

The 2019 General Elections and the Politics of Party Defection: Implications on Democratic Consolidation

AGAN, Abraham; ADZAIGBA, Terwase and VIHIMGA, Terungwa Lawrence

Abstract

Politics is quite an interesting game in which most often actors play without taking into consideration the implication of their actions, one which is defection. Events across the country's political space reveal that, this practice of defecting from one political party to another appears to have become a necessary attribute of politics in Nigeria. Though, the framers of the Nigerian Constitution were not unaware of the harm, unguarded defection of the actors in party politics could cause the polity, which explained the wisdom behind the provision of Section 68 (1) (g) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution as amended. However, this constitutional provision aimed at curbing political actors at both the federal and state levels from jettisoning the platforms on which they were elected at the slightest reason, seems to have been defeated given the style and manner politicians defect at will in the present dispensation. The Elite theory is used in interrogating the phenomenon, emphasizing the power and influence of the political elites to continue to have access to state resources. The paper made use of review of related literature for the purpose of data collection. The work revealed ideological confusion, personal aggrandizement, and lack of internal democracy and fear of persecution has been responsible for most issues of defection. The paper is of the conclusion that, some lessons must have been learnt from this gale of defections. 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 a breach.

Key words: Election, Politics, Defection, Democracy and Consolidation.

Introduction

The framers of the Nigerian Constitution were not unmindful of the harm unguarded defection of elected public officers could cause to the polity which explained the wisdom behind the provision of section 68 (1) (g) of the 1999 constitution as (amended). One of the noticeable common practices of the Nigerian political system under the fourth republic is the issue of defection of politicians from one political party to another. There is unprecedented rate of defection despite the constitutional provision, which clearly intends to discourage and penalize culprits for dumping the political parties on which they were elected.

Events across the country prior to the 2019 general elections revealed that, this practice of defection appears to have become a necessary attribute of politics in Nigeria. A record of eighty four members of both chambers of the National Assembly dumped the various political parties on which they were elected during the 2015 elections. The defectors are twenty seven senators and fifty seven members of House of Representatives (Nwaneri, 2018). The history of this phenomenon could be traced to the First Republic. Arguing in support of the above Edet (2017, p.2) posits that “defection has become not only a norm but an increasingly permanent feature in the Nigerian democratic setting”. In like manner, this paper reveals that, there is psychological underpinning to such political behavior. Lending credence to the above Ake (1982, p.2) opines that “economic considerations underscore, define and indeed determine the pattern of human behavior in all societies”. To agree with Ake, this paper affirms that people are primarily concerned with carrying out activities that gratify their needs and are basically out to meet their interest most often. In Nigeria for instance, most times, two factors influences the chances of a candidate representing a party at the general elections. This is either economic or political power.

Economically, the candidate may have huge amounts of money to influence the delegates for the nomination. Politically, the candidate may enjoy the influence of a godfather who finds interest in him/her or such candidate may enjoy the benefit of incumbency even though not popular among the electorates. Thus, when the political interests of other individuals or groups are considered threatened they defect. In most instances; these are part of the reasons advanced for their defection. Thus explanation of such political behavior in a transiting democracy like Nigeria is that economic needs or personal aggrandizement is responsible for the entrenched culture of defection as well as undermining democratic processes.

This paper reviews some cases of defection prior to the 2019 General Elections and the effect of such practices on democratic consolidation in Nigeria. By so doing, the paper uses the political economic and political psychological theories. It also attempts to relate the reason for defection to personal interest and how most defections remain at variance with constitutional provisions.

Conceptual Clarifications

The Concept of Election

Free and fair elections both at intra party or inter party contest is the bench mark of democracy. Thus, democracy implies that the people have the opportunity to decide who governs them. Regular elections imbedded in democratic values offer the people the opportunity to accept or refuse the people who are to govern them. In other words, it is the post mortem that investigates the record of office holders to ascertain whether they have kept faith with their election promises or not, (Jibrin, 2018).

In similar vein, Idowu (2010:54) defines election as a “post mortem of the record of those in office whose performance may have little to do with promises made when they were last elected”. Thus, he refers to electoral process as all the pre and post-election activities without which an election is either impossible or meaningless. This is because the electoral process is certainly about rules and procedures of conducting an election.

