

Party Defection and Sustenance of Nigerian Democracy

Jude Odigbo¹

¹ Federal University Wukari

Received: 14 December 2013 Accepted: 1 January 2014 Published: 15 January 2014

Abstract

It has always been the practice in Nigeria's unstable party democracy for people to defect to other parties with the intention to secure nominations from the party, and for a good number of them to return after elections to join the winning party to vie for positions in the government. The recent massive party defections by political gladiators in Nigeria were symbolic as it was the members of the ruling party that defected to opposition party and on a non election period. This paper examined the implications of this on democracy in Nigeria. It observed that this particular defection would help build strong opposition that would create a balance in the country's democracy by checking the excesses of the ruling party at any time. It also noted that party defections are integral part of democratic processes. However, it argued that since the present defections are not driven by fundamental ideological consideration, there is still a tendency that the opposition would still crumble in no distant time especially if the motive (which is to stop the incumbent president) is not achieved or even after the struggle as the bond cannot be strong outside ideology. The paper relied on content analysis and adopted abstractions from elite theory. It observed that lack of ideology and internal party democracy appears to have ignited the prevailing squabbles that orchestrated the recent exodus. The paper recommended social re-engineering, reorientation and mobilization that is directed towards inculcation of new values and the essence of entrenching acceptable philosophy in Nigeria's party system.

Index terms— Party, Defection, Sustenance, Democracy

1 INTRODUCTION

he practice of carpet-crossing, defection or party switching appears to have become an undying attribute of party politics in Nigeria. Carpetcrossing 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 (Adejuwon, 2013). 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). Subsequent republics are not exempted from defections and 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).

43 Explaining this long history and the consolidation of the trend in Nigerian political system, Mbah (2011:3)
44 observed that political party defection has become an increasingly permanent feature in the Nigerian democratic
45 experience. In fact, for over a decade now since the country returned to democratic governance (1999), party
46 defections and political instability are the greatest challenges confronting Nigeria's democracy. The usual practice
47 in the past has being for politicians to defect to other parties with promises of election tickets if they fail to secure
48 party nominations during their own party's primaries. Some who felt disenchanting or denied of a level playing
49 ground, defect to participate in the election, with some still having the intention of returning to their parties.
50 This has being the practice during election periods especially since 1999. The most recent major defection is
51 different from the usual experiences. It appeared to have heralded an irreconcilable stance of major political
52 gladiators in the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP). Indeed, the formation of splinter unit (New PDP) on
53 August 2013, under Kawu Baraje leadership typified the degree of disillusionment among the party bigwigs in
54 PDP.

55 Thus, absence of internal party democracy seems to have contributed to party defections in Nigeria. Indeed,
56 this gives rise to unhealthy power contest and intra-party feuds. Arguably, while it could be stated that the
57 defection by these members of the ruling People's Democratic Party in 2013 to opposition party could be linked
58 to 2015 elections, there is overwhelming evidence that crisis of internal party prompted the exodus. As a T Party
59 Defection and Sustenance of Nigerian Democracy result, intra-party squabbles, disputations have continued to
60 energies the growth of what could be seen as a sordid act of party defection. As was seen, the recent massive
61 party defections in Nigeria and the muzzy struggle that characterized the act were very fierce and intense, almost
62 cutting the breath of the party politics in Nigeria. Indeed, the situation in the other parties, especially the party
63 they defected to is not in any way better. There seems to be absence of internal party democracy in virtually all
64 political parties in Nigeria which always raise another; the issue of question of ideology. Following from the above,
65 it is important to note that party defections are not exclusive character of one party in Nigeria. It is a general
66 practice. Thus, the magnitude of the current defections and its impacts on the body polity raises fundamental
67 questions on the manifestation of the trend and sustainability of Nigerian democracy. Evidently, it shows a clear
68 indication that the phenomenon has the capacity of either derailing Nigerian democracy or reinforcing opposition
69 with the capacity to provide a guide for democratic consolidation. In fact, its persistency, ubiquity and growth
70 could provide a bleak future on the sustainability of party politics in Nigerian political system. Considering its
71 implications on quality of governance, peace, stability and the challenge of sustenance of Nigeria's democracy,
72 this paper seeks to establish the critical link between defections arising from internal party crisis and the extent
73 it has impacted on sustainability of Nigeria's democracy.

74 2 II.

