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Cross-Carpeting and Party Alignment: Obstacles to Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

Ehiyamen Osezua, Ph.D,

Innovations for Peace and Development (IPD)

University of Texas at Austin

ehiyamen.osezua@austin.utexas.edu

+1 512 569 6260

and

Omodunbi Olumide

Department of Political Science

Osun State University, Nigeria

Abstract: This study aims to explore the impact of cross-carpeting in the political system and provide a feasible solution to Nigeria's high rate of party turnover. The corporate existence and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria have been significantly tarnished by cross-carpeting. Party defection, cross-carpeting, party switching, and other terms that describe this phenomenon have grown so commonplace in Nigeria that the typical Nigerian views them as both a tradition and an essential component of democracy. Unhealthy power struggles and internal party strife do result from this. In Nigeria, the rate at which party members switch from one political party to another has denigrated and ridiculed the party system. In addition to being portrayed as lacking morality and integrity, the scenario shows Nigerian politicians as self-serving self-aggrandizers. The effect of party defection on the consolidation of democracy was explained by the study using the Group theory. Most of the study's foundation comes from secondary data sources, including an extensive examination of pertinent books, journals, magazines, newspapers, government publications, historical records, and online resources. The results show that although party alignment is not joint, cross-carpeting has become a severe problem and significantly hinders Nigeria's democratic consolidation. The study concludes with recommendations for politicians to cease indiscriminate party switching and for political parties to be founded on robust ideological bases, thereby enhancing the quality of Nigeria's democratic processes.

Keywords: Cross Carpeting, Party Alignment, Democracy and Democratic Consolidation

Introduction

Cross-carpeting is becoming more prevalent at all governmental levels, which is alarming Nigerians and causing significant political conflict and animosity. The practice of politicians, particularly those in the House of Representatives, members of the House of Representatives, and political parties fervently rallying people to join new parties, abandoning their official responsibilities of enacting laws and maintaining good government, has gained popularity. Giving weight to the aforementioned, it evolved into an increasingly permanent part of Nigeria's democratic culture, not just a norm. The two biggest issues facing Nigeria's democracy are cross-carpeting and political instability. Cross-carpeting between political parties may appear elegant to those who engage in it, but it compromises their ethics and may benefit their spouses financially. Additionally, it taints democracy's future.

In Nigeria's political landscape, cross-carpeting and party alignment have been persistent concerns since the early 1920s due to the creation of political parties along ethnic and regional lines. When twenty members of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) defected to the Action Group in 1951, Nnamdi Azikiwe's party was unable to produce a premier in the Western Region, and that is when cross-carpeting first appeared. After 39 years, the Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the NCNC came together to establish a coalition government after the 1959 elections,

marking Nigeria's first major party alignment. After evolving through several republics, this political scheming culminated in the 2013 formation of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) from the merger of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All-Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), and a faction of the All-Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) (Olaolu, 2015).

The study shows that, from a historical antecedent perspective, cross-carpeting was geared towards the political class self-serving interests, intra-party conflicts, and ethnic and religious inclinations. In addition to these anti-democratic inclinations, the study discovered that the main causes of cross-carpeting in Nigeria's Fourth Republic were lack of ideology and political party discipline. Ultimately, the study confirms that political parties must rigorously uphold party discipline and doctrine in order to curb the threat of constant competition among political office holders and strengthen Nigeria's fledgling democracy. As a result, the study looks at party cross-carpeting in Nigeria with the intention of determining how it affects the nation's democratic engagement and the eventual consolidation of Nigerian democracy. In Nigeria, party alignment and cross-carpeting—the act of politicians moving from one political party to another—present serious obstacles to the development of democracy. These actions jeopardise the development of political institutions and the stability of democracy in multiple ways:

i. Political Parties' Weakening

Politicians' lack of ideological commitment is frequently reflected in cross-carpeting, which undermines party institutions. Political parties no longer serve as vehicles for cogent political platforms, but rather as arenas for individual aspirations. This self-serving conduct stifles the emergence of powerful, ideologically based parties capable of offering stable government and distinct policy options.

ii. A Decline in Voters Confidence

Public trust in the political system is undermined when politicians are seen as being opportunistic and self-serving when they move parties regularly. Political apathy and decreased voter turnout may result from voters believing their choices are meaningless if elected officials can switch parties for personal benefit.