As Jibrin (2009:33) writes, "elections have meaning for most people only) in a democratic context because they lead to the choice of decision makers by the majority of the citizens. Elections and democracy are therefore inextricably linked". Therefore, this work conceives election as an authorized mandate acquired by a candidate of a political party or an independent candidate as the case may be, from the electorates to carry out its manifestoes. Thus, fraudulent intra- party elections are incapable of producing acceptable and legitimate representatives or consolidating democracy. For leaders to rule with the consent of the people, the electorates must have the freedom of selecting those who represent them through electoral processes with international best practices.

Party Defection

Party defection has been given different interrogations by political analysts such as Omulisi (2015), Awofeso and Irabor (2016) and Moliki (2018). According to Moliki (2019, p. 4) party defection is rampant in the current democratic dispensation more than any republics and no political party in Nigeria, especially in the Fourth Republic that has not suffered from defection crises. He further argued that, issues indentified as factors responsible for party defection includes; intra-party feud, selfish interest of the political class, deficient party ideology and internal democracy, leadership crisis amongst others. It is an act of changing party allegiance or moving from one party to another, (Malhota, 2005). In similar vein, Echikwonye (2011, p. 148) views it as “a situation whereby a member of a given political party denounces his or her membership of that political party in preference for another political party”. He further asserts that defection is a feature or characteristics of multi-party political systems.

Remarkably, Desposato (2006, p. 62-63), gives three reasons why defection should be an issue to be studied. One, frequent defection makes it obvious that the in societies that do not recognized independent candidacy, having a platform

also matter otherwise politicians would not bother to defect from one political party to another. Two, defection provides explanation for politicians underlying preferences, including their incentives for belonging to political parties. Third, it poses a normative problem for representation in democracy. However, Chang (2009) said, it should be noted that the phenomenon of defection is no respecter of age a democracy. And that the frequency of its occurrence varies from country to country. To strengthen the argument of Chang, Evans and Hadley (2010), observed that an analysis of the American Congress reveal that, only twenty defections took place in the United States from 1940s to the 1990s. By contrast, Olu and Irabor (2017, p.67) posits that, defection is reported very frequently in most African democracies including Nigeria. In view of the above, this paper conceives defection as the movement of both elected public office and non-elected holders from one party platform to another.

Democratic Consolidation

Democratic consolidation is one concept that has attracted the attention of scholars and policy makers since the advent of the third wave of democratization (Fukuyama, 1992). Despite the nebulous nature of the concept, most scholars accept the original understanding of the concept as being associated with the challenge of securing and extending the life expectancy of new democracies, of building immunity against the threat of regression to authoritarianism and reverse waves (Schedler, 1998). On the other hand, scholars have argued that the institutionalization of electoral rules is not the most crucial feature of democratic consolidation. Rather the informal practices of actors are very vital in democratic consolidation. Consolidation therefore occurs when the actors in a system follow the formal rules of the democratic institution (Abdullahi, 2018).

However, taking a close watch of the situation in Nigeria, with an exponential increase in societal violence, it is difficult to say if democracy is being consolidated. The public still casts doubt on the state's capacity to manage domestic crises and protect the security of life and property. To strengthen the above position, Fayemi (2012) opined that, it is difficult to “have democracy without democrats”. His assertion is simply a justification of the attitude of political party hierarchies who consider political parties as their personal empires and therefore impose decisions and candidates on the parties.

Methodology of Study

This paper relied on secondary data from journals, books, conference papers, Newspapers as well as reports from international organizations. The paper is basically descriptive based on data sources mentioned above.

Theoretical Analysis

The framework adopted to guide our understanding of party defection and democratic consolidation, the case of the 2019 General Elections is the Elite theory. This theory has become a tool for analysis and understanding of society

through the efforts of Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, Robert Michels and later popularized by C. Wright Mills, Robert Putnam and Thomas Dye among others. According to Tsuwa and Ugbudu (2018, p. 78) the basic assumption is that society is composed of rulers who are minute in population than the masses who are in the majority. It further asserts that, the minority set of people directly or indirectly controls the social, political and economic fabrics of the society. The ruling class which is less in number performs all political functions, monopolizes political power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the more numerous group (masses) is directed and controlled by the first in a manner that is now more or less legal, and more or less arbitrary and violent.

