

**POLITICS OF PARTY DEFECTION AND CROSS-CARPETING: IMPLICATION
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY IN EDO STATE**

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines implication of politics of party defection and cross-carpeting on Edo State sustainable democracy. The quantitative methods were adopted and using systematic sampling technique sixty (60) respondents were selected based on their geographical spread. Data obtained were analysed with both descriptive and inferential statistical method using statistical package for social scientist (SPSS). Findings among others reveal that; the fact is that defections have created more enmity among members of the parties such that they play bad politics with every issue that borders the wellbeing of Edolites such as, security challenges and farmers herdsmen crisis at the expense of credible and objective governance. One of the commonest challenges of defection is the unhealthy rivalry and unconstructive criticism between PDP and APC members which thus affects voting behaviour of the electorates and threatens democratic sustainability in the study area. The study recommends amongst others that; **since** cross-carpeting is usually triggered by intra or inter party conflict, it is recommended that political parties should be re-engineered from mere institutions for acquiring political power to effective institutions that are capable of mediating and reconciling interests and conflicts.

KEY WORDS: Politics, Party defection, Cross-carpeting and implication for sustainable democracy

INTRODUCTION

Democracy has been adjudged the best form of government because it defines powers responsibility/functions, procedures etc of government, conception of civil rights and individual freedom, among other things. Here, all citizens are assumed to have certain inalienable rights which are usually guaranteed in the constitution, (Avidime and Obi, 2018). Right to freedom of expression/ association/religion, right to life, right to human dignity, right of children and other minority such as women or ethnic group. The philosophical basis of these rights and freedom of course is the value orientation which underpin western society. Indeed, some of these rights are derived from ideological framework of the ideology of the west which promotes individualism, competition, appropriation or property acquisition (Avidime and Obi, 2018).

On the other hand, Party switching or defection which is the second variable of this research has assumed a preposterous dimension since Nigeria returned to democratic governance in 1999. Defection has indeed become a routine and part and parcel of political flesh in Nigeria. The spate of party defection has not only threatened the country's fledgling democracy, but has also rubbished its underlying philosophies. It has further resulted into gross and acute democratic instability in which the country is currently enmeshed. In short, party switching in Nigeria constitutes one of the strong currents of reversal that the country is contending with. The nation's newspapers are always inundated with reports on party switchers and how they are celebrated at the state Houses of Assembly and the National Assemblies. Party switching aptly described as "political prostitution" is fast becoming the hallmark of Nigeria's democracy.

What democracy depicts in Nigeria continues to manifest clearly individual's quest for recognition or self-preservation rather than the greater purpose of service to the people and nation as enshrined in the letters of the definition of democracy. This systemic behaviourism by so called self-styled politicians in Nigeria where Alhaji Atiku Abubakar defected to APC in 2015 for presidential ticket and later cross-carpeted to PDP in 2020, Kwankwanso crossed

to APC in 2015 and returned to PDP in 2020, Orji Uzo Kalu from PDP to APC in 2020, Senator Elijah who was accused of molestation in 2020 from PDP cross carpeted to APC in 2020, the Governor of Ebonyi State who was two times governor from PDP and still the current governor cross carpeted to APC in chase of his presidential ambition and 4 times deputy senate president senator Ike, Ekweremadu defected from PDP to APC in 2020 for his gubernatorial ambition, and Kogi State where in the western senatorial district Senator Dino Melaye of APC defected to PDP and Smart Adeyemi of PDP defected to APC in pursuit of Kogi West Senatorial district from 2015-2020, and recently in Edo State in 2020, Pastor Izeh Iyamu of the then 2015 flag bearer of PDP and his supporters defected to APC, while Godwin Obaseki and his deputy Philip Shaibu and majority of the LGA chairpersons defected from APC to PDP and clinch the party ticket and eventually won over the candidate of the embattled former PDP candidate. This has reduced the quality of opposition and regional balance affecting the capacity and ability for checks and balances which is compromised weakening the process and system of governance for probity (Smith, 2012). Edo State politics has witnessed series of political defections in the last 5 years of power shift from PDP to APC with politicians decamping from one political party to the other.

