

Political Ideology, Defection and Electoral Outcomes in Nigeria: Exploring the Intricacies and Realities

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Abstract

Poverty of ideology and its attendance conflict have been of dramatic effect not only on political party, but also on the outcome of election, national integration and sustainable development. In about the last twenty years, Nigerian democracy has witnessed series of political defections with politicians decamping from one political party to the other particularly from opposition parties to the ruling party. However, it has been perceived that political parties in Nigeria portend a vehicle of political utility bereaved of ideology and deficit in both ideas and principle. This study, therefore, anchored on rational choice theory, explored the intricacies of political ideology in Nigeria political space. Using content analysis of secondary data obtained from various available literature and documentary evidences, and descriptive analysis of primary data obtained through the administration of questionnaire on purposively selected respondents, this study critically explored the linkage between party ideology and electoral outcomes in Nigeria. It was found that political parties in Nigeria are not ideological based, and as such, are only interested in gaining power at all cost. The result of the findings revealed that there was a strong connection between party ideology and defection on electoral outcomes in Nigeria's Fourth Republic and thus recommended that the activities of all political parties in Nigeria should be guided by definite ideologies, programmes and policies that defines their vision for a better Nigeria.

Keywords

Defection, democracy, electoral outcome, political ideology, political party

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Introduction

The politics of defection means the act of politicians changing party allegiance or moving from one political party to another. Politics is always characterised by methods and strategies aimed at sustaining political power and authority in governing the citizens of any nation (Agboga, 2023). The science of politicking has also introduced terminologies to define the political character exhibited by actors in the scene of struggling and protecting common interest in every society. Hence, in the struggle to win political power, political gladiators move from one party to another to foster their interest (Okereka, Efebeh, Ikenga & Oluka, 2020). The imposition during primary election, backbiting, schisms, intrigues, bickering, violence, mismanagement of party finance, greed, illegal rotation of party's candidacy, overzealous and suspicious romance of key party members with opposition party's members have had adverse effect on outcome of elections and country's democracy. This ugly scenario has thus provoked studies aimed at resolving the menace of defection given the important role party ideology can play in the electoral outcome.

Badejo *et al.* (2015), Edet (2017), Mbah (2011) in Omilusi (2015) have considered politicians' greed, lack of party ideology, lack of internal democracy, intra and inter-party crisis, inordinate political gains among others as factors of defection in Nigeria. This has created some limitations in addressing the implications of defection for Nigeria's democracy. However, few studies have pointed out that it creates political instability (Okereka *et al.*, 2020). The increasing cases of defection and its grave implications on electoral outcome is attributed to lack of clear-cut ideology which leads to incessant intra-party conflicts which has led to the factionalisation of some political parties and the consequence of decamping from one political party to the other by party members (Arinze & Oliver, 2016).

Poverty of ideology and its attendance conflict have been of dramatic effect not only on the party, but also on the outcome of election, national integration and sustainable development. The way and manner politicians in Nigeria defect from one party to the other has not only constituted democratic nuisance, but has continued to raise serious concern among political observers and participants in Nigeria which is manifested through lack of clear ideology (Danjibo & Ashindorbe, 2018). What is common in the literature is defection masterminded because of crisis within or between parties. Of course, lack of ideology, intra and inter-party crisis, greed, corruption, imposition during primaries among others are known factors of party defection in Nigerian politics (Okolie, 2021).

Okolie (2021) observed that political parties in Nigeria portend a vehicle of political utility bereaved of ideology and deficit in both ideas and principle. The political class seems to always remained bereft of viable political ideology on which Nigeria political future could be anchored and because of this, all the parties seem to be experiencing cracks, and mass movement and defection from one party to the other because parties have been known to exist on sustained ideological base, not just a platform for ascending to political power. Nandi and Ibrahim (2021) posit that some political parties in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, lack clear cut ideology which has accounted for incessant internal party crises which usually lead to defections. Piero (2020) believes that the issue of clear ideology seems to be a factor that makes candidate defect from one political party to the other which may affect the outcome of election in Southwestern, Nigeria.