The relevance of this theory to the phenomenon under investigation is that, elites are political leaders, party executives who possess tremendous power and authority and decide who are qualified to represent the party or not. They anoint their clients, stooges or godsons and fix them into various available positions without the cognizance and choice of party members. Their autocratic tendencies and do-or-die character often incurs the displeasure of the deprived members, who are also a rival faction of the party elite in the pursuit of state power. Consequently, factions, divisions and intra-party conflict ensue, hence the deprived members who could not withstand the challenges of achieving their political ambition defects to other political party (ies) or move ahead to form another party (Moliki, 2019).

An Overview of 2019 General Elections and Cases of Party Defection

Name of Defectors	State of Origin	Position Held	Previous Party	Party Defected to
North-Central				
Barnabas Gemade	Benue	Senator	PDP	APC & moved to SDP
Bukola Saraki	Kwara	Senate President	PDP	APC returned to PDP
Abdulfatah Ahmed	Kwara	Governor	APC	PDP
Samuel Ortom	Benue	Governor	APC	PDP
Dino Melaye	Kogi	Senator	APC	PDP
Edward Pwajok	Plateau	Member HOR	APC	PDP
North-East				
Yakubu Dogara	Bauchi	Speaker HOR	APC	PDP
Atiku Abubakar	Adamawa	Party Chieftain	PDP	APC returned to PDP
Aisha Alhassan	Taraba	Minister	APC	UDP & moved to PDP
Inuwa Nguru	Yobe	Party Chairman	PDP	APC
Bala Tinka	Gombe	Party DG	PDP	APC
North-West				
Shehu Sani	Kaduna	Senator	APC	PRP
Aminu Tambuwal	Sokoto	Governor	APC	PDP
Rabiu Kwankwaso	Kano	Senator	APC	PDP
South-South				
Emmanuel Uduaghan	Delta	Former Governor	PDP	APC
Timi Alaibe	Bayelsa	Party Chieftain	PDP	APC returned to PDP
Ita Giwa	Cross River	Party Chieftain	PDP	APC
Akpo, Bomba Yeeh	Rivers	Party Chieftain	AAC	PDP
Osagie Ize-Iyamu	Edo	Party Chieftain	PDP	APC
Godswill Akpabio	Akwa Ibom	Senator	PDP	APC
South-East				
Ken Nnamani	Enugu	Party Chieftain	PDP	APC

Source: Author's Field Work, (2020).

The table above is a fraction of defection cases in the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. These happened before, during and after the 2019 General Elections. It shows that the People's Democratic Party and the ruling All Progressive Congress were mostly affected.

An Interrogation of the Issues of Party Defection

As mentioned earlier, defection by politicians is an everyday feature of the Fourth Republic. A closer look at this issue of defection shows that these

“decampers” leave their former parties for a number of reasons. This paper reveals that people defect mainly due to personal and material reasons as proven by the Elite theory. Hence politicians decamp only when they are not favoured. In most cases they contest and lose in party primaries while others lose in interparty elections and decamp to join the ruling party in order to survive both socially and economically. These issues include;

Ideological Confusion

The alarming rate of defection of politicians and instability within political parties occasioned by lack of internal democracy tends to obstruct democratic sustenance in Nigeria. Parties are known to exist on a sustained ideological base, not just a platform for ascending to political power. Ideology is a belief system that justifies chosen political order for the society (Christenson, 1981). In other words it is the hallmark of social political identification as well as a mobilization and unifying factor (Omotola, 2009). Ideology maybe broken into about three specific categories: beliefs, values, and ideals (Bodley, 2008). In a more elaborate manner, Olaolu and Agbana (2015, p.38) posits that, people's beliefs give them an understanding of how the world works and how they should respond to the actions of others and their environments. It however seems that political ideology vanished, to a great extent, with the first political dispensation in Nigeria—1960 to 1966. A measure of it was retained in the 2nd republic, 1979 to 1983; whilst not much has been seen of political ideology in Nigeria, thereafter. What is seen in the Nigerian political space today is much of money politics, not the politics of ideology. It must be realized that money does not confer direction; where the requisite ideology is lacking, money would be abused.