iii. Instability in the Executive Branch

Parties that switch parties frequently risk creating unstable coalitions in government and disrupting legislative processes. It can lead to erratic changes in the priorities of governance and policy direction, making it challenging for any administration to keep a steady and well-organized policy agenda. Development outcomes may suffer as a result of this instability, which can impede efficient governance and policy execution.

iv. Inadequate Responsibility

Cross-carpeting, in which politicians change allegiances to avoid taking responsibility for their acts, can weaken accountability systems. Because party flipping shatters the clear connection between political acts and electoral outcomes, it may become more challenging for people to hold elected politicians accountable for their performance.

v. Promotion of Political Favouritism

A patronage system where political

loyalty is rewarded over talent and public service is frequently the result of weak party alignment. As a result, political affinities may be used to allocate public funds instead of merit, which would go against the fundamentals of effective public management and good governance.

vi. Constitutional and Legal Difficulties

The cross-carpeting legal framework in Nigeria has generated controversy. Although it is against the constitution for elected officials to change parties without losing their positions unless there is a rift within their current party, this provision is frequently disregarded or evaded. The judiciary's involvement in deciding these disputes has occasionally resulted in conflicting decisions, which has further complicated the political environment.

Cross-carpeting has increased in Nigeria after democratic rule was restored in 1999, mostly due to self-serving political objectives. Cross-carpeting, which is driven by personal ambition, power rivalries, personality conflicts, a lack of internal democracy, and constitutional difficulties, is different from party alignment, which entails formal cooperation between political parties (Olaolu, 2015). By creating instability and reducing public confidence in the political system, the widespread defection of Nigerian politicians threatens the consolidation of democracy. This essay seeks to assess the effects of party alignment and cross-carpeting on Nigeria's democratic consolidation and suggests measures to mitigate these challenges.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Clarifications

2.1.1 Cross-Carpeting

Since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, the country has witnessed a series of political defections, with politicians moving from one political party to another. This phenomenon, known as cross-carpeting, party-defection, party-switching, floor-crossing, party-hopping, or decamping, refers to the same practice of defection. Cross-carpeting has become a permanent feature of Nigeria's nascent democracy (Malthora, 2005). According to Hoeane (2008), cross-carpeting or political party defection occurs when elected party representatives within a legislative structure, such as a parliament, adopt a political or policy stance incompatible with their party. Typically, defections arise from dissatisfaction and discontent with the former party, rather than any ideological shifts (Mbah, 2011). Though the terms cross-carpeting and party defection are often used interchangeably, they are distinct. Cross-carpeting involves an elected member of parliament and occurs within the parliamentary context, motivated by personal reasons. Conversely, political defections happen outside parliament, involving local politicians and executive members. Over the years, Nigerian politicians have used decamping as a tool for expressing dissatisfaction with intra-party issues or as a reaction to losing party nominations for elective or appointive positions.

Historically, cross-carpeting in Nigeria dates to the pre-independence era. The first significant case occurred in 1951 when members of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) defected to the Action Group, preventing Nnamdi Azikiwe from becoming the Premier of Western Nigeria. This episode marked the beginning of ethnic and regional politics in Nigeria and

introduced the term "cross-carpeting" into the country's political lexicon (Mbah, 2011). During the first republic (1960-1966), notable cross-carpeting incidents included Chief Ladoke Akintola's defection from the Action Group due to a personality clash with Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Similarly, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Dr. Kingsley Mbadiwe's political rift led to the formation of the Democratic Party of Nigerian Citizens (DPNC) by Mbadiwe. In the second republic (1979-1983), several prominent politicians, including Chief Akin Omoboriowo and Alhaji Abubakar Rimi, defected from their original parties. Odum (2002) suggests that these defections appeared to be ideologically driven, with parties like the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) mirroring earlier political entities like the Northern People's Congress (NPC).

2.1.2 Party Alignment

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines alignment in politics as an association or agreement to support somebody. In this context, party alignment refers to the process where two or more political parties form a coalition to challenge the ruling party. Party alignment involves creating new support coalitions that endure for a period to wrest power from the opposition.