While several studies have investigated the effects of defection on democratic engagement (Awofeso and Irabor, 2017), democratic consolidation (Aleyomi, 2013) and political instability (Badejo *et al.*, 2015) in Nigeria, little is known on the political ideology of defections and implications on electoral outcomes in Southwestern Nigeria, hence the study. This paper is organized into five parts; the first part introduces the study, followed by literature review and methodology occupying second and third sections respectively. Findings, conclusion and recommendation take the fourth and fifty sections.

Conceptual Clarifications

Political Ideology

The heart of every political party is an ideology which serves as the central activity of the party. Ideology represents a typically crucial element of political parties and their activities (Edwin, 2022). It is a set of ideas about politics, all of which are related to one another and that modify and support each other. Though relatively enduring, it is yet a dynamic phenomenon, capable of being modified by new issues (Omotola, 2010). Similarly, Nnoli (2003) sees ideology as "a systematized and interconnected set of ideas about the socio-economic and political organisation of society as a whole."

Emmanuel *et al.* (2017) defined party ideology as an organized set of ideas about politics that help to streamline the actions and inactions, as well as objectives and programmes of a political party. It is a systematised and interconnected set of ideas about the socio-economic and political organisation of society as a whole. In other words, the most important or propelling force or vehicle of any democratic system is a proper and workable party ideology (Ogbo *et al.*, 2017).

Party ideology is a systematic articulation and outline of how to achieve the self-avowed political aims of a given party if given the political mandate. Party ideology also includes the political party strategy for capturing the

targeted majority votes of the electorates which will empower the party to take charge or control the affairs or machinery of government.

Political ideology is therefore very essential for political campaigns in communicating the uniqueness of each contending political party; its understanding of the state or national issues; and its intentions on how best to solve such issues so as to enable the voters evaluate each contending party against others with a view to ascertaining the party with most authentic programmes of action for national progress and development (Anene & Theodore, 2020).

The relevance of party ideology to the party itself, politics, governance and the welfare of the society are numerous and cannot be overemphasised. Writing on the relevance of party ideology, Edet (2017) articulates that political parties, across the world, are identified by their ideology as it defines the policies and programs they intend to pursue when they get to the corridor of power to govern. Edet (2017) highlights the pivotal significance of ideology to a political party by maintaining that ideology helps political parties to realize the following: attract, unite, and mobilize support; withstand significant changes in the internal organisation and external operating environment; identify like-minded groups in other countries; and provide political parties with frameworks for analysing societal needs, assessing and prioritizing any problems, establishing a vision for the future, and identifying the policy actions required to achieve that vision (Okeke, 2015). It follows that without a clear-cut and well-thought-out ideology, a political party is doomed for failure. Lending credence to the above, Edet (2017) asserts that ideology is essential to a political party because, it is that which is built upon a set of philosophical premises, and which define in broad stroke the political template that a political party uses to create their brand, and is the standard they use to attract people with similar notion to support them.

It is evident that in the political sphere of life, the principal goal of every political party is to acquire political power through elections so as to control the machinery of government. Conversely, this feat can only be achieved in an ideal political system through a well-articulated and clear-cut ideology that genuinely promises the desired good governance (Babalola & Abba, 2017). Ideology does not only confer direction to political parties, but also ensures their uniqueness has been mentioned earlier, and their viability as a means of realizing the state or national dream of peace, progress and development which are the hallmarks of good governance. In the light of above, Aleyomi (2013) posit that ideology is a distinguishing factor that emphasizes the existence of one party outside another, and hence where more than one party exist, as in most democracies, each is known and identified with its unique ideology.