Our aim is not to come up with an explanatory framework on party defections in Edo State and Nigeria as a whole, but most importantly to analyse a new framework and proffer explanations on why political party defection has become an increasingly permanent feature in Nigerian democratic experience. Then, find an escape root towards a secure future for democratic process in Edo State.

Objectives of the paper

- i. To ascertain the extent of party defection and cross-carpeting in Edo State
- ii. To examine the degree at which party defections and cross-carpeting affects the consolidation of Edo State Democracy

- iii. To find out if party defections and cross-carpeting affect political stability of Edo State.

Research Methods

This research work adopted survey research method and made use of primary and secondary data as the main source of data collection through the instrument of structured and unstructured questionnaire. The study randomly selects 60 respondents using. Data obtained were analysed descriptively using frequency table.

Party Defection in the Fourth Republic (1999 to Date)

Party switching has become a recurring decimal in the fourth Republic when Nigeria returned to democratic rule. The spate of party switching since 1999 has assumed preposterous dimensions. In 1999, Chief Evan Enwerem, having lost the gubernatorial primaries in the All Peoples Party (APP) in Imo State, defected and joined the People's Democratic Party (PDP) on whose ticket he won a senatorial seat. His defection was rewarded as he was elected the Senate President (Odum, 2002). In Plateau State Alhaji Alhassan Shu'aibu defected from the APP and joined the PDP in 1999. In Cross River State, not less than seven prominent All Peoples Party and Alliance for Democracy members have defected to the People's Democratic Party (Ezia, 2015: 6). Evidently, the direction of defection from 1999 to 2011 shows that it is one-sided, and was essentially into the PDP. Only little percentage seemed to be defecting from PDP to other parties to form a new political party. However, there is nothing wrong in people switching if they do not find the programmes of their party in consonance with their ideals. It becomes dubious when politicians begin to mortgage their consciences as well as seek to pursue their private and selfish interest in the name of defection. This may have stemmed from the mere fact that politicians are poor and desperate to hold public office as a means of accumulating wealth.

In advanced democracies, cross carpeting is done on principle, rather than on selfish and personal interest. What we are witnessing today is political prostitution which lacks political morality. In 2003, Wahab, Obanikoro, Senator Ogunlere and Senator Musilieu all

from Lagos State were elected on the platform of Alliance for Democracy (AD) but defected to join PDP. Chief Arthur Nzeribe (Imo) Senator Nwanunu (Abia), Dr. Usman Kabir (Kogi), the trio defected from All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) to join the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Senator Patrick Osakwe representing Delta North defected from PDP to Accord Party (AP). Not long enough, the elected Senator also abandoned AD and defected to PDP alleging division within the party. Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari the former Speaker House of Representative also jettisoned PDP for CPC (Ezia, 2015: 7). A chronicle of defection shows that the most important cases of defection are that of the former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar. He was a founding member of the PDP, and defected to the Action Congress (AC) after a running battle with the former President Olusegun Obasanjo.

In 2007, he contested the presidential elections on the platform of AC, but lost to the late President Umaru Yar'Adua. In 2015, Atiku went back to the PDP where he contested the presidential primaries. Before Atiku's defection, Ondo and Edo States witnessed defection of members of the opposition parties to the party of the incumbent governor. Edo State witnessed a large defection of members of the PDP to the AC, which is the Governor's party (Agina, 2010:3). In that period, Ondo state saw a mass defection of PDP members to the Labour Party (LP) of which the incumbent governor is a member. In both cases, the cross-carpeting were an aftermath of political battles and in-fighting. In Abia State, Comrade Uche Chukwuemerijie elected on the platform of the then ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) defected to the Progressives People Alliance (PPA).