Situating the concept of political ideology in Nigerian Fourth Republic reveals that Nigerian political parties lack clear ideology. This has accounted for unnecessary defections. This has also accounted for parties changing names, merging with other parties and sometimes forming alliances but still encounter peculiar problems. For a political party to promote democratic sustainability, it must be rooted in a clear ideology. Supporting the above assertion, Edet (2017, p.5) posits that, “political party is the fruit of ideology and ideology is the root of political party”. Prior to the 2019 General Elections, 84 Senators and the members of the House of Representatives defected from their former political parties. According to Nwaneri, Chukwu and Nyam (2018, p. 11) “officials of parties at the receiving end have argued that the defectors are politicians bereft of ideological convictions.” It is clear that none of them can be identified with ideas on which economic or political systems are based but mere platforms under which elections are contested.

Barnes (2018) was very unambiguous in his observation of the absence of ideology in Nigerian political parties. He said that, “political parties in African continent tend to lack explicit messages that separate them from each other.

Emerging political alliances are based mostly on personalities and agreements among political leaders, and do not necessarily reflect differences in policy preference or ideology.” It is the submission of this study that the observation as postulated by Barnes is simply stating the obvious. In the lead up to the 2015 General Elections, the All Progressive Congress hinged its campaign on the failure of the Peoples 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.

Drawing from the whole of the foregoing, it is not out of place to infer that Nigerian politics has been reduced to lust for power and money, only; and achieving this is pursued by all means. In fact, principles and carefulness are undermined in this pursuit, while defection has become an easy tool employed without a little restraint. Sadly too, many politicians cannot convincingly articulate what their political parties stand for; worse still, what they themselves as politicians represent the political space.

Personal Aggrandizement

In Nigeria, people join and defect from one political party to another based on economic opportunities that party can offer. This situation is rampant in the Fourth Republic. For many, politics is seen as a means to an end. The manifestoes of almost all the political parties in this republic are the same when subjected to critical analysis. So defection is not for the fact that one manifesto is better than the other, but it is tied to where personal interests can be achieved. This view agrees with Aleyomi (2013, p.74-75), he noted, there is a mass movement of Nigeria politicians from different political parties into the ruling party towards the time of the general elections. The idea is to participate in party primaries of the ruling party. On the other hand, there is another movement that starts after the party primaries. Those who lost in the party primaries move to their former parties or to new ones or even to form a new party under which they intend to contest the coming election. Incessant defection by Nigeria's political actors, therefore, reflects their continuous quest for political advantage.

In a similar manner, Jibo (2014, p.296) is of the view that, George Akume, former Governor of Benue State and his factional group within the People's Democratic Party defected to Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) when it became obvious that their ambition to seek re-election on the PDP platform was in jeopardy”. A similar situation played out in the wake of the 2015 and 2019 General Elections in the case of Samuel Ortom, Aminu Tambuwal, Abdulfatah Ahmed, Governors of Benue, Sokoto and Kwara States respectively, defecting from PDP to APC and back to PDP, (<https://www.nairaland.com>). These instances testify to the fact that when the political interest of politicians is not guaranteed, they seek for alternative platforms. Taken a step further, we contend that those politicians in Nigeria who visit the rural areas during burials and other events to distribute cash and material in order to induce voters, do so in

anticipation of political supports by way of coming out to vote or remain supportive to their aspirations after which these same politicians forget the electorate until another election is imminent.