Party politics has been central to Nigeria's political activities since the colonial period (Akinboye & Anifowose, 1999). The Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), formed in 1923 by Herbert Macaulay, was the country's first political association. Subsequent parties, such as the Nigeria Youth Movement (NYM) and major regional parties like the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), the Action Group (AG), and the Northern People's Congress (NPC), were

formed along ethnic lines. The first notable party alignment in Nigeria occurred after the 1959 federal election when no party won a clear majority. This led to a coalition between the NPC and the NCNC, which governed the country until independence in 1960. New alliances emerged for the 1964 federal elections, including the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) and the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA), composed of various regional parties (Solomon & Anifowose, 1999).

In the second republic (1979-1983), despite a multi-party system, there were no significant political alignments or alliances. The fourth republic saw the formation of alliances like the one between the All-Peoples Party (APP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD) during the 1999 presidential elections (Solomon & Anifowose, 1999). A significant alignment occurred in 2013 when the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), and factions of the All-Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) merged to form the All-Progressives Congress (APC) (The Nation, 2013). This merger aimed to create a formidable opposition to the People's Democratic Party (PDP) (Premium Times, 2013).

2.1.3 Democratic Consolidation

Democracy is a central concept in political discourse, encompassing issues like justice, human rights, the rule of law, and good governance. Democratic consolidation refers to the process of making new democracies secure and extending their lifespan beyond the short term, ensuring they are resistant to authoritarian threats (Schedler, 2001; Olaleye, 2004). Collier, cited in

Ogundiya (2011), identifies three approaches to defining consolidation: actor-centered, event-centered, and institutional. None of these approaches are mutually exclusive. Democratic consolidation means a political process where democracy is broadly and profoundly legitimized among citizens, making it unlikely to break down through unconstitutional means such as military coups.

Consolidation involves behavioral and institutional changes that normalize democratic politics and reduce its uncertainty (Rustow, 1970). The term originally described the challenge of securing new democracies against authoritarian threats. It requires expanding citizens' access, developing a mature civil society, and ensuring political institutionalization. High institutional routinization is key to this process (Rustow, 1970). Authors argue that the principal indicator of democratic consolidation is the percentage of voters who view democracy as indispensable and are willing to defend it. For Nigeria, this remains a significant challenge.

3.0 Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This study is primarily based on secondary data sources, encompassing a comprehensive review of relevant texts, journals, magazines, newspapers, official publications, historical documents, and internet resources. These sources provide valuable insights and evidence regarding the challenges and prospects of cross-carpeting, party alignment, and democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the group theory as the

theoretical framework for analysis. Group theory posits that the interactions of groups form the foundation of political life. Arthur Bentley, a key proponent of group theory, argued that legislation, administration, and adjudication are determined by group activities rather than by institutional frameworks (Bentley, 1908). He maintained that politics is inherently a group activity, with various groups competing for power. Bentley asserted that understanding the dynamics of groups offers a better framework for analyzing societal functions than focusing on individual actions. Group theory is particularly relevant for understanding political parties, as it views them as aggregates of group interests. Political parties in a democracy act as vehicles for aggregating and promoting these interests, with the goal of acquiring political power for the authoritative allocation of values (Ayoade, 2006). This theoretical perspective is crucial for analyzing the intricacies of party activities and their quest for power, which often involves high levels of institutionalization, candidate nomination processes, internal party offices, and formal rules and objectives. Under a multi-party democracy, different political parties or groups vie for power, leading to intense rivalries. This scenario often reflects the nature of party politics in Nigeria, where political parties engage in constant interactions within themselves, across party lines, and with the state. These interactions are often characterized by anti-democratic behaviors such as assassinations, lawlessness, rigging, oppression, manipulation, marginalization, and violence (Okereka, 2015). Additionally, factors like monetary inducement, godfatherism, incumbency, religious bigotry, and ethnic divisions further complicate the political

landscape.

In Nigeria, political parties are supposed to aggregate and promote the interests of the people under a democratic process. However, personal interests, domineering tendencies by top party hierarchies, party indiscipline, inter-party relations, internal party democracy, violence, political thuggery, and membership defections have become prevalent. Anifowoshe (2004) noted that since the inception of the Fourth Republic, Nigeria's political landscape has witnessed frequent discords, unresolved political issues, threats of impeachment, breaches of party rules, carpet-crossing, inter-communal rivalries, and factional cleavages within parties, all of which threaten democratic functioning. Another significant challenge to democratic consolidation in Nigeria is the weak party structures and lack of internal cohesion. These weak structures often result from the dominating interests of individuals or groups within political parties, leading to conflicts and undermining party cohesion and institutionalization. This ideological emptiness hampers the parties' ability to represent and promote the interests of the majority (Ania, 2002; Abutudu, 2013).