Political Party Ideology and Defection

Some Nigerian political parties lack clear-cut party ideologies unlike what is obtainable in other developed democracies like the United States of America, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, etc. (Olanrewaju, 2015). In the United States for example, it is practically impossible to see a democrat politician defect to Republican Party for any reason whatsoever and vice versa. As Olanrewaju (2015) rightly submits, political ideology is an essential vehicle of a political party. Where political parties and political leaders are bereft or barren of any political ideology, then defection from one political party to another will continue incessantly. Lack of political ideology tends also to encourage party members to engage in anti-party activities by working against their political parties where they failed to secure their political interests. This happened, for instance, in Ogun and Imo States during the 2019 general elections when the then State Governors worked against the successes of their party's candidates in their States. While Okorochoa of Imo State was sponsoring and campaigning openly for his son-in-law, Uche Nwosu, who had earlier defected from APC to Action Alliance (AA) as the gubernatorial candidate, Amosun of Ogun State on the other hand was working for the candidate of the Allied Peoples Movement (Akpambang & Oniyinde, 2020).

Every party in a democratic dispensation is expected to have a well-articulated plan of actions, programmes, measures and activities that amount to the party's ideology for taking the state or nation to the promised land of politics in the form of good governance (Nnamdi & Ogan, 2019). More importantly, the political ideology enables the electorate to anticipate what each party has to offer if elected into office thereby eliminating unnecessary wild imagination and doubts about the capacity and readiness of the party to contribute meaningfully to the nation's development (Aniche, 2017). Thus, the success of any political party is determined by the degree of political ideology especially in advanced democracy. This issue of ideology has been so central to the activities of political party across the time and space, and has been regarded as the durable convictions held in common by party members in respect to the most desirable form, institutions, spirit and course of action of the state determines the natural attitude of a party towards every public question (Iyare, 2003).

The manner at which party politics is practiced in Nigeria has left doubt in the minds of the observers of Nigerian politics (Anthony *et al.*, 2017; Ogbo *et al.*, 2017; Emmanuel *et al.*, 2017). Nigerian politics over the years have been crisis-prone, with political parties organised along regional and ethnic lines. This lack of internal democracy and a well-defined political ideology has been evident since the post-independence years. First political parties, like the Northern People's Congress, were open to all Northern descent, Action Group and National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons later gained support along these lines (Obiajulu *et al.*, 2016).

This political culture indisputably has been inherited by the fourth republic political parties, particularly those of the two dominant parties, the All-Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) considering the manners in which they pilot their intra-party affairs, particularly their internal democracies which involve party primaries and conventions respectively has subjected the activities of the entire multi-party system to questioning (Adebayo, 2016). With this, most critiques have argued that the fourth republic political parties are not different from the political parties of the first and second republics. This is evident in their failure to observe the rules of internal democracy just like the first-generation political parties (Ige, 2021). The consequence of this is internal frustration which the consequence is the mass defection of the aggrieved party members from one party to another and which is simply defined as a situation in which one can voluntarily give up his or her membership of a political party or disobeying, abstaining or voting against the directives of the party leadership (Edet, 2017; Daniyan Bagudu *et al.*, 2017; Suryasa *et al.*, 2019). It has been argued that the only option left for the aggrieved party members is defection or decamping from one party to another. Mbah (2011) cited in Edet (2017) argued that defection among the political parties is not only a norm but also an increasing and perturbing phenomenon or feature in the Nigeria's democracy since independence. In the same manner, Edet (2017) argued that it is one of the major challenges confronting the nation's democracy.

Emerging political alliance are based mostly on personalities and agreements among political leaders, and do not necessarily reflect differences in policy preference or ideology. In the lead up to the 2015 General Elections, the All-Progressive Congress hinged its campaign on the failure of the People's Democratic Party with the issues of corruption, insecurity, and unemployment. However, during the 2019 General Elections, neither the APC as the party that controls the national government nor the PDP could clearly put out a message on why it should win the elections (Adebayo, 2019). In essence, alliance and re-alliance become the order of the day. In line with this popular perception, Mustapha and Isah (2018) have argued that the nation's politics in recent years is characterized by the poor observation of internal democracy more often than it was in the Second and third republic political parties. Similarly, Baba and Aeysinghe (2017) argued that the fourth republic political parties are not different from first, second and third republic political parties since they imbibe and inherited political dishonesty in character and orientation. Like the first-generation political parties, the fourth republic parties also lack defined political ideologies. In other words, their ideologies are similar, encouraging easy defections (Nnamani, 2018).