Lack of Internal Democracy

Democracy requires political parties as organizations that mediate the democratic process and produce leaders that run democratic politics, (George-Genyi 2009). The absence of intra-party democracy as seen in Nigeria represents the most formidable challenge to the sustenance and deepening of democracy and democratic culture in Nigeria. Party elites are afraid of losing their relevance by allowing transparent processes and principles to be implemented as this would elevate the likelihood of damaging the elite's interest through the defeat of their preferred candidates. The widespread intra-party crises within the ruling party and other parties in Nigeria are clearly the examples of the struggles between party elites to maintain undemocratic practices that secure their interest and retard progressive democratic forces that seek to entrench core democratic values. Komolafe (2008) as cited in George-Genyi (2019) posits thus:

It has never been a party of issues. The polarization in People's Democratic Party has never been which policy direction the government produced by the party should go on the economy, healthcare, education or the collapsed infrastructure. It has always been a game of intrigues between those who want to pocket the party for the purpose of next election. The electoral law provides that it is the party that presented candidates. So, whoever controls the party mechanism determines those to field for elections. It has never been about the poor Nigerians (p.423).

The above scenario further elucidates the unending problems of god-fatherism and imposition of candidates within political parties. This often results into a situation where a candidate that does not foresee fairness in the selection process often move to parties where party tickets are made available for them. Such occurred across most of the political parties in Nigeria. Examples include Imo, Zamfara, Ogun and Benue States.

Fear of Prosecution

This may sound absurd but there is a sense in it. Politics has assumed the largest and lucrative industries in Nigeria. This undoubtedly is responsible for the massive corruption amongst the elite. Corruption is a general term covering misuse of authority as a result of considerations of personal gains (Nwanta, Okechukwu and Chigozie, 2009). Thus, for politicians enmeshed in behavior considered being inimical to the trust of office bestowed on them, usually defect from their parties when their parties lose election to the ruling political party to avoid been called to explain some of their actions or inactions while discharging their duties when in office. Corroborating the above views, Dede cited in Yio

(2011, p. 215) opined that, In preparations towards the 2007 General Elections Kebbi and Jigawa governors having been blackmailed with Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) reports on them had followed PDP advice and defected en-mass with their legislatures to the ruling party. The assertion above is a confirmation that the fear of prosecution is a common factor for a governing party to use in weakening the opposition deliberately.

The defection of many elected public officers before or after the 2019 General Elections to the ruling APC may not be unconnected to the fact of fear of prosecution. According to Inyang (2019), the National Chairman of the All Progressive Congress (APC), Adams Oshiomhole, was credited to have said, "Politicians' sins are forgiven when they join the ruling party". This suggests that, politicians with corrupt cases can be forgiven irrespective of their crime against society, the moment they join the ruling party. It also suggests that, one of the cardinal agenda of the APC which was a fight against corruption was not true. There are many of such persons with charges at the EFCC or the conventional courts; therefore, defecting to government in power is a common ground to be acquitted.

Constitutional Ambiguity

Constitutional ambiguity is another serious reason for party defection. In the last decade of democratic governance in Nigeria, the country has witnessed series of defections, with politicians cross-carpeting from one party to the other especially to the dominant political parties, the PDP and APC. This development has generated heated debates on whether the constitution should allow carpet crossing or not.

According to Ali and Mohammed (2019, p.122), opined that, the vulnerability of the Nigerian Constitution such as section 68(1g), (2) and 109 (1g), as well as some lacuna in the reference cases on legislators' defections have also fueled the defection syndrome, while the politicized and corrupt nature of the Nigerian judiciary as characterized of bribery, delay in decisions, inconsistency in verdicts and interpretations are being fully exploited by the defecting politicians. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 has made provisions with respect to defection from one political party to the other while holding any political (executive or legislative) offices in Nigeria. Mohammed, Aisha and Saidu (2018) on their part argued that, these provisions could however, be categorized into two perspectives of elected executives and elected legislators. Sections 131(c), 142(1), 177(d) and 187(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended which together provided that a President and Vice President, Governors and Deputy Governors must prior to their elections into offices respectively belong to any of the registered political parties in Nigeria and also be sponsored by such parties during their elections into office.

In view of the provisions of the Constitution of Nigeria, the issue of the defection of the executive officers such as the President and Vice President, Governors and Deputy Governors is shredded in ambiguities. On the other hand, the legislators are only allowed to defect from one party to another throughout

their tenure of four years when and if the legislator defects to another political party as a result of internal division within his/her party he/she defected from or there is a merger between his/her political party and one or some other parties.