75 3 Democracy and Defection: Conceptual Underpinnings

76 The spread and general acceptability of democracy as an appropriate form of governance tend to have increased
77 intellectual effort at achieving universality in the accepted definition of the concept. Scholars (Osaghae,
78 1992;Schumpeter, 1990;Nnoli, 2003;Appadorai, 2004;Dahl, 2000;Ake 2003; ??wa, 19991;Sen, 1999;Ake 2000;
79 L. Diamond, J. Hartlyn, J. Linz & M. Lipset 1989) have continued to dissect the concept of democracy in a
80 manner it would reflect global practices. In spite of their contributions, democracy is still devoid of generally
81 accepted definition. This could be attributed to structural inadequacy, cultural, environmental and societal
82 imperatives inherent in recipient societies which condition the operation and practice of democracy (Nwanegbo
83 & Odigbo 2013b). Hence, Osaghae, (1992) argued that regardless of the discrepancies that could be observed,
84 one fundamental objective of democracy is "how to govern the society in such a way that power actually belongs
85 to all people". More succinctly, Diamond e tal (1989) posited that democracy is a system of government that
86 congregates three vital stipulations of governance: (a) meaningful and extensive competition among individuals
87 and groups, especially political parties for political offices at regular intervals and excluding the use of force; (b) a
88 highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, at least through regular and
89 fair elections, such that no major (adult) social group is excluded; and (c) a level of civil and political liberties.
90 For them, these are requisite conditions. Indeed, to Nnoli (2003), it is a system of government usually involving
91 freedom of individuals in various aspects of political life, equality among citizens and justice in the relations
92 between the people and the government and the participation of the people in choosing those in government.
93 Earlier, Schumpeter (1990) defined democracy as an institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions
94 in which individuals acquire the power to decide, by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote. It
95 is a state with unlimited opportunities for adult participation in political life. Democracy does not function in
96 isolation, it is about the people. And its success is measured or dependent on the extent it has empowered people
97 to surmount their basic needs and enjoy unrestrained participation in the policy process (Unah, 1993). In fact,
98 what gives democracy meaning and substance is participation and authority of the people to determine who
99 rules. The extent of involvement encompasses the power to decide who rules, what policy to support and decision
100 which would benefit the greatest number of people. The absence of the above contaminates the functionality and
101 operation of democracy and democratization process. In such condition, democratic values inherently imbedded
102 in its operations tend to be neutralized making democracy to produce contradictory results.

103 On the other hand, defection could be seen as an act of swapping. Thus, party defection is the act of switching

104 from one party to another. According to Malhotra (2005) party defection is known by different nomenclatures-such
105 as "floor-crossing," "carpetcrossing," "party hopping," "dispute" and "waka [canoe]-jumping" (cited in Janada
106 2009; Mbah 2011). Indeed, party defection occurs in every political system. It is a global reality and an integral
107 part of political process. King and Benjamin (1986) investigated the rationale behind party defections especially
108 in America, and came to conclusion that party defection is most likely to coincide with important political events
109 such as changes in partisan control of political institutions, with changes in key economic indicators, and in times
110 of military conflict. For Castle and Fett, (1996) it is the ideologically cross-pressured members who are most
111 likely to change parties (cited in Nokken and Poole 2002).

112 However, Malhotra, in his analysis observed that in some countries party defections "are a non-issue and not
113 perceived as a problem," whereas in others the practice threatens government stability and is taken as very
114 serious (cited in Janada 2009). Understandably, this threat and instability arising from defections especially in
115 emerging democracies prompted enactment of anti-defection laws in some societies. Most of the anti-defection
116 laws emphasize parliamentary defection. For instance, India enacted various antidefection laws in 1973, 1985
117 and presently the 2003 anti-defection law. According to Malhotra, the 2003 law provides that a person can be
118 disqualified from serving in parliament for "voluntarily giving up the membership of his original party (cited in
119 Janada 2009).

120 The above legal provision appears to have reduced drastically cases of defection in the polity since one finds it
121 difficult to forfeit one's position or faces parliamentary expulsion. Interestingly, a similar law (antidefection law)
122 exists in Nigeria. However, major deficiencies and incongruence that fraught the 1999 constitution, its operation
123 and function have stalled the achievement of gains derivable from the law. For instance, the conflicting positions
124 of section 68 (1g) and 109(1) tends to weaken the enforcement. For instance, section 68 (1a) states that:

125 A member of the Senate or the House of Representatives shall vacate his seat in the House of which he is a
126 member if being a person whose election to the House was sponsored by a political party, he becomes a member
127 of another political party before expiration of the period for which that House was elected. Provided that his
128 membership of the latter political party is not as a result of a division in the political party of which he was
129 previously a member or of a merger of two or more political parties or factions by one of which he was previously
130 sponsored" (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999:34).