Okereka *et al.* (2020) also noted in their study entitled “Conflicting Ideologies and Defection of members in Nigeria’s Multi Party System: Implications for Democracy, revealed that lack of internal democracy in the political parties, lack of differences in ideologies among all political parties in Nigeria, dearth of democratic values, imposition of candidate by powerful party leaders, personal ambition of politicians among others are factors responsible for political defection. Agan *et al.* (2020) revealed ideological confusion, personal aggrandizement, lack of internal democracy, candidate’s selection, constitutional ambiguity and fear of persecution has been responsible for most defection in Nigeria. The research concludes that, some lessons must have been learnt from this gale of defection. Also, appropriate understanding of party politics and democratic consolidation must be achieved, if political parties must develop clear cut ideologies and the law should be allowed to clearly take its course whenever there is breach. This is also relevant to this study in that it provides insights into the causes of defection among Nigerian political elites.

Mustapha and Yakaka (2019) noted that most of these issues or problems of inter party decamping are because of personal interest and over ambition to gain power at all cost, the mode of candidate selection among others are the major factors that motivate defection among Nigerian politicians. This is also relevant to this study in that it provides insights into the causes of defection among Nigerian politicians. Nnamdi and Ogan (2019) who investigated political ideology and its efficiency in Nigeria political party system examined the relevance of ideology to political parties in general and the implications of lack of it in Nigerian political party system in particular. Ideology plays the important role of enabling the party have a direction in terms of its programmes and formulation of policies. The usefulness of an ideology consists in mobilizing support for a political party, thereby putting the party in a vantage position to win election and endeared itself to the electorates. The findings of the research revealed that in Nigeria, the dearth of ideology has continued to be elusive in our political parties leading to loss of direction in governance and inability of our Nigerian leaders to address pressing issues cum problems facing the Nigerian society. It concludes that by maintaining that the political parties in Nigeria should brace up and imbibe an ideology that is capable of bringing the country out of the doldrums of poverty, insecurity, unemployment, mismanagement of resources, embezzlement and promotion of personal and sectional interests over and above that of the generality of the citizens.

Adekeye and Ambali (2017) who carry out a research on Party Primaries, Candidate Selection and Intra-Party Conflict in Nigeria: PDP in Perspective noted that there is interplay between intra-party conflicts, candidates’ selection and party primaries in People’s Democratic Party and that virtually all the political parties in Nigeria have been perpetually enmeshed in conflicts owing to lack of internal democracy and imposition of party candidates by powerful

party leadership, substitution of candidates who have won the primary election with other who did not and disrupting internal rules and regulations, which have resulted to defection of members to other parties and factionalization within the party. The findings from the qualitative analysis signifies that while institutional structures have been enacted to avert conflict within the party, non-adherence to the dictates of such structures have birthed a wide range of internal conflicts within the party, thus resulting to cases of defection, factionalization, proliferation of political parties, unconstitutional change of party leaders and most importantly, the defeat of PDP in 2015 general elections.

Also, Elisa (2016) who carried out research on “Ideology and Party Switching: A Comparison of 12 West European Countries. The research tested whether specific aspects related to parties’ ideology (i.e., extremism, isolation, authoritarianism, programmatic clarity and stability) are linked to different levels of defection. The findings of the research conducted showed that party switching can pose a severe threat to party unity and deepen internal party division. Also, the results of multilevel negative binominal analyses show that indeed, ideology, selection of candidate, personal ambition, lack of internal democracy and its various components have a substantial impact on the scope of switching. For instance, parties promoting authoritarian values suffer from a higher number of defectors. Moreover, parties with more unstable labels seem to be more subjected to switching. This is also relevant to this study in that it improves our understanding of how party ideology, candidates’ selection, personal ambition are related to party unity and, more generally, to party defection.