Chief Sergeant Awuse, former Chairman Board of Directors, Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) defected from (PDP) to become the gubernatorial candidate of Democratic People's Party (DPP). Alhaji Attahiru Bafarawa, former governor of Sokoto State elected on the platform of All Peoples Party (APP) abandoned the party to form the Democratic People's Party (DPP) and became its presidential candidate in 2007 general

elections. Alhaji Attahiru Bafarawa discarded the party he harboured to establish for the Action Congress of Nigeria (I). Chief Orji Kalu left the PDP to form the Progressives Peoples Alliance (PPA) and became its presidential candidate in 2007 general elections. Chief Orji Kalu damped membership of PPA for CPC. The former military head of state, Rtd. General Muhammad Buhari who contested against for President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2003 and 2007 elections under the banner of ANPP found his way to Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). He was the presidential flag bearer of the party in 2011 election.

Ahead of the 2015 general elections, the opposition parties namely I, CPC, ANPP and a faction of APGA for the first time in the history of the country's politics formed a strong merger that gave birth to the leading opposition party called All Progressives Congress (APC). At the peak of the merger, some chieftains of the APC such as former governor of Kano State, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, his Sokoto and Borno counterparts, Alhaji Attahiru Bafarawa and Senator Ali Modu Sheriff defected to the PDP accusing some APC leaders of overbearing influence (Ezea, 2015: 11). As the 2015 general elections draw nearer, it appears that the country operates a two-party system, as only the PDP and the APC seem to be holding sway nationally (Baiyewu, 2015: 13). At the peak of the intra-party crisis within the PDP that rocked the party under leadership of Alhaji Bamanga Tukur as the national chairman of the party, five governors defected to APC. Just a few days after the PDP lost the presidential election to the APC; there have been mass defections of politicians from the PDP to APC.

From the Southwest to the North, it is hurricane defection of politicians to the APC. It is only in Southeast that such moves have not been witnessed openly. Some of these defectors include former National Legal Advisor PDP, Mr. Olusola Oke, former governor of Edo State, Osarhiemen Osunbor, the former Minister of Justice Mike Aondoakaa, Prof. Tony Ijobor (SAN), Major General Lawrence Onaja (Rtd), former Speaker House of Representatives, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, former governor of Sokoto State, Alhaji Aliyu Magatarda Wammako, former governor of Kano State, Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, Rotimi

Amaechi among others (Baiyewu, 2015:16). Party switching certainly predates Nigeria's independence.

Before the 2015 general elections and immediately after the victory of the opposition party coalition; the APC over the PDP, many politicians and members from the losing side henceforth begin to embark on mass defection to the victorious party. As at last count, many former leaders, ex-government appointees, lawmakers, well-known contractors and even some support groups of the former President Jonathan's presidential campaign then have joined the APC. Although, there was no certain proportion of defectors from APC to PDP, but APC had much greater proportion especially after the party had won the presidential seat in the 2015 general elections. From Katsina, the home state of the president General Muhammad Buhari, two former gubernatorial aspirants on the platform of the PDP in the state, Alhaji Kabir Barkiya, and Alhaji Tukur Jikamshi, have defected to the APC.

Also, a former Military Governor of Borno, Col. Abdulmumini Aminu (rtd), eight serving members of the Katsina State House of Assembly and two former commissioners, Nasidi Danladi and Aminu Jamo have also defected from PDP to APC. One of the most significant switching is the defection of the former Speaker House of Representatives, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal which spurred a very serious political upheaval at the National House of Assembly. Tambuwal was denied entrance to the House by some members of the House especially those under the platform of the then ruling party, PDP. Tambuwal had during plenary told his colleagues that he heeded the calls of the members of his constituency to dump the PDP. The Speaker said, "based on the provision of the 1999 constitution, and having regard to the development of the PDP in my own state, Sokoto, I hereby announce my membership of the APC. Let me register my profound application to all of you my colleagues for the unflinching support you have continued to extend to me for the overall national interest and development of our democracy" (Oladimeji, 2015:2). The defection ended the months of

speculations over his political future. It also threw up questions on whether he would resign as speaker, be impeached or remain in office

Another important defector is Atiku Abubakar, the former vice president of Nigeria from May 1999 to May 2007, who has been a presidential aspirant since 2007. While pursuing the highest seat in the land, he had moved from PDP to the now-defunct AC, he defected back to PDP then to APC. After losing the APC's primary election to General Muhammad Buhari (Rtd), he later became an ardent supporter of Buhari (Ezigbo, 2015: 4).

