Michael, 2013: 82). Extant literature has also associated the porous nature or lacuna observed in the country's constitutional provisions regarding election matters to the problem of the Nigerian multiparty politics. The lacunas in the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended) have also been exploited by the Nigerian politicians who defect or decamp at will with the slightest opportunity available to them (Ughalaa, 2020).

The most striking and amusing of all is the politicization of the Nigeria judiciary by the political cabals of this generation. This, indisputably, has bastardized the court system to the extent that the courts give rulings that some observers alleged questionable even to the laymen on the streets of the country's cities. This is evident in the January 14, 2020 ruling of the Supreme Court declaration of Senator Hope Uzodinma of the APC as the duly elected Governor of Imo State while declining the victory of the PDP, Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha who was initially declared the winner of the March 10, 2019 governorship election by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Ughalaa (2020) argued that the Nigerian laws provide that victory in the electoral contest may not end with the declaration of a winner by the electoral umpire but anyone aggrieved should approach the court for justice, regrettably, the manner at which the judgement was passed even to the laymen in the street of Nigeria felt that something went wrong with the ruling of the Apex court. This act no doubt has changed the politics of the state and ushered in swift

changes in political alignment and re-alignment or what is today regarded as unwarranted “decamping or defection” from the PDP to APC in some quarters (Ughalaa, 2020).

Onyekwere (2020), an Assistant Editor, Law and Foreign Affairs of Guardian Newspapers while x-raying these issues concerning controversial apex court judgement in the country tried to access the distinctions as well as the impact, domestically and internationally, of these judgments on the already battered image of the highest court of the land and that of the judges of the apex court. The controversy surrounding these judgments up to this moment is lingering and indisputably perturbing legal precedence in the country’s electoral processes. Another perturbing legacy according to him is the nullification of the election victory of APC candidate, Mr David Pereworimin Lyon as the Governor-elect of Bayelsa State on the ground that his deputy, Mr Biobarakuma Degi-Eremienyo presented false information to INEC in aid of his qualification for the November 16, 2019 governorship election in the state. This incident which led to the declaration of the PDP candidate in the election, Mr Diri Duoye as the duly elected Governor of the state was seen in some quarters as another *judiciary abracadabra* in the political history of the country.

In the same manner, this incident was described as “very surprising and dramatic” by a Channels news anchor, Olumide Macaulay while asking his studio guest, Frank Tie-Tie, his view on the development. In the same vein, Dr Nzeribe Abangwu of Babcock University argued that the judicial outcome of the governorship election of both Imo and Bayelsa states have generated intense legal and political controversy. Domestic and foreign observers of the Nigeria case on the other hand are yet to recover from what they termed *confusing judgement* or *another judicial somersault* (Ukpong, 2020, Onyekwere, 2020). These dramatic twists, wrong, ineffective internal democracy, ideological failure and other sundry issues have affected members of the political parties leading to party harlotry or defections in the country’s contemporary political system.

According to Santell Barnes (2018), Nigeria since the year 2014 has been reeling from what many Nigerians referred to as a gale of defections that threatened and collapsed the house that was built by the PDP. Most notably was the defection of five state Governors from Adamawa, Kano, Kwara, Rivers and Sokoto, and 37 members of the House of Representatives and 11 Senators of the Federal Republic who left the PDP to APC in 2013 giving life to the newly created opposition party. In the early days of August 2018, some of these defectors including 15 Senators and 37 members of House of Representatives returned to the PDP and three state governors left the APC for PDP. Furthermore, Santell noted that the current president of Nigeria, Gen. Mohammedu Buhari (Rtd.), though, never a member of PDP moved from one political party to another in his quest to become the president of the Federal Republic. In 2003 and 2007 precisely, he was the presidential candidate of the All Nigeria People’s Party (ANPP), and in 2011 and 2015 respectively he was the presidential candidate of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) which he founded and again lost in the general elections, as well as the candidate of the All Progressive Congress (APC) which he contested, won and is the current president of the republic (Santell, 2020). Also of significance is the defection saga of the former Vice President of Nigeria, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar who was involved in several political defections after his term as the Vice President in 2006.

Table 1. Some of the recorded political defections or cross-carpeting in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic

S/N	Names	Old Party	New Party
1	Alhaji Ibrahim Shehu Kwatalo (Ex Deputy Governor of Jigawa State)	ANPP	PDP
2	Sulaiman. M. Argungu (Ex Deputy Governor of Kebbi State)	ANPP	PDP
3	Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan (Ex-Governor of Delta State & APC Senatorial Aspirant – Delta South)	PDP	APC
4	Barr. Ovie Omo-Agege (Fmr. SSG, Delta State)	PDP	APC
5	Chris Okotie	NDP	JP
6	Chief Marshall Harry (A Politician & chieftain of the ANPP Rivers State)	PDP	ANPP
7	Mala Kachalla (Borno State Governorship Aspirant)	ANPP	AD
8	Mala Kachalla (Borno State Governorship Aspirant)	AD	PDP
9	Gbenga Aluko (Senator of the Federal Republic)	PDP	ANPP
10	Enyinnaya Abaribe (Ex Deputy Governor, Gov. Aspirant of Abia State & Senator of the Federal Republic)	PDP	ANPP
11	Enyinnaya Abaribe (Ex Deputy Governor, Gov. Aspirant Abia State & Senator)	ANPP	PDP
12	John James Akpan Udoedehe (Akwa Ibom North District Senator)	PDP	ANPP
13	Kofoworola Buckmor Akerele (Ex Deputy Governor of Lagos State) under Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu (1999-2003)	AD	NDP