Theoretical Framework

In the context of this study, the rational choice theory is used as the analytical framework. The theory was promoted in Scott (2000). The rational choice theory is relevant here as it offers a framework for examining the basis upon which an individual’s decision to defect is anchored. At the heart of the rational choice theory is the belief that individuals use their self-interests to make rational choices that will provide them with the greatest benefit (Aldrich & Bianco, 1992; Scott, 2000). As applied to the field of economics, rational choice entails the process of determining what options are available; and then choosing the most preferred one according to a consistent criterion (Scott, 2000). The rational choice theory holds the belief that all social actions are rationally motivated, and that individuals are thus presumed to be motivated by certain goals that express their preferences. Individuals are thus considered to be acting within specific constraints and in accordance with the information at

their disposal about the conditions within which they operate (Scott, 2000). The theory believes that as individuals cannot achieve all what they desire, they make choices in relation to their goals and means of attaining them. The theory further provides that individuals are capable of anticipating the outcomes of their calculated actions, in which the courses of actions pursued are those that are likely to give them the greatest satisfaction (Aldrich & Bianco, 1992; Scott, 2000).

From the theoretical point of view of rational choice, defection is associated with one's calculation of what he/she stands to benefit from joining a particular party (Aldrich & Bianco, 1992). Thus, an individual may defect to a new party with a view to securing private goods benefits, such as ballot positions for upcoming elections (Aldrich & Bianco, 1992). This is especially the case when elections costs are high, and when it is certain that the party one is defecting to can cover a part of such costs. In other cases, individuals particularly rich ones opt to join parties that can lower their election costs, and guarantee them of post-election benefits such as appointments (Nwanegbo & Udoh, 2017). In other cases, defection is associated with ones' calculation of re-election prospects as defectors normally aim at maximizing their benefits of political office and votes. Individuals are also presumed to calculate their defection decisions by looking at the existing bond between them and the electorate. When that bond is great, chances of defection are high (Scott, 2000).

Methodology

This study adopts a mixed method of survey research design and key informant interview. This is necessitated by the fact that the major indicators of candidates' defection and implications on electoral outcomes in South-western Nigeria cannot be measured using the same instrument. This study was situated in Southwestern, Nigeria to enable the researcher reach out to the respondents for data gathering. The population for this study consists of politicians/party members of the two major political parties of All Progressive Congress (APC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) in South Western Nigeria. For the purpose of adequate representation, to arrive at the population of the study, two states have been selected with respect to the strength of membership of APC and PDP, one representing the state with the highest number of registered members for the two dominant political parties and the other with the lowest number of registered members. The choice of the two states is based on the level of political consciousness of the citizens of the states in the region. While Ogun State represents the state with the highest level of political consciousness with 822,022 registered party members for PDP and APC, Oyo State represents the state with the lowest level of political consciousness with the lowest number of registered party members for the two parties (264,723) The rationale for choosing the states with the highest and lowest number of registered members is that membership strength indicates level of political

consciousness in these states. The Taro Yamane mathematical formula was used to calculate the sample size from the study population of 1, 086,745 of party members of the two dominant political parties of APC and PDP in South-Western Nigeria.

The Taro Yamane Formula
$$\frac{n = N}{1 + N \times (e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1, 086,745}{1 + 1,466,569 \times 0.05 (0.05)}$$

$$n = \frac{1, 086,745}{1, 086,745 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{1, 086,745}{2716 .8625}$$

$$n = 399.99 \approx 400$$

Therefore, the sample was 400 respondents, proportionally selected from members of the two dominants political parties situated in Oyo and Ogun States of Nigeria which were PDP and APC for questionnaire administration purpose. In order to have in-depth research, the study employs two different research instruments in generating data. The use of oral interview as a source of primary data collection alongside the survey discussed above becomes necessary. Thus, interviews were conducted with the pressmen and women; Some candidates that have defected from one political party to another in the two dominant political parties of APC and PDP, and State party Chairmen/Secretaries/Publicity Secretaries of All Progressive Congress (APC) and Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). The data were analyzed both with descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of SPSS.