Party Defection and Implications on Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

The events surrounding defections in Nigeria shows that political parties are not built or rooted on ideas and principles. This ideological lacuna has reduced Nigerian political parties to mere organizations that survive on financial inducements as the basis for loyalty and support. This act erodes the efficiency of democratic sustenance through party processes. In Nigeria, politicians only defect from one party to another to contest elections or get favour not on the basis of party ideological diversities.

The notion of opposition within a democracy behooves of such parties to offer credible alternatives in the form of policies for development. In some cases, a ruling party can borrow an opposition view and turn it into its own. But for the sake of personal aggrandizement, the idea of a strong opposition party which is the essence of a multiparty system is defeated as everyone wants to belong to the ruling party. This represents the tragic state of contemporary democracy in Nigeria. Hence, the ruling parties often have no strong opposition to help check their excesses. The absence of this makes the party in government monopolize the system.

Unfortunately, in Nigeria, where an opposition party or members of the opposition party tries to criticize the activity of government, the government in power uses government machinery to prosecute them. The idea of wooing or accepting politicians from other political parties and writing off their corrupt practices against the state is unwholesome in our fight against corruption which has done so much damage to our collective development. This attitude has put us in bad light at the international arena. The sustained orientation where personal interest overrides public interest is responsible for the absence of good governance. Defections in Nigeria are most times not done in line with the constitutional provisions. This makes a mockery of our laws. For instance Section 68 (1.g) of the 1999 Constitution amended 2011 states thus:

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 party is not as a result of a division in the political party of which he was previously a member or of a merger of two or more political parties or factions by one of which he was previously sponsored (p.34).

In most events of defections in Nigeria, the cases are neither of the issues raised above, yet people defect without vacating the seats. Such political behavior is an exhibition of a lawless society and at variance with best democratic practices.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper adopted the Elite theory as framework of analysis to examine the politics of defection and its implication on Nigeria's democracy. This is because, in Nigeria, political parties are driven by personalities and agreements among political leaders reflect their personal interest. From the analysis, the paper argued that, the main reason for defection in Nigeria remains the individualistic materialistic considerations. Since the social surplus is slim, access to political power becomes objectively a means to the acquisition of economic power. Thus, people defect to either acquire higher officers, maintain the positions they already hold or have connections with those in authority. In line with the above, it is right to say that material influence plays a vital role in politicians defecting from one political party to another. However, such political behavior shows that political parties in Nigeria are not built on ideas and principles. And it is fast eroding the efficacy of democratic sustainability through party processes. The study makes a number of recommendations for effective functioning of political parties. Some of the recommendations are stated below.

In considering the problem democratic consolidation as a result of the current practice where parties have become personal businesses of individual because parties are driven by personalities and not ideology. Parties need to be re-organized on the basis of principle. This will help deal with the problem of monopolization of party decision making process and this will help in the restoration of internal democracy. Party primary is the initial aspect of democracy that elects members in this case flag bearers who represent various political parties. The lack of credibility, fairness and justice during party primaries breaches the core values of democracy and is what often leads to defection to other parties.

Reduction of the premium placed on political power. When political positions are made less lucrative but rather considered as patriotic service to the nation, it will also help mitigate the problem of unnecessary defection. This is because; political parties are not seen as vessels to government and power, but capturing political power has become synonymous to primitive accumulation of societal wealth.

Political parties should not sponsor unfaithful politicians, especially defectors, as their candidates in elections, because confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like shooting one's self on the foot of scoring an own goal. The electorate should not vote for politicians who are unfaithful or lack integrity and accountability, especially if they defected with the mandate from another party, because they are driven by self interest and unpatriotic spirit which makes them unreliable.

Section 68 (1) (g) should be amended and restructured to solve the ambiguity caused as a loopholes for politicians to defect. Proper interpretation is required on the concept of 'division'. There should be strict enforcement/compliance with the provisions of section 68 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in respect of legislators' incessant and unconstitutional inter-party defections. In line with the solution to constitutional ambiguity, there is need for independent candidacy in any election. Sections 7(4), 65 (2) (b), 106 (d), 131 (c)

and 177 (c) of the Constitution of Nigeria 1999, prohibit independent candidacy in elections. For a vibrant democracy, independent candidates should be allowed.