A pioneer member of the PDP and its former National Legal Advisor, Chief Olusola Oke, and a three-time Senator from Ondo Central, Gbenga Ogunniya, led some other leaders and their supporters to defect to the APC. Also, a former Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives and founding member of the PDP, Prince Chibudom Nwuche, has resigned his membership of the party, citing frustrations at the party's non-adherence to internal democratic rules. In Cross River State, a PDP stalwart and former ambassador to Mali, Chief Sonny Abang, has resigned membership of the former party and joined the APC. Owelle Rochas Okorocha, the controversial governor of Imo State, won the hardly-contested governorship election in Imo State in 2011 under the APGA. He has been a member of almost all the political parties in Nigeria. He is also a one-time presidential aspirant. Governor Okorocha surprised everybody in February in 2014 when he took his supporters from the faction of APGA and defected to the newly formed APC. Rotimi Amaechi, the controversial governor who became governor of Rivers State through court ruling in October 2007 after he was controversially substituted before the election also joined the train of politicians that defected to APC late 2014 after irreconcilable differences with the presidency that lasted for months amidst conflicts and tension that almost consumed Rivers State.

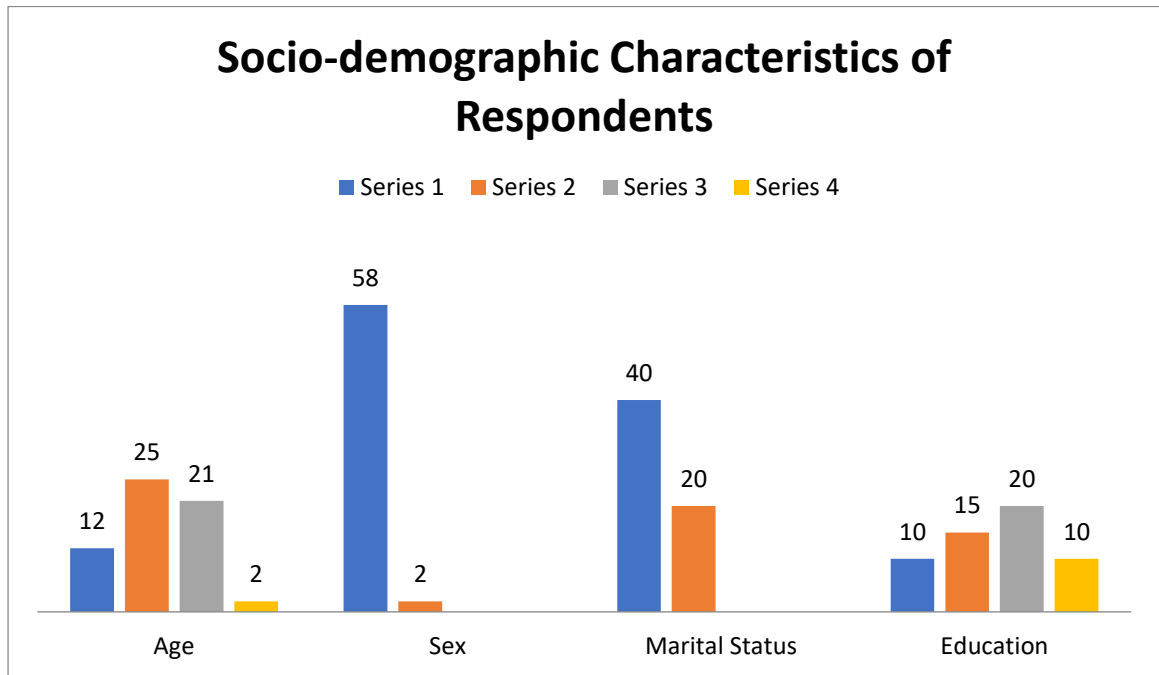
Chief Tom Ikimi, the former minister of Foreign Affairs under the late General Abacha, was the founding member and in board of trustees of the now-defunct APP. In September 2001, he defected to the PDP. In 2006, he was among the founding members of the now-defunct AC and led the party to win governorship elections in 2007, and also in 2012 in