131 The fluidity in formations, mergers and demergers including the orchestrations of internal party crisis has made
132 that section difficult in application as the boundaries between mergers and demergers in Nigeria party politics
133 appear too thin, thereby creating justification for parliamentary defections. In the other vein, it is imperative
134 to note that in most developing political system especially in Latin America and Africa, party defections seem
135 not to be motivated by ideological consideration but several other mundane factors not unconnected with the
136 foundations of party politics in the regions. For instance, in most postcolonial states, parties emerged within the
137 context of religious, ethnic consideration and the financial capacity of few elites. In fact, many of them are driven
138 by such considerations and are ultimately seen as devoid of ideological coherence, heavily personality-driven and
139 relying on an ethnic support base (Carothers 2006). Ideology plays a pivotal role in prolonging the life span
140 of a political party. It neutralizes or reduces internal conflict thereby serving as a binding force. Nnoli (2003)
141 explaining that ideology is a very crucial aspect of politics, not only by serving as a cognitive structure for looking
142 at society generally and providing a prescriptive formula, that is, a guide to individual action and judgment, but
143 also as a powerful instrument of conflict management, self identification, popular mobilization and legitimization.

144 In fact, intra party crisis in Nigeria underlies the burgeoning state of party defections in Nigeria. For instance,
145 major parties in Nigeria, like the ruling Peoples Democratic Party, All Progressive Grant Alliance among others
146 are in severe internal crisis. These crises have corresponding impact on the political system, and sometimes ensue
147 in members defecting to other parties. Essentially, internal party democracy is a sine qua non for redressing deep
148 rooted animosity among members and reactivating the fortunes of these parties, since they have lost ideological
149 content. It is through this that parties would be able to select candidates that are capable and alluring for
150 elections. Scarrow (2004) In fact, internal party democracy would serve as a veritable platform for mediation
151 and conflict resolution among party faithful. Following from the above, it could be hypothesized that there are
152 serious ideological poverty in virtually all Nigerian political parties which appeared to have generated intra party
153 conflicts and in turn increased the rate of party defections.

154 4 III.

155 5 Theoretical Discourse

156 The study adopted the elite theory in explaining the interplay in the political horse trading and its impact in
157 evolving credible and open market democracy in Nigeria. The elite theory as developed by Vilfredo, Pareto,
158 Roberto Michels, Gaetano Mosca and Jose Ortega Gassat among others, hinges on the fact that every society
159 is composed of two classes of people (Varma 1975). The two classes are made of minority group who rule
160 and the majority being ruled. More specifically, Roberto Michel's "iron law of oligarchy" dwells on element of
161 organization, which exists in every kind of human society that strives for the attainment of a definite end (Varma
162 1975). In fact, Michels concluded that as a movement or party grows in size, more and more functions are to
163 be delegated to an inner circle of leaders (elites), and, in course of time, the members of the organization are
164 rendered less competent to direct and control them (see Varma 1975).

165 The above postulations mirror vividly the state of Nigerian political society. Arguably, the Nigerian elites
166 appeared to have succeeded in rendering the majority incapable of controlling them through the perfected process
167 of managing electoral frauds and heinous manipulation of state institutions. This is manifest in the total delusion
168 of the basic electoral principles symptomatic of the market democracy. Instead of opening up the democratic space
169 genuinely for people's participation, they created the kind of politics which places in the hands of the very
170 few elite the ultimate control of the political system, including the institutions; the political parties, electoral
171 institutions and agencies, security agencies, judicial organs, etc. That is 'machine politics' (see ??beanu, 2007).
172 Control of these institutions by the members of the ruling class creates a lot of fierce contests, bad bloods and
173 crisis in the political system.

174 Attached to this contest is the bad governance principles associated therewith in such societies. Ultimately,
175 associated with machine politics is the control of the state economy by such group of persons (the elites) and
176 the indulgence in the act of buying people's support and conscience and in forcing such support when corrupt
177 mobilization becomes difficult. Further to this is sharing the state resources among the members of the ruling
178 class. Considering that the society including the members of the class is not a monolithic existence, there is a
179 sustained contest among members of that class for the control of the machine as that also means control of the
180 distributive power. The winner usually takes all and the looser loses everything. Hence, the contest is usually
181 very fierce and petty. In the face of this contest, several activities take place, all surrounding the struggles for
182 the acquisition and utilization of the state power. They become victorious or to avert losing out, they play dirty
183 and sometimes, depending on their place in every power equation, engage in act of destabilization and in some
184 occasions, persistent defections. This is in their desperate move to align with other parties or groups where
185 they feel that their individual interest would be secured and by this heating up the polity. People tend to be
186 deluded into accepting flimsy reasons such as crisis, as what propels such defections without emphasizing their
187 (defectors) role in those crises. In many cases political elites tend to manipulate ethno-religious sentiments as
188 tools for gathering political support after defection (see the instance of the Western Regional House of Assembly).
189 Interestingly, the recipient parties in their desperation to get more members and strength accept the defectors
190 and present them in a manner they could be seen as political "saints" regardless of their previous misdemeanor.