Table 1: Showing Number of Allotted Questionnaire to Each of the 24 Clusters

S/N	LGAs	Clusters	Registered Members	Allotted Questionnaires
1	Ifo	APC	55,765	63
2		PDP	20,012	22
3	Odeda	APC	17,283	19
4		PDP	13,392	15
5	Shagamu	APC	25,665	29
6		PDP	33,656	38
7	Ijebu East	APC	9,523	11
8		PDP	11,519	13
9	Ado-Odo/Ota	APC	51,122	57
10		PDP	20,155	22
11	Yewa South	APC	13,503	15
12		PDP	12,610	14
13	Iwajowa	APC	6,916	8
14		PDP	3,631	4
15	Irepo	APC	3,696	4
16		PDP	3,884	4
17	Ibadan South East	APC	16,117	19
18		PDP	6,879	8
19	Ibadan North West	APC	4,282	5
20		PDP	3,873	4
21	Akinyele	APC	8,765	10
22		PDP	6,739	8
23	Surulere	APC	3,130	4
24		PDP	3,825	4
TOTAL			355,951	400

Researcher (2023)

The Table 1.0 above showed the twenty-four cluster in the two selected states of Ogun and Oyo.

Findings

Table 2 above displays the background information of the respondents. Of the total respondents, 185(48.3%) respondents were male, while 185(51.7%) respondents were female. In terms of party affiliation, 232(60.6%) were member of All Progressive Congress (APC) and 151(39.4%) were of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). In terms of educational qualification, 134(35%) had NCE/ND, 127(33.2%) respondents had B.Sc./HND, 108(28.2%) and only 14(3.7%) respondents hold master's certificate. Most of the respondents are traders (47.3%), politicians (40.5%), lecturers 17(4.4%), election observers 12(3.1%), and others 18(4.7%).

Analysis of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The respondents' demographic characteristics e.g. gender, political affiliation, state of political affiliation was presented in both tables and figure.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

	VARIABLE	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	185	48.3
	Female	198	51.7
Party	APC	232	60.6
	PDP	151	39.4
Age of Respondents	18-25years	38	9.9
	26-35years	87	22.7
	36-45years	175	45.7
	46-60years	67	17.5
	61years and above	16	4.2
Educational Qualification	SSCE	108	28.2
	NCE/ND	134	35.0
	B.Sc./HND	127	33.2
	M.Sc.	14	3.7
Job Status	Lecturer	17	4.4
	Politician	155	40.5
	Trader	181	47.3
	Election Observer	12	3.1
	Others	18	4.7
State	Lagos	11	2.9
	Oyo	94	24.5
	Osun	13	3.4
	Ogun	254	66.3
	Ekiti	6	1.6
	Others	5	1.3

Researcher (2023)

The findings on the extent to which party ideology and candidates' defection affect electoral outcomes in Southwestern Nigeria is presented in Table 3 below. The eight items designed to explore the link between party ideology and defection affect electoral outcomes produced statistics as reported below:

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of Political Party Ideology and Defection

Items/Questions	SD %	D %	A %	SA %	\bar{x}	Std. Dev
Political defection is a reflection of weak political party	11 (2.9)	21 (5.5)	208 (54.3)	143 (37.3)	3.26	.69
Defection erodes political ideology	8 (2.1)	33 (8.6)	137 (35.8)	205 (53.5)	3.41	.74
Defection from political parties is an increase of many political parties	20 (5.2)	83 (21.7)	156 (40.7)	124 (32.4)	3.00	.87
Unstable political party system in Nigeria is as a result of political defection	4 (1.0)	39 (10.2)	167 (43.6)	173 (45.2)	3.33	.70
Elected executives persistently swindle the mandate of their voters with impunity	10 (2.6)	91 (23.8)	169 (44.1)	113 (29.5)	3.01	.80
Party defection could move Nigeria into a state without viable opposition	11 (2.9)	56 (14.6)	111 (29.0)	205 (53.5)	3.33	.83
Defection threatens consolidation of democracy	9 (2.3)	51 (13.3)	115 (30.0)	208 (54.3)	3.36	.80
Politicians defect from one party to another to get favour not on the basis of party ideological differences	11 (2.9)	42 (11.0)	119 (31.1)	211 (55.1)	3.38	.79
Weighted average mean	3.26					