Edo State. Ikimi was also saddled with the responsibility of heading the Merger Steering Committee of the defunct AC, ANPP, CPC and faction of APGA that coalesced into APC, following his inability to clinch the party's chairmanship position. In August 2014, he defected to the PDP. Another important figure, the pioneer chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu who was the presidential flag-bearer of the now-defunct AC in the 2011 presidential election also defected to the PDP in August this year (2015) citing the pursuit of a "good cause" rather than selfish desires as his reason. In Kano State, Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso became governor of the State in 1999, but lost his re-election in 2003. In 2011, he was re-elected for a second term.

Kwankwaso left PDP for the APC arguing that neither the presidency nor the party leadership had shown any respect to him or his office. With more cases of switching from the PDP to the APC in the days ahead, what is now agitating the minds of political analysts is the likely implication of the gale of defections on the quest for a virile democratic environment. The question is how the PDP will and other parties in Nigeria survive in order to continue to play their vital role in acting as checks to possible excesses of the now-ruling party, APC. Because without a strong opposition party, Nigeria can easily move into the realm of one-party system where all the elements of democracy will assume different characters (Ezea, 2015). Some Nigerian politicians attribute political defections to intimidation and lack of internal democracy in their party. Others attribute their political defections to lack of followership of their parties outside the shore of the region.

Yet to some, Nigerian politicians switch parties in order to improve or contribute to the process of democratic consolidation in the country. However, this study comes to terms with the prevailing view that most of the politicians in Nigeria defect to other parties because of their self-interest rather than for the common good which has injuriously affected democratisation in Nigeria.

Result and Discussion of Findings



Source: Field Survey, 2021

Figure 1, presents information on socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in the study areas. Findings shows that 12 respondents (20%) falls within the age of 18-30, 25 respondents (42.%) falls within the age of 31-40, 21 respondents (35%) falls within the age of 41-50, while 2 respondents (3%) within the age of 51 and above. This indicated that majority of the respondents to the questionnaires falls within the age bracket of 31-40 years. Findings further revealed that 58 respondents (97%) were male while 2 respondents (3%) are female. Investigating into marital status of respondents, it was discovered that 40 respondents (67%) were married 20 respondents (33%) were single. On educational attainment of the respondents, findings shows that 10 respondents (17%) are SSCE/GCE holders, 15 respondents (25%) has ND/NCE, 20 respondents (33%) are HND/B.Sc. Holders, 10 respondents (17%) has

MB/M.Sc./MA, while 5 respondents (8%) has Ph.D and above. This indicates that study participants were educated enough to contribute meaningfully to the study.

Causes of politics of party defection among members of PDP and APC between 2015-2019 elections

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Poor party performance | 8 | 13% |
| Lack of internal Democracy | 15 | 25% |
| Prospects of acquiring political office | 10 | 17 |
| Poor ideology and Corruption | 17 | 28 |
| Hijacking of Power by the elder statesmen in the party | 10 | 17 |
| Total | 60 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 1, presents identified variables that led to politics of party defection among members of the PDP and APC. Data contained in the table shows that Poor party performance (13%), Lack of internal Democracy (25%), Prospects of acquiring political office (17%), Poor ideology and Corruption (28%) and Hijacking of Power by the elder statesmen in the party (17%). These findings show that, there are different factors that influence defection of politicians to another party in Nigeria. Some politicians switch to another party to get into office/power. Therefore, personal gain and the lure of office motivate some defectors to change parties. Another factor similar to the above-mentioned factor is that politicians switch to parties that maximise their prospect of re-election because they lose hope in their dumped party. This suggests that the motive for defection is mainly to advance the political interests of the defectors and to create access to the wealth of the nation. What is also pertinent is that, defection occurs when the defector could not fulfil or realise his/her political aspiration under his/her original party.