191 6 IV.

192 Nigeria's Democracy Since 1999: Catalogues of Political Defection Nigeria's return to democratic governance in
193 1999 raised optimism that democratic practices and inherent qualities embedded in it would help to fastrack
194 Nigeria's development trajectory. This hope tends to be becoming a mirage. Nigeria since 1999 appears to have
195 been engulfed with series of confrontations, ethnoreligious conflict, economic instability, militancy, terrorism and
196 political squabbles. These crisis that rocked major political parties from 1999 till date instigated multiple political
197 party defections in this fourth republic. These defections as noted earlier were mainly to secure party platform
198 or nomination to contest elections. The fact that most of the defectors especially from the ruling parties at the
199 national and state levels later returned to their various parties lend credence to the above assertion. However,
200 there is no indication that the recent exodus in the ruling party would align with what seems to be a noticeable
201 awful character of Nigerian politicians or that there is any "chance of return" at least for now. This is because
202 both defectors and highly placed individuals in the ruling party stand at different extremity with none of them
203 ready to compromise. With this move, number of defection cases has continued to occur and appeared to have
204 overwhelmed the numbers prior to the present republic. Records of the major defections in the Nigeria's political
205 landscape since the commencement of the fourth republic were stated below: Understandably, it could be stated
206 that the above zigzag political roaming tends to be permissible specifically for the executive arm of government
207 under the 1999 constitution. However, such leverages are not extended to the parliament. It is outlawed by
208 virtue of the provision of section 68 sub-section. According to section 68 (1) of the 1999 constitution, a member
209 of the Senate or of the House of Representatives shall vacate his seat in the House of which he is a member if:

210 (g) being a person whose election to the House was sponsored by a political party, he becomes a member of
211 another political party before the expiration of the period for which that House was elected; Provided that his
212 membership of the latter political party is not as a result of a division in the political party of which he was
213 previously a member or of a merger of two or more political parties or factions by one of which he was previously
214 sponsored (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999:68).

215 Thus, the constitution seems to be explicit on the conditions that could warrant or would demand forfeiture
216 of one's seat in the Nigerian parliament. However, the constitution like in many other sections created gap in
217 the second part which states that such forfeiture is legitimately mandatory "provided that his membership of the
218 latter political party is not as a result of a division in the political party of which he was previously a member"
219 (section 68 (1) of 1999 Nigerian constitution). Considering the nature of Nigerian political parties and perhaps
220 more importantly the character of Nigerian politicians and the fact that no individual or agency is saddled with
221 the responsibility of determining when a party is divided or not, makes this section more complex and ambiguous.

222 Beyond constitutional complexities, experiences have shown that the general impact on the stability of the
223 system is terribly monumental especially when it disadvantaged the ruling party. For, instance, over 15 members
224 of the ANPP in the National Assembly have defected to the PDP since 2007 (Mbah, 2011). As a result, the
225 ANPP appeared to have been overwhelmed by the probable loss of its members to the PDP. On its part, the
226 ruling party tends to explain this as heroic, milestone and landmark decision motivated by the successes of the

227 party over a decade of providing leadership. In the senate, Dr Wahab Dosunmu, Senator Adeseye Ogunlere and
228 Senator Musulius Obanikoro all elected on the platform of Alliance of Democracy (AD) Lagos State defected
229 to join the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). Senator Arthur Nzeribe (Imo), Senator John Nwanunu
230 (Abia) Dr Usman Kadir (Kogi) the trio defected from the All Nigeria People Party (ANPP) to join the Peoples
231 Democratic Party (PDP). While Senator Satti Gogwin, Action Congress (Plateau) defected to join the ruling
232 party (PDP) (see Okparaji, 2010). Also, Patrick Osakwe (LP, Delta State); Patricia Akwasike, (ANPP, Nasarawa
233 State); and Sa'di Yauo (ANPP, Zamfara State) in 2010 defected to Peoples' Democratic Party (also see Baiyewu,
234 2012).