Source: Researcher's Computation (2023)

Responses on the impact of defection on political party ideology are as in table 3.0 "Defection erodes political ideology" which has a mean score of 3.41 ranks highest and is followed by "politicians' defect from one party to another to get favour not on the basis of party ideological differences" which has a mean score of 3.38; "defection threatens consolidation of democracy" which has also a mean score of 3.36. "Unstable political party system in Nigeria is as a result of political defection" and "party defection could move Nigeria into a state without viable opposition" with a mean score of 3.3 both rank next, and followed by "political defection is a reflection of weak political party which has a mean score of 3.26. The weighted average mean was obtained as 3.26 indicating agreement of respondents on strong impact of defection on political party ideology.

In sum, the statistics on several items indicated a strong connection between political party ideology and defection.

Interview Report on Party Ideology and Defection

The commonality of defection among politicians and political system in Nigeria, have raised further questions that dovetailed to the issue of party ideology. Do political parties in Nigeria have ideology that stimulate the interest and struggles? This is the same quest was explored by Yagboyaju, (2011) who concluded that the malady of inappropriate political ideology has been part Nigeria political terrain for years. As mostly construed by the academics, politicians do not differ on whether their parties have certain intrinsic value that worth holding on to or struggle for even when they cannot realise their candidacy. Thus, the general perception that the main goal for politics is to enrich themselves through leadership position may not be hidden. One of the interviewees explains:

“You see, presently, all the political parties we have in Nigeria does not go in line with ideal ideology. Every political party must have their own ideology but the situation on ground in Nigeria nowadays is that political parties are not incline ideologically.” (*Interviewee 10, 48 years, Chairman*)

Unfortunately, lack of ideology is well acknowledged even among political office seekers themselves and seem to be eager to exploit rather than contribute to make a stronger political/electoral process and party system. One of the interviewees retorted:

“If it were to be in other saner climes, they would say a particular political party will have its own ideology and every one of them would operate within the scope of that ideology, but in Nigeria, there is nothing like ideology but selfish interest. Once a politician is denied the opportunity to go into a particular office, such a politician in most cases will leave that political party for another one that will offer the ticket, so that their personal/selfish interest can be served. That is why in most cases, politicians defect from one political party to another one, and will always cite cases that are not the reasons for leaving that political party.” (*Interviewee 4, 53 years, Secretary*)

“The only thing we can do as earlier mentioned is to appeal to them to wait for their time. We also promised them appointment if the party eventually wins the election but if they remain adamant, there is nothing else we can do than to leave them.” (*Interviewee 2, 52 years, Chairman*)

It can be said that defection from one political party to another have significant impact on electioneering and outcome of election in Nigeria. In recent elections, the high level of legal contests and litigations that ensue after major elections in the country have consistently presented internal issue and candidacy, a genuine post-electoral concern. These do not only underline the heightened wastage of resources through numbers of litigations, but also underline the fragility of Nigerian democratic system. In all, the 14 respondents unanimously accepted that lack of political ideology affected election outcome in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The weighted average mean was obtained as 3.26 indicating agreement of respondents on strong impact of defection on political party ideology and this have effect on electoral outcome. This result corroborates that of Edet (2017) who revealed that lack of clear ideology and manifesto among political parties in Nigeria are the causes of defection. It however concludes that the issue of defection has been one of the major banes of democratic process in Nigeria. The result of this study was also supported that of Okolie (2021) who revealed that ideological differences is a major factor responsible for defection in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic because politicians in Nigeria defect from one party to another not on the basis of ideological differences, but on selfish interest. This has made the electorates lost faith in their representatives especially at the lower house of legislature and it has resulted into a situation where lawmakers at the lower house have been the object of ridicule, laughter and shame because of the way and manner they defect without any sense of national interest.