14	Uche Ogbonnaya	PDP	ANPP
15	Matthew T. Mbu Jnr. (Senator of the Federal Republic)	AD	PDP
16	Daniel Saro (Senator of the Federal Republic)	PDP	UNPP
17	Peter Ajuwa	ANPP	LDP
18	Omololu Meroyi (Senato of the Federal Republic)	AD	PDP
19	Ukeje O. J. Nwokeforo	UNPP	AD
20	Olufemi Ojo	PDP	AD
21	Kura Mohammed	PDP	ANPP
22	Adamu Bulkachuwa	PDP	ANPP
23	Chief Idowu Odeyemi	PDP	AD
24	Chief Ade Akilaya	PDP	AD
25	Arinze Egwu	ANPP	PDP
26	Kayode Oguntoye	PDP	AD
27	Patrick Edediugwu	ANPP	PDP
28	Owelle Rochas Anayo Okorochoa (Ex-Governor of Imo State & a Senator representing Imo West Senatorial district)	PDP	ANPP, APC
29	Dr. Bukola Sariki (Fmr. Sen. President of Federal Republic)	PDP	APC
30	Dr. Bukola Sariki (Fmr. Sen. President)	APC	PDP
31	Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu (Ex-Governor Abia State)	PDP	PPA
32	Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu (Senator)	PPA	APC
33	Rt. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi (Ex-Governor of Rivers State)	PDP	APC
34	Dr. Chris Nwabueze Ngige (Fmr. Senator of the Federal Republic)	PDP	CAN
35	Dr. Chris Nwabueze Ngige (Ex-Governor of Anambra State, Senator & currently Min. of Labour & Employment)	PDP	APC
36	Ray Akanwa	PDP	ANPP
37	James Mako	AD	PDP
38	Alli Balogun (House of Rep)	AD	UNPP
39	Appolos Amodi (House of Rep)	PDP	NDP
40	Alhaji Atiku Abubakar (Ex Vice President of the Federal Republic)	PDP	CAN
41	Alhaji Atiku Abubakar (Ex Vice President of the Federal Republic)	ACN	PDP
42	Alhaji Atiku Abubakar (Ex Vice President of the Federal Republic)	PDP	APC
43	Alhaji Atiku Abubakar (2019 PDP President Candidate)	APC	PDP
44	Authur Nzeribe (Senator)	ANPP	PDP
45	Ali Modu Sheriff (Ex-Governor of Borno State & Senator of the Federal Rpublic)	ANPP	APC
46	Ali Modu Sheriff (Ex-Governor of Borno State & Senator of the Federal Republic)	APC	PDP
47	Ali Modu Sheriff (Ex-Governor of Borno State & Senator of the Federal Republic)	PDP	APC
48	Timipre Marlin Sylva (Ex-Governor of Bayelsa State)	PDP	APC
49	Mr. Peter Gregory Obi (Ex-Governor of Anambra & the running mate to the Presidential candidate of the PDP in 2019)	APGA	PDP
50	Barr. Godswill Obot Akpabio (Ex-Governor of Akwa-Ibom State, Senator & currently Min. of Niger Delta Affairs)	PDP	APC
51	Theodore Ahamefule Orji (Ex Deputy Governor, Governor of Abia State & a Senator of the Federal Republic)	PPA	PDP
52	Engr. Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso (Ex-Governor of Kano State & Senator of the Federal Republic)	PDP	APC
53	Engr. Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso (Ex-Governor of Kano State & Senator of the Federal Republic)	APC	PDP
54	Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu (Ex-Governor of Abia State, Presidential Aspirant & Senator)	PDP	PPA
55	Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu (Ex-Governor of Abia State, Presidential Aspirant & Senator)	PPA	PDP
56	Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu (Ex-Governor of Abia State, Presidential Aspirant & Senator)	PDP	PPA
57	Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu (Ex-Governor of Abia State, Presidential Aspirant & Senator of the Federal Republic)	PPA	APC

Sources: *Edet (2017: 3-4)*

From the list of defections above, it is obvious that the political defections, harlotries or prostitution occurred as a consequence of the inabilities of the fourth republic political parties to strictly

adhere to the expected rules of the game of politics which is as expected, Non-zero-sum- a game where no winner is meaning that the winner should embrace the loser and offer him or her hands of fellowship to retain his or her loyalty to the party and to avoid grievances, dissatisfaction and defection. On the contrary, the Nigerian case is Zero-sum-game, a situation in which the winner takes all. In some cases, there is no sacrifice of any sort at all to the loser. The actions of fourth republic politicians no doubt have lent credence to the facts of this study and exposed the extent of the rifts that exist between and among the members of the political parties in Nigeria's fourth republic. The reasons abound to the trend in party defections in recent time, such as intraparty conflicts orchestrated by the leaders of the political parties at the centre and state levels and lack of / ineffective party ideologies and manifestoes are of significance. No marked differences among ideologies of political parties hence they are easily accommodated.