235 However, the recent defections from the ruling party to the opposition party have generated enormous tensions.
236 The exodus of thirty seven (37) members of House of Representatives and eleven (11) senators from the ruling
237 party (PDP) was matched with rancor and litigations. This is not unexpected given that party politics in Nigeria
238 are personalized and the seemingly non-institutionalization of political parties in Nigeria tends to increase the
239 magnitude of confrontations. Since parties are the creation of the most influential individuals in collaboration
240 with allies, the processes of conducting party affairs and regulating the behavior of members have remained hugely
241 conflictual. Arguably, it could be stated that the present trend may prosperously augment the size and growth
242 of opposition party, but it is still vague whether this growth could be translated into good leadership or to be
243 sufficient enough to check and condition the action of the ruling party. What is incontrovertible is that both the
244 opposition and government parties are bereft of ideology and are therefore not rooted on any major foundational
245 belief. The fact that both the abandoned and recipient parties are identical in virtually every attributes indicates
246 that the movement may persist yet the leadership gap may correspondingly broaden. In fact, such exodus has
247 remained ubiquitous over the time. The experiences in the first republic and subsequent republics where internal
248 party conflicts resulted to defections lend credence to the above assertion. Essentially, defections in Nigeria have
249 been more conflictual and indeed, seem unable to promote democracy and good governance. This is really one
250 of the predicaments of democracy in Nigeria over a decade. The reason for that is not unconnected with the
251 absence of major factors on party politics, ideology, etc.

252 V.

253 7 Ideology and the Challenge of Democratic Sustenance in 254 Nigeria

255 The scale of party defections and acrimonies, instability accompanying the act tends to suggest that defection
256 has become one of major threats and destabilizing factor to party politics and sustainable democratic practice
257 in Nigeria. Indeed, political party is essentially a requisite institution in the process of democratization and
258 democratic sustenance. Conventionally, political parties have been understood to rest their existence on sustained
259 ideological foundation. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, is to determine whether ideological status
260 of Nigerian parties is inextricably linked to perennial internal wrangling and to determine its implication on
261 democratic sustenance.

262 Ideology generally could be seen as a set of shared beliefs regarding the proper order of a society and the
263 means this could be achieved (Seliger, 1976;Gerring, 1997;Iyare, 2004;Omotola, 2009;Jost, Federico & Napier,
264 2009). According to Van Dijk (2006) an ideology is the foundation of the social representations shared by a social
265 group. As Omotola (2009) rightly noted, ideology functions as a means of self-identification, as an instrument of
266 conflict management, as a prescriptive formula and as a mobilizational and unifying force. Indeed, several other
267 scholars have seen ideology beyond the confines or views of specified party politics (Heberle, 1951; ??anshurst,
268 2005;Fischman & Law, 2005). For Heberle (1951) ideology of a movement in "a broad, non-technical sense" could
269 be seen as "the entire complex of ideas, theories, doctrines, values and strategic and tactical principles that is
270 characteristic of the movement.

271 The import of the above definitions is that since ideology is a shared belief, it has the potency of binding
272 people together regardless of their background, sex, religion, culture, status and orientation. It engenders peace
273 and reduces internal bickering thereby promoting decorum, growth and development which extend to the larger
274 polity. This does not mean also absence of conflict of interest, but a party that is fundamentally built on ideology
275 possesses the capacity to democratically managed conflicts of interest. Of course, the tendency that party faithful
276 may resort to compromises to accommodate other competing interest is certain. Buttressing this further, ??ost
277 (2006) asserted that different ideologies represent socially shared but competing philosophies of life and how it
278 should be lived (and how society should be governed), it stands to reason that different ideologies should both
279 elicit and express at least somewhat different social, cognitive, and motivational styles or tendencies on the part
280 of their adherents (cited in Omotola, 2009). Yet, it is endowed with internal value mechanisms for addressing
281 basic issues emanating from within.

282 Contrary to the above, several studies on political parties in Nigeria point to the fact that political parties in
283 Nigeria seem to be confronted with and indeed suffering from ideological deficiency (Omotola, 2009; Iyare, 2004).
284 This could be attributed to flawed foundation and wobbly foundations of these parties since 1960 which according
285 to Omotola (2009) have been largely responsible for their seeming ideological barrenness. He further argued that
286 despite all pretences to the contrary through their manifestoes, as much as the superficial classifications as the
287 "left" and "right", "progressive" and "conservative", Nigerian parties are bereft of clear ideological commitments.

288 Thus, while Omotola (2009) is of the opinion that this faulty origin of political parties in Nigeria is responsible for
289 the party's ideological barrenness, we emphasize further that the poverty of ideology is significantly accountable
290 for the prevailing political harlotry and party defections in the fourth republic. For instance, virtually all political
291 parties in Nigeria seem to have one internal crisis or the other. Sometimes these crises snowballed into full scale
292 conflict, leading to division, factionalization and sometimes even gruesome murder of members. For example, the
293 gruesome murder of former justice minister Bola Ige after indicating his willingness to resign his position and
294 return to help his party for the 2003 election and the murder of former PDP zonal leader Harry Marchall after he
295 defected to ANPP are instances that party politics in Nigeria is not guided by clear commitments and principles.