Political parties in Nigeria are products of their specific environments, which influence their structures, functions, and operations. Despite these influences, parties are expected to serve as agents of sustainable democratic rule. However, as Anifowoshe (2004) observed, there is growing public apprehension about the nature and intensity of party competition, leading to political uncertainties and disorder. Consequently, party politics in Nigeria has not undergone any genuine transformation capable of strengthening the democratic process.

3.2 Empirical Review

Historical Account of Selected Cases of Cross-Carpeting in Nigerian Politics

Cross-carpeting, also known as political defection, has been a significant feature in Nigerian politics. This phenomenon involves politicians switching their allegiance from one party to another, often in pursuit of better political opportunities or in response to internal party conflicts.

In 1999, Chief Evan Enwerem, after losing the gubernatorial primaries in the All-Peoples Party (APP) in Imo State, defected to the People's Democratic Party (PDP), where he won a senatorial seat and was subsequently elected as Senate President (Mbah, 2011). Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, a founding member of the PDP, defected to the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) in 2007 after a dispute with then-President Olusegun Obasanjo. He contested the presidential election on the ACN platform but lost to the late President Umaru Yar'Adua. Abubakar rejoined the PDP in 2009, only to defect again to the All-Progressives Congress (APC) in 2014, citing the PDP's deviation from its founding principles (Channels TV, 2014).

In 2007, Bauchi State Governor Isa Yaguda won his election under the All-Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) but defected to the PDP in 2009 along with many of his supporters (Mbah, 2011). Similarly, former Imo State Governor Ikedi Ohakim, who initially won on the platform of the Peoples Progressive Alliance (PPA), defected back to the PDP in 2009 (Mbah, 2011). The incumbent Governor of Ogun State, Segun Adesegun, defected from the APC to the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in

November 2014, following a conflict with Governor Ibikunle Amosun. Former Governor Olusegun Osoba also left the APC for the SDP in the same month, citing unresolved crises within the Ogun State chapter of the APC (Awoyinfa & Okpi, 2014).

Three Senators from Ogun State—Adegbenga Kaka, Gbenga Obadara, and Akin Odunsi—defected from the APC to the SDP, influenced by the defection of their political godfather, Olusegun Osoba (Awoyinfa & Okpi, 2014). Additionally, five House of Representatives members from Ogun State followed suit, moving to the SDP due to the ongoing political turmoil in the APC (Awoyinfa & Okpi, 2014). In October 2014, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aminu Tambuwal, defected from the PDP to the APC. Tambuwal's defection was anticipated due to his growing alignment with the APC and his criticism of President Goodluck Jonathan's administration (Agbajileke, 2014).

Furthermore, former Osun State Governor, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola, defected from the PDP to the APC in August 2014, expressing dissatisfaction with his treatment by President Jonathan (Emmanuel, 2014). Similarly, former Ekiti State Governor Segun Oni left the PDP for the APC in May 2014, aiming to support Governor Kayode Fayemi's re-election bid (Punch, 2014).

Chief Tom Ikimi, a founding member of the APC, resigned in August 2014, returning to the PDP after failing to secure the APC National Chairmanship, accusing Bola Tinubu of dominating the party (Owele, 2014). A significant wave of defections occurred in 2013 when five PDP governors Chibuike Amaechi (Rivers), Ahmed Abdulfattah (Kwara), Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso (Kano),

Muritala Nyako (Adamawa), and Aliyu Wamako (Sokoto) joined the APC, citing internal party crises (This Day Live, 2013). In the same vein, 37 members of the House of Representatives defected from the PDP to the APC in December 2013, attributing their decision to the division within the PDP (Channels TV, 2013).

In recent developments, Nuhu Ribadu, former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), defected from the APC to the PDP in 2014, arguing that there was no fundamental difference between the two parties (Adesomoju, 2014). Former Anambra State Governor, Peter Obi, also switched from the All-Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) to the PDP in October 2014 (Okonkwo, 2014). These instances highlight the fluid nature of political affiliations in Nigeria, often driven by personal ambitions and internal party dynamics.