Reason has been that politics in Nigeria is associated with wealth. Therefore, elective post is the major avenue of upward mobility, status, power and wealth (Ogundiya, 2009). Many politicians in Nigeria are therefore in politics, not because of any high quest to serve for altruistic reasons, but for personal enrichment and self-aggrandisement: political appointments, contracts, and all forms of patronage.

What is the volume of part defection among members of APC and PDP between 2015 and 2019?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Many | 60 | 50% |
| Few | - | 0% |
| No Idea | - | 0% |
| Total | 60 | 100% |
| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
| I agree | 15 | 25% |
| I strongly agree | 20 | 33% |
| I disagree | 10 | 17% |
| I strongly disagree | 5 | 8% |
| No idea | 10 | 17% |
| Total | 60 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2 above shows that total respondents 60 (100%) indicates that the volume of people defecting among members of the APC and PDP many. Findings further revealed that 15 respondents (25%) agree that these defectors have been able to mobilize their supporters, 20 respondents (33.3%) strongly agreed, 10 respondents (17%) disagree, 5 respondents (8.3%) strongly disagree, 10 respondents (17%) have no idea. These indicate that, these defectors have been able to mobilize their supporters. The table further shows that 30 respondents (50%)

believe there are sanctions against defectors by the parties, 20 respondents (33%) believe there are no sanctions against defectors by the parties, while 10 respondents have no ideas, this indicates that majority of the respondents to the questionnaires think there are sanctions against defectors by the parties.

Do you think that defection affected voter’s behaviour in the course of the 2015 and 2019 Election?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| I agree | 10 | 17% |
| I strongly agree | 40 | 67% |
| I disagree | 5 | 8% |
| I strongly disagree | 1 | 1% |
| No idea | 4 | 7% |
| Total | 60 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 3 above shows that 10 respondents (17%) think that this defection affected voter’s behaviour in the course of 2019 State of House of Assembly election, 40 respondents (67%) strongly agreed, 5 respondents (8%) disagreed, 1 respondent (1%) strongly disagreed, while 4 respondents (7%) have no idea. This indicates that, most respondents think this defection affected voter’s behaviour in the course of the 2015 and 2019 elections. The table further shows that 4 respondents (6.7%) agree that the parties expected these defection, 2 respondents (3.3%) strongly agreed, 30 respondents (50%) disagree, 19 respondents (31.7%) strongly disagree, while 5 respondents (8.3%) have no idea. This indicated that, the parties were not expecting this defection. Findings show that 20 respondents (33%) think the political parties were able to perform after many people had left, 58% attest no, while 5 respondents (8%) have no idea.

This indicated that majority of the respondents thinks the political parties were unable to perform after many members had left them. Probing into defectors view on party defection, 20 respondents (33%) attest that they would encourage this type of party defection in future election, majority 30 respondents (50%) would not encourage this type of defection, while 10 respondents have no idea. This indicates that majority of the respondents to the questionnaire wouldn't encourage this type of defection in the future election. Investigating into the mechanism put in place to curb defections, findings from table 3 above shows that 5 respondents (8.3%) agreed there are mechanisms put in place to check further defections from party, 4 respondents (6.7%) strongly agreed, 30 respondents (50%) disagree, 19 respondents (31.7%) strongly disagree while 2 respondents (3.3%) have no idea. This indicates that majority of the respondents think that mechanisms have not been put in place to check further defections from the party. On the discipline to defectors, it was discovered that majority 30 respondents (50%) suggest strict discipline for party defectors in the future, 25 respondents (41.6%) do not suggest strict discipline, while 5 respondents (8.3%) have no idea.