CONCLUSION

How members of the fourth republic political parties in the country defect from one party to another have not only constituted what we termed political harlotry but has also provoked perturbing concern among political observers within and outside the shores of the country. It is important not to forget the fact that colonialism had a far-reaching impact on the development of the political culture, character or behaviour of Nigerian politicians. Since the pre-independence era up to date, politicians in the country have been involved in orchestrating vices that could trigger mass defections from one party to the other. According to Michael (2013: 85), lack of viable party ideology is a serious *raison d'etre* for cross-carpeting. To him, the reason for the alarming rate of defection or cross-carpeting in Nigeria cringes on lack of clear political ideology. Political parties in the country are not driven by any ideology or manifesto other than amassing wealth for selfish desires, a culture alleged to be inherited or transmitted by the first generation political parties in the history of the country. Tribal and regional politics initiated by the colonial administrators and political leaders of the pre-independent era is still very much visible in the post-independent political society. Participants and non-participants in party politics across the country are also not exempted from the perturbing circumstances leading to defection from one party to another in recent time. As stated earlier in this study, the actions and inactions of some individuals, as well as the alleged involvements of the nation's judiciary, particularly the Judges of the Federal High Courts and the Apex Court, have lent credence to the belief that the nation's democratic culture or system has been bastardized, the consequence of which is the criticism across the nation and beyond. It is imperative, therefore, to note that the defects in internal democracy, lack of clear ideology and manifesto, and the current trend in inter-party defection are not just threats to Nigerian democracy but are also detrimental to its development.

It is pertinent at this point to note that several reasons apart from the plethora of reasons enumerated above exist in Nigeria's situation. Although, it is not particularly wrong to defect from one party to another the manners in which this is orchestrated by the ruling parties at the centre and those dominating the politics of the respective federating units (i.e. the 36 states of the federation) repeatedly enjoys landslide victory in elections conducted in their domain, especially the Local Government elections, is a factor to be considered when discussing the reasons for party defection in the country. Also of note are the manners some individuals or group of individuals defect to another party to pursue the selfish and dubious interests that were denied them in another platform.

It becomes necessary at this point not to conceive the reasons behind this nuisance call defection or political prostitution from a single perspective, but from both the actions and inactions of the party leaders on the one hand and from the selfish and private interests of those desperate to pursue their selfish desires by all means on the other hand. In other words, it would be wrong to forget the fact that some politicians defect or move to the ruling party in their localities towards election period while some defect after party primaries when they have lost completely from the party primary or their interests were not represented or considered. From this standpoint, we make bold to conclude that the trend of inter-party defections is not just a culture or virus that has eaten deep into the minds and heart of Nigerian politicians but is also a perturbing threat to the development of democracy in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This recycling known as defection or carpet-crossing from one party to the other by politicians of the fourth republic can be eliminated or rather reduced to a reasonable minimum by the following suggestions or recommendations:

- Political parties of the fourth republic should as a matter of urgency rise up to the expectations of the citizenry through coherent and effective political ideologies and manifestoes. This will possibly re-orient and promote the political culture of the Nigeria citizens and politicians of all classes.

- Political parties of the fourth republic should also emphasize the need and pertinence of promoting internal democratic principles. This could be achieved through political and social enlightenment programmes. In other words, the leaders and members of these political parties should embrace the principles of internal democracy in their entirety.
- The Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) or Courts of competent jurisdiction should be strengthened by the relevant laws of the state or country to enforce compliance to Chapter V, Part 1, Section 68, particularly Subsection (1g) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic (as amended) which specifically contains the regulation against incessant and unconstitutional inter-party defections of members of the National Assembly.
- INEC should also rise to its constitutional responsibility of registration and deregistration of political parties as well as the control and regulation of financial fair play as enshrined in Part III, Section 221 -229 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic 1999 (as amended) and the Electoral Act 2015 (as amended). In other words, the government and leadership of the political parties in the state should as a matter of urgency check the excessive display of wealth by politicians to reduce it to a bearable minimum and provide level ground for eligible and qualified individuals to run for political offices rather than the money bag politicians who are in most cases not schooled in the act of governance.
- To avoid incessant intra and inter-party conflicts, and to eliminate political prostitution, political leaders should create a political environment conducive to accommodate all facet of the public and politicians alike. This is likely to encourage a wider political socialization and participation in the country.

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