3.3 Causes of Cross-Carpeting in Nigeria.

Various factors can be attributed to be the cause of cross-carpeting in Nigeria. According to Peter Mbah (2011), scholars and commentators sees the reasons for cross-carpeting as resulting from personality clash, power tussles, divergent views on the operations of a political party's philosophy, crisis of division within a given party, disagreement on party's position on an issue, realization of one's personal political ambition and party leaders reneging on agreed issue of the political party probably on power sharing formula. Another important reason for party defection is the lack of party internal democracy. Intra party democracy signifies the active participation of all party members to contest any position

both within the party and for public offices (Aleyomi 2013). However, since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, political parties have problem of non-democratic practices.

According to (Aleyomi 2013), he identified constitutional ambiguity and loopholes as another serious reason for party defection. The 1999 constitution of Nigeria was full of ambiguities because the remarkable feature of the period during which the 1999 constitution was framed did not allow participation and discussion by Nigerians. General Abacha and Abubakar did not intend to put in place a democratic government based on popular consent. For Abacha, the 1999 constitution was meant for self-succession, while for Abubakar, it was rather a mechanism for quick handover to civilian elected democratic government. The constitution did not address the national question and other nagging issues pertaining to Nigerian federalism. In all, the process that culminated in the constitution ignored the structural issues that have bedeviled the country's ability to enthrone a truly accountable, transparent and democratic political order. Consequently, it produced a draft that was full of ambiguities which have led to the increasing rate of party defections and cross-carpeting immediately it came into operation in May 29, 1999 (see section 68 (1) and 109 (1) of the 1999 constitution.

Section 68 (1) states:

A member of the senate or the House of Representatives shall vacate his seat in the House of which he is a member if being a person whose election to the House was sponsored by a political party, he becomes a member of another political party before the expiration of the period for which that House was elected provided that his membership of the latter political party is not as a result of a

division in the political party of which he was previously sponsored” (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999:34).

The last part of the forgoing section provided as escape root for politicians to cross-carpet since there are always divisions within the political parties. It provided the platform for many legislators and governors who defected to justify their actions on the grounds of division or crisis within their political parties since the 1999 constitutional is not definitive of crisis or division that could cause defection or cross-carpeting.

The provisions of these sections of the constitution were explicit in matters concerning the legislature. It clearly mandates that any member of the legislature, who intends to defect to another party, must prove that division or factions exists in the party in which he was a member, or that his party has merged with another political parties. The constitution made provisions for legislators, but it was however silent on those members of the executive arm such as the president, the vice-president, the Governors, and the deputy Governors. The ambiguity of the constitution caused the defections among Nigerian politicians to be on the increase as the country has in recent times witnessed a great deal of defection among legislators, governors, deputy governors, party members and other political office holders.

3.4 Impact of Cross Carpeting, Party Alignment, and the Challenges to Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria.

Party alignments have impacted Nigerian politics a great deal. This can be seen in the aftermath of the 1959 federal election. Despite the differences in the political parties that operated in the political parties that operated in the first republic, these political parties came together to form a coalition government that led the country to independence in 1960. Several

other party alignments have since taken place with little or no impact. After the return to democracy in 1999, the fourth republic witnessed the alliance of the All-Peoples Party (APP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD) so as to improve its performance at the polls especially the 1999 presidential election but the alliance did not work as the PDP was dominant in the elections.

However, a major party alignment that marked a watershed in the history of party alignment in Nigeria was the merger of the ACN, CPC, ANPP, APGA, into APC. This alignment was based on the need to form a formidable party to wrestle power out from the hands of PDP which has been ruling at the federal level since 1999. The merger however bore fruits and impacted the political landscape as the APC won the 2015 presidential election and 19 states out of 28 governorship posts. The APC also had the majority in the eight National Assembly. The Alignment have now made APC the majority party and relegating the PDP to an opposition party