296 Thus, while we do not intend to engage on characterization or evaluating major components that drive party
297 formation and management in Nigeria such as ethnicity, religion, the role of money and influence of powerful
298 individuals, it is thus, important to note that sustaining Nigerian democracy has remained a herculean task
299 that may not be achieved with the present flawed machinery. Political party is an indispensable apparatus of
300 state. Party system that is not institutionalized and lacked the spicity, needed basic ingredients for regulating
301 conduct, aggregate opinion may definitely lack the capacity to sustain itself and the entire political system. In this
302 condition defections occur and may persist. However, it is important to note that defections are not the solution.
303 It can only offer the defectors short period of peace (if at all). For sustenance of democracy in Nigeria, there
304 is need to critically address basic problems that bordered on party formation, structure and management that
305 would be erected based on certain ideological principles. This is essential because just as Seliger (1976) rightly
306 observed "politics is inseparable from ideology". Fundamental among them is the establishment of internal party
307 democracy to give people opportunity to participate and protest on issues they feel strongly about and to get
308 redress within. Absence of that and death of ideology would obviously continue to drive defections in Nigeria
309 party politics.

310 8 VI.

311 9 Defection and Sustenance of Nigerian Democracy

312 It is commonly held that beyond government, the existence of credible, strong and challenging opposition is
313 important for the sustenance of democracy. The recent defection by a section of the ruling People's Democratic
314 Party (PDP) to the All Progressive Congress (APC) ordinarily ought to drive Nigerian democracy to such
315 situation of balance needed in any normal and established democracy for the practice in the country to consolidate.
316 Looking at the equation of the elected officers in the country before and after that defection, one would understand
317 that it really was a very significant development in the position of Nigeria party politics. It was a defection that
318 saw five (5) state governors, Eleven (11) Senators and Thirty-Seven (37) members of the House of Representatives
319 joining the APC to create a rather balanced power equation among the government party and opposition, giving
320 the posture of an increased possibility for a change in the next general election.

321 Thus, Nigeria might be presenting a democracy with two consolidated or strong parties that would ordinarily
322 place democracy on a competitive ground. That as stated at the early part of this paper is not only good but
323 required. Incidentally, quite some thick clouds cover both the PDP and APC, making the picture unclear. This
324 calls for deeper inquiry in the nature of these parties to aid our arrival to an acceptable conclusion. One basic
325 consideration is to determine if the parties, PDP that has being in government at the centre for over thirteen
326 (13) years now and APC have major differences. Has PDP's long stay in power and the ability to maintain
327 high population of 'members' made it sustainable? Has the APC, just by its ability to merge with others and
328 assuming the "physical" status of a big opposition (or even ruling) party made its position as party sustainable
329 enough to make a change in the system. What appears common in Nigeria is that virtually all the political
330 parties have very fluid nature. Beyond not being established on any principle, they are easily formed, reformed,
331 changed, merged, demerged and disintegrated. To help our analysis, there is need therefore to establish the
332 measure of sustainability of political parties and infer from that if the parties in Nigeria, especially the party that
333 emerged from the merger and defection (APC) acquired the strength to create the needed balance that would
334 make Nigerian democracy strong.

335 Generally, a party's sustainability can be measured by its level of adaptability, its resource adequacy, the
336 presence of mechanisms of internal conflict resolution, and the extent to which the party evolves a continuous
337 process of self reincarnation through the positive leadership recruitment and injection of new ideas (wanjohi,
338 2003: 239). It can be measured in terms of the size of its core membership as well as the character and
339 organizational capabilities of its core leadership. The more homogenous the core membership and the more
340 focused the leadership, the more sustainable a party will be (Wanjohi, 2003). He further explains that political
341 parties may be viewed like other important organizations whose institutions sustainability is a function of a clear
342 mission based on the leaders' vision. He further called this entrepreneurial viewpoint.

343 Beyond every other consideration Wanjohi (2003) explained that political party's sustainability is dependent
344 on its ability to stay focused on its mission and to be able to transform itself into many forms as may be inspired
345 either by the vision of its leaders or by the prevailing political conditions. Such include mutating into a different
346 type or evolving a new mode of operation. ANC in South Africa under the apartheid regime was able to evolve
347 this adaptable character to survive and achieve its goals. Such too could be seen in the manifestation, through

348 the youth's wing and Zikist movement that came with the NCNC in the Nigerian first Republic to survive certain
349 colonial policies and achieve its objectives of wresting sovereignty out of the hands of the colonialists.