Discussion of Findings

The study examined politics of party defection among member of the All Progressive Congress (APC) and Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) in Edo State. Many reasons were adjudged for party defections, but whatever are the reasons for party defections in among member of APC and PDP in Edo State political process, the fact is that defections have created more enmity among members of the parties such that they play bad politics with every issue that borders the wellbeing of Edolites such salary payment, security challenges and farmers herdsman crisis the expense of credible and objective governance.

One of the commonest challenges of defection is the unhealthy rivalry and unconstructive criticism between PDP and APC members. For example, the parliamentarians from the two leading parties argued and openly abuse themselves at

their session. The APC lawmakers do not see anything good in PDP policy and programmes even when some of these policies are credible and commendable, the PDP on the other hand sees the APC as their potential enemy, even when some of their criticism can be helpful in deepening our democracy. Defection has generated unhealthy and hostile relationship between parliamentarians of APC and PDP in the lower legislative house. Sadly, defection has promoted and established a situation where politicians play politics with the sharing of country's scarce resources among various competing groups. This view was aptly supported by Anifowose (1982) when he averred that: Constitutional controversy and struggle for state power have been the recurring themes in Nigeria's political history. The constitutional crisis in Nigeria between 1962 (Western Nigeria crisis) and 1964 as well as two-third majority of 19 states in 1979 readily comes to mind.

One of the ways defections has adversely affected the Edo politics cum' democracy is that it has made the politicians a political prostitute. Odum (2002) captures this when he argues that: Politicians and prostitutes are two seeming parallel professions. One supposedly displaying constitutional leadership virtue in governance is that the latter revealing social vice-the fabric of a decadent society. Incidentally, one common denominator for both appears to be their loyalty, which stands on quick sand, shifting as mundane attractions glow in their adulterous eyes. The consideration, especially with the modern-day politician is where stakes may be lower and gains higher. It does not matter who is the offer. So, while the prostitutes switch beds, the politicians change camp in this game of defection, (Janada, 2009).

From the above assertion, it can be reasonably deduced that party defection among members who do not resign their first platform for coming to political position,

do not add any value to the process of democratic consolidation but rather pose grave danger to it. Countries like Zambia, Pakistan and Bangladesh are clear evidence that party defection is a threat to the stability of political system. Corroborating this view was Hoeane (2008), who contends that in extreme cases of defection or floor-crossing, where a number of representatives at the lower house of legislature who defected has been significantly high, such shifts of allegiance have led to the collapse of democratically elected governments, such as in Lesotho in 1997. Party defection has negative impact in the process of consolidating democracy under unwarranted situations of plethora of defections among legislators, governors, deputy governors, and other party members to the ruling party or opposition party. This tends to make caricature of democracy and belittles the spirit of opposition parties and democratic consolidation in Edo State democracy (Mbah, 2011).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Party defection has negatively affected consolidation of democracy where legislators, governors, deputy governors, and other party members defect to the ruling party. This trend tends to make caricature of democracy and undermines the opposition, the validity of contrary views and undercuts the principle of alternative democratic choice. Findings from the study on party politics have proved that internal activities of political parties; from their organizational standards, institutional capacity democracy and leadership recruitment, socio-political ideologies, manifestoes and programmes, funding and campaign etc structure electoral process and affect the operation of government. The difference identified here is that, in relation to the Nigerian democracy, it has assumed an amusing but dangerous dimension capable of derailing the democratization effort. The bottom line is that party-switching prevents parties, and in turn, party systems, from stabilizing, thus threatening the development of the democratic system. Viewed this way, the topic of party-switching is far from irrelevant

in the context of new democracies. Rather, one could argue that it is important precisely because of the problems of developing meaningful, stable political parties in new democracies.

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