On the other hand, cross-carpeting or party defection has had a lot of impact that has continued to bedevil development in Nigeria. One impact of cross carpeting and party defection in Nigeria is the weakening of a viable and formidable opposition which portends a great danger for democratic consolidation. After the 2015 general elections, some politicians have defected from the ruling PDP to the APC. Notable among them are the former legal adviser of the PDP and the party’s candidate in the 2012 Ondo governorship election, Olusola Oke. The deputy governor of Jigawa state Ahmad Mahmud and Edo state PDP’s governorship candidate in the 2012 governorship election, Maj.Gen Charles Airhiavbere (rtd) (Sola Ogunmosunle, 2015). This development

is clearly showing the depletion in the rank of the PDP which is supposed to serve as the major opposition to the APC. Opposition is an integral part of any democracy as it exists to constantly put on alert and be watchful of government policies and actions. The lack of a formidable opposition may make the ruling party to become complacent, arbitrary and autocratic. But the constant presence of a formidable opposition will serve as an obstacle to despotism because it affords well-informed critics as opposition is ever ready to expose the wrong doings of the ruling party and put the government on its toes. (Sola Ogunmosunle, 2015)

Nigeria should begin to emulate some advance democracies where the opposition is galvanized into a formidable force that serves as a catalyst of good and effective governance. Nigeria should begin to entrench a viable opposition structure in our political arrangement. But in a situation whereby politicians' defect or cross-carpet at will, it makes the development of a strong opposition a mirage.

Another impact of cross-carpeting or party defection that has continued to bedevil democratic consolidation in Nigeria is the lack of a viable party ideology which has contributed a great deal to the incessant cross-carpeting and party defections. This is because political parties in Nigeria are not driven by any ideology other than making money. This claim was buttressed by Alhaji Balarabe Musa, National Chairman Conference of Nigeria political parties (CNPP) when he asserted that "defection of politician is championed by the fact that there is a lot of loose money in the country and anybody with sufficient money can go to any other party to achieve his ambition". (ThisDay Live, 2014).

However, Muhammed A.M (2013)

highlighted some challenges to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. He asserted that ethno religious factor feature prominently among the challenges of democratic consolidation in Nigeria as it greatly affects the socio-political instability. Also the absence of true federalism is another stumbling block to democratic consolidation in that, some practices like quota system; revenue allocation, federal character etc. can bring about agitation that is capable of inciting politicians to move from one party to another as a result of perceived neglect by the ruling party. Also, godfatherism is one of the impediments to democratic consolidation in Nigeria because it has come to dominate the political scene of the country. It is a game where political king makers and gladiators manipulate the political system to enthrone their own crowned political steward. And if these trends continue, aggrieved politicians can decide to dump their party for another party that will favour them on the long run. Another impending challenge to democratic consolidation is corruption. Corrupt practices between and among politicians of a particular political party can crippled the ideal activities needed for the growth and development of the party and in the process, any politician that feels him/her has been cheated can decide to leave such party and pitch tent with another political party.

4.0 Summary and Conclusion

Cross-carpeting and defections by Nigerian politicians leaves much to desire because defection have seriously polluted the political atmosphere to the extent that citizens who voted for a candidate on a particular political platform are no longer ever sure that such a candidate will ever remain faithful to the party's mandate. The present crop of Nigerian elected public officers have shown themselves to be suffering from greed and inordinate

ambition for political offices because of the gains attached to such position than the service they are supposed to render to the citizens. (Business World, November 3, 2014).

Defections have continued to damage the country's democratic image outside the country as it shows the state of immaturity in which the political system is still wallowing. Needless to say, is the political instability which the defections of these selfish politicians have caused.

A simple way out of this bad and terrible trend is to firstly build political parties that are ideologically inclined. Secondly, all forms of constitutional ambiguity and loopholes that encourage political adultery should be re-examined to put a stop to or drastically minimize political cross-carpeting and defection in Nigeria.

5.0 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations were made:

i. Stabilising Legal Frameworks: One way to stop cross-carpeting is to enforce harsher legal sanctions and make sure that judges consistently interpret the law.

ii. Political education: Increasing civic education to encourage party platforms and inform voters of the significance of party agendas and manifestos.

iii. Internal Party Democracy: Promoting internal democracy inside parties reduces the possibility of defections brought on by discontent with party procedures by guaranteeing that candidates emerge through open processes.

iv. Institutional Reforms: Reinforcing organisations such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to improve overall electoral integrity and implement regulations against party switching.

v. Encouraging Ideological Commitment: To increase politicians' fidelity to their parties, political parties

should be developed on the basis of distinct ideologies and policy objectives.

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