350 We may need to take the other factors one after the other to arrive at a good assessment of the new merged
351 party. First, the capacity of the new political party to be adaptable to changing circumstances in the political
352 system determines to a large extent how the political party is. It can be explained as how the political party is
353 able to exist and sustain itself within the various changes and circumstances it meets and be able to survive it.
354 Looking at the most celebrate merger that was built through the defections of some PDP chieftains and their
355 followers, it has actually shown the dynamic characters of the leaders of that party to prepare itself for sustenance
356 in the face of the challenge facing them in elections against a dominant PDP country. However, it has to be
357 explained that this is not the first time such mass organization was built as a political party in Nigeria. Usually,
358 preparatory to elections, political parties have usually sought alliance which many of the time led to defections,
359 mergers and birth of a new bigger party.

360 Incidentally, the same core organization in this new experiment has always found themselves in these
361 arrangements. Thus, they have usually not been able to adapt to the turmoil that go with primaries and elections
362 in Nigeria. Of course, the principles of democracy have in-built mechanisms to control internal insurrections.
363 However, the undemocratic character of these parties has consistently created problems for them. In fact,
364 the undemocratic nature of these organizations usually makes it very difficult for them to survive and to be
365 sustainable. Already, APC is beginning to manifest such traits with the outcome of the recently concluded party
366 convention that saw their election of national leaders of the party. The fact that one of the contestants for the
367 position of party chairman who was formerly of PDP, Tom Ikimi has returned to PDP lend credence to this
368 assertion.

369 The above situation indicates absence of genuine internal party democracy. Close to it also, is the absence of
370 good mechanism of intra-party conflict resolution. Indeed, with obvious injustice in the system, any mechanism
371 puts in place will rest on nothing strong to solve problems. It will equally not allow leadership recruitment to
372 be open and would surely stifle new ideas. Looking at APC, it still retains those crops of leaders that were at
373 the centre stage in the second republic (especially UPN) and since 1999 under AD, through ACN to the present
374 new merger. Yet, with good percentage of former PDP members who had defected to the APC. What may look
375 appealing is the new crowd thrown into the party (its new members). Incidentally, describing these people as core
376 members of a political party requires establishing the level of commitment that these (especially new) members
377 have for the party.

378 The next problem is the challenge of resources. Conventionally, one of the most reliable sources of funding
379 political parties is party membership dues. In Nigeria, the culture of having "party financiers" as few members of
380 the party who by that status almost take over the party structure makes it difficult for one to safely argue that
381 any political party in Nigeria has a sustainable base. If those financiers decide to withhold their supports and
382 finances, just like some PDP Governors did at the height of their intra-party difficulties in 2013, the finance of the
383 party crumbles. Some of the credible resource basis for political parties is returns from investments. Obviously,
384 no political party in Nigeria has such resources not to think of sustaining it. For the government and opposition
385 party, contributions from members in political positions form the strongest source of funding, complementing
386 and sometimes constituting part of the major financiers.

387 10 VII.

388 11 Conclusion

389 From the analysis, it could be stated that one of the major challenges for sustaining Nigerian democracy in the
390 fourth republic is the perennial defections arising from internal party crisis. With huge number of defections, the
391 present republic is facing the problem of stability. This is mainly because of ideological deficiencies among parties
392 and the drive by influential individuals to privatize a political party. Based on the above, this paper concluded
393 that resolving the recurrent defection among party members or ending the persistent defection would demand
394 rethinking and a paradigm change from the hitherto amalgam of political profit making allies representing political
395 parties to erecting party systems that are ideological rooted. More importantly, is the critical role of the civil
396 society groups and state agencies in reversing the present abnormality. Arguably, the beneficiaries of the present
397 rot may pose serious obstacle in this direction. However, sustaining Nigerian democracy demands a sustained
398 radical, social re-engineering, re-orientation and mobilization that would be directed towards inculcation of new
399 values and essence of entrenching acceptable philosophy in the Nigeria's party system.



Figure 1: Figure 1 :