The result of this study also aligned with the work of Awofeso and Irabor (2016) who revealed that lack of ideology was the major factors that determined cross-carpeting in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic. It however concludes that party discipline and ideology must be strictly adhered to by political parties to check the menace of incessant cross-carpeting among political office holders. In a similar vein Badejo, Agunyai and Buraimo (2016) noted that the surge for party switching in Nigeria is becoming disturbing and could undermine the country’s efforts at deepening her democracy because there is scant evidence of credible elections, strong internal democracy in political parties and ideological defections. It was also concluded that lack of credible elections, strong internal democracy in political parties and ideological

disposition of the political class are the major factors that made politicians to defect to other political parties.

The result of this study also supported that of Udeuhele (2020) who found out that party defections in Nigeria should not only be blamed on lack of strong party ideology and manifestoes but on the self-centeredness of the average Nigerian politician in place of service to the people and the country. It was concluded in the study that the strength of character of politicians reflects the strength and effectiveness of political parties which invariably is directly proportional to the degree of resilience democracy enjoys. This unreliable and egoistic nature of the politicians and parties reflect the fluidity of Nigeria's political party system that is threatening our democratic consolidation and good governance. The result of this study also supported that of Badejo and Akpowoghha (2015) who revealed that Nigerian politicians possess no democratic value, credentials and the political system is awash with professional politicians who are devoid of modern political ideology and issue driven politics.

In addition, the result of this study also supported that of Anene and Theodore (2020) who found out that any political party without a defined ideology remains detrimental to the practice of participatory and representative democracy. He believed that a political party without a consistent ideological predisposition is like an individual who does not believe in anything, and that is dangerous for the country. Nwandu and Ogunleye (2021) also observed the lack of ideology in most political parties in Nigeria undermines democracy and the democratic process. The effect of absence of party ideology in Nigerian political setting is that Nigeria will continue to elect leaders who will consistently plunge the country into the state of underdevelopment, unemployment, poverty, corruption, bad governance, promotion of personal and sectional interests, insecurity and mismanagement of resources. He further asserted that owing to the fact that Nigerians are ideologically 'jaundiced', they are bound to remain in 'economic servitude and flagrant disequilibrium'.

Furthermore, the result of this study also supported that of Nnamdi and Ogan (2019) who examined the relevance of ideology to political parties in general and the implications of lack of it in Nigerian political party system in particular. Ideology plays the important role of enabling the party have a direction in terms of its programmes and formulation of policies. The usefulness of an ideology consists in mobilizing support for a political party, thereby putting the party in a vantage position to win election and endeared itself to the electorates. The finding of the research also revealed that in Nigeria, the dearth of ideology has continued to be elusive in our political parties leading to loss of direction in governance and inability of our Nigerian leaders to address pressing issues or problems facing the Nigerian society. It

concludes that by maintaining that the political parties in Nigeria should brace up and imbibe an ideology that is capable of bringing the country out of the doldrums of poverty, insecurity, unemployment, mismanagement of resources, embezzlement and promotion of personal and sectional interests over and above that of the generality of the citizens.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

The study examined the concept of political ideology, defection and electoral outcomes in Southwestern Nigeria on the way and manner politicians in Nigeria defect from one party to the other. This has not only constituted democratic nuisance, but has continued to raise serious concern among political observants and participants which has been attributed to lack of clear-cut ideology. The weighted average mean was obtained as 3.26, indicating agreement of respondents on strong impact of defection on political party ideology and this has effect on electoral outcomes. It is recommended that the activities of all political parties in Nigeria should be guided by definite ideologies, programmes and policies that define their vision for a better Nigeria.

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