- 400 [Seliger ()] , M Seliger . *Ideology and Politics* 1976. George Allen and Unwin.
- 401 [Van Dijk ()] , T Van Dijk . *Politics, Ideology and Discourse* 2006. Elsevier. p. .
- 402 [Wanjohi (ed.) ()] *African Political Parties, Evolution, Institutionalization and Governance*, N Wanjohi . Salih
403 M. A. (ed.) 2003. London: Pluto Press. (Sustainability of Political Parties in Kenya)
- 404 [Iyare ()] ‘An Overview of Political Parties in Nigeria’. T Iyare . *Governance: Nigeria and the World. Lagos:*
405 *Center for Constitutionalism and Demilitarization*, S Odion-Akhaine (ed.) 2004.
- 406 [Schumpeter ()] *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, J Schumpeter . 1990. New York: Harper and Row.
- 407 [Baiyewu ()] *Defections and the Survival of Deocracy. Punch Newspaper, 14 th October*, L Baiyewu . 2012. p. 8.
- 408 [Ake ()] *Democracy and Development in Africa*, C Ake . 2003. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- 409 [Mosha, F. N. (April 28th)] ‘Democracy and Governance in Africa’. *Africa Leadership Forum* Mosha, F. N. (ed.)
410 April 28th. (As Part of Papers)
- 411 [Awa (ed.) ()] *Democracy and Governance in Africa: Preliminary Statement*, E Awa . Aderinwale, A. & (ed.)
412 1991.
- 413 [Nwanegbo and Odigbo ()] ‘Democracy and Institutionalization of Poverty’. J Nwanegbo , J Odigbo . *Journal of*
414 *African Studies and Development* 2013b. 5 (5) p. .
- 415 [Sen ()] ‘Democracy as a Universal Value’. A Sen . *Journal of Democracy* 1999. 10 (3) p. .
- 416 [Diamond et al. ()] *Democracy in Developing Countries*, L Diamond , J Hartlyn , J Linz , & M Lipset . 1989.
417 Boulder: Lynne Reiner Publishers.
- 418 [Osaghae (ed.) ()] *Ethnicity and Democracy*, E E Osaghae . Ayo F. (ed.) 1992. Ibadan: Bookcraft Ltd.
419 (Understanding Democracy)
- 420 [Unah ()] *Fundamental Issues in Government and Philosophy of Law*, J Unah . 1993. Ikeja: Jojo Educational
421 Research and Publisher Ltd.
- 422 [Gerring ()] ‘Ideology: A Definitional Analysis’. J Gerring . *Political Research Quarterly* 1997. 50 (9) p. .
- 423 [Nnoli ()] *Introduction to Politics*, O Nnoli . 2003. Enugu: PACREP. (Revised 2nd Edition)
- 424 [Janada ()] *Laws against Party Switching, Defecting, or Floor-Crossing in National Parliaments. The Legal*
425 *Regulation of Political Parties*, K Janada . 2009. (the Working Paper 2)
- 426 [Varma ()] *Modern Political Theory*, S P Varma . 1975. New Delhi: PVT Ltd.
- 427 [Barnhurst ()] ‘News Ideology in the Twentieth Century’. K Barnhurst . *Diffusion of the News Paradigm.*
428 *NORDICOM: Nordic Information Center for Media and Communication Research*, S Hoyer, H Pottker (ed.)
429 2005.
- 430 [Omotola ()] ‘Nigerian Parties and Political Ideology’. S Omotola . *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in Social*
431 *Sciences* 2009. (3) p. .
- 432 [Nokken and Poole (2002)] T Nokken , K Poole . *Congressional Party Defection in American History. Being*
433 *a Paper prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association*, (San
434 Francisco) 2002. August 29.
- 435 [Adejuwon ()] *Of Carpet Crossing and Old Wine in New Bottle. Newswatch, 23 rd December*, L Adejuwon . 2013.
436 p. 21.
- 437 [Dahl ()] *On Democracy*, A Dahl . 2000. London: Yale University Press.
- 438 [Mbah ()] ‘Party Defection and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria -1999 -2009’. P Mbah . *Afro Asian Journal*
439 *of Social Sciences* 2011. 2 (2) p. .
- 440 [Jost et al. ()] ‘Political Ideology: its Structure, Functions and Affinities’. J Jost , C Federico , J Napier . *Annu.*
441 *Review Psychol* 2009. (Retrieved from arjournals.annualreviews.org)
- 442 [Okparaaji (2010)] *Political Party, Defection and the Law. The Tide*, P Okparaaji . 2010. 1 st February.
- 443 [Heberle ()] *Social Movements: An Introduction to Political Sociology*, R Heberle . 1951. New York: Appleton-
444 Century-Crofts.
- 445 [The Constitution of Nigeria’s Federal Republic ()] *The Constitution of Nigeria’s Federal Republic*, 1999. (Fed-
446 eral Government of Nigeria)
- 447 [Ake ()] *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa. Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research*
448 *in Africa*, C Ake . 2000.
- 449 [King and Benjamin (1986)] *The Stability of Party Identification Among US Representatives: Political Loyalty,*
450 *1789-1984. Being a Paper Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Convention*, G King , G
451 Benjamin . 1986. 4 th May.
- 452 [Appadorai ()] *The Substance of Politics*, A Appadorai . 2004. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- 453 [Carothers ()] *The Weakest Link: Aiding Political Parties in New Democracies*, T Carothers . 2006. Washington
454 DC. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- 455 [Fischman and Law ()] ‘What is Judicial Ideology, and How should we Measure it?’. J Fischman , D Law .
456 *Journal of Law and Policy* 2005. (8) p. .