References

- Ali, M. A, & Mohammed, I. S. (2019). Politics of inter-party defections in Nigeria: Whos' interest? *African Journal of Management (AJOM)*, 3(2), 114-135.
- Ake, C. (1982). *Political economy of Africa*, England; Longman.
- Aleyomi, M. (2013). Election and politics of party defection in Nigeria: A clue from Kogi State. *Covenant University Journal of Politics and International Affairs (CUJPIA)*, 1(1), 72-84.
- Barnes, S. (2018). Defections, decamping and cross-carpeting: The challenges facing Nigerian political parties ahead of the 2019 General Elections. International Republican Institute's. www.democracyspeas.org/
- Chang, A. (2009). *Re-election incentives and defection: Party switching in the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party*. Japan Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica.
- Christenson, E (1981). *Ideologies and modern politics*. New York. Harper and Row.
- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as (amended 2011).
- Echikwonye, B.A. (2011). Political Stability and Extra-Parliamentary Carpet Crossing. In Nigeria's First and Second Republics. *Journal of Political and Administrative Studies*, 2 (2); 148-157.
- Edet, L. I (2017). Politics of Defection and its Implication on Nigeria's Democracy. *Global Journal of Human-Social Sciences: (F) Political Science*, 17 (1); 1-14.
- Evans, K. & Hadley, N. (2010). Party switching and the goals of membership in the US Congress: The cases of Arlen Specter, Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, paper prepared for WPSA, San Francisco, CA.
- Fayemi, K. (2012). Democratic consolidation in Nigeria: Looking between the mirage and the mirror. Paper presented at the Center for Democracy and Development. <http://www.slideshare.net/kayodefayemi/democratic-consolidation-in-nigeria-looking-between-the-mirage-and-the-mirror>.
- Fuuyama, F. (1992). *The end of history and the last man*, England: Penguin Book.
- George-Genyi, EM, (2009). Political Parties, Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: An Insight into the Fourth Republic. In, T. Edoh and T. Wuam (Eds.) *Democracy, Leadership and Accountability in Post-Colonial Africa*. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers.
- Idowu. O. (2010). Corruption, the police and the challenges of a free and fair election in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 12 (7), 52-63.
- Inyang, I. (2019). Once you join APC, all your sins are forgiven. Daily Post 18th, January. 2019. Retrieved from <https://dailypost.ng/2019/01/18/join-apc-sins-forgiven-oshiomhole>.

- Jibo, M. (2014). *Elite Politics in the Middle Belt of Nigeria: 1993-2014*. Ibadan: Kraft Books limited.
- Jibrin, I. & Aturu, B. (2009). Rigging and electoral fraud in Nigeria: State of the art. In *Engineering the web's third decade. Association for Computing Machinery*, 53(3); 6-18.
- Jibrin, A.D (2018). The out-come of Nigeria's 2015 General Election and the prospect of democratic consolidation. E.M. George-Genyi and J.T. Tsuwa (eds.). *Post-election peace building and democratic consolidation in Nigeria*. Abuja: Don'Afrique Publishers.
- Johari, J.C (2009). *Principles of Modern Political Science*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Malhotra, G.C. (2005). *Anti-Defection Law in India and Common Wealth*, New Delhi: Metropolitan Books Company.
- Mbah, C. C. (2007). *Foundations of Political Science*. Onitsha: Rex Charles & Patrick Limited.
- Moliki, A.O (2019). Intra-party conflict, party defections and political stability in Ogun State, 2013-1018. *Hyuku Journal of Politics and Development Studies (HJPDS)*, 4(1); 1-13.
- Mohammed, I. S., Aisha, A. A, & Saidu, A. (2018). Nigerian political development. Beau Bassin, Mauriyus: Lambert Academy Publishing.
- Mwanta, E., Okechukwu, I. E. & Chigozie, I. O. (2009). Corruption in Nigeria. The National Assembly Experience 1999-2006. In T. Edoh and T. Wuam (Eds.) *Democracy, Leadership and Accountability in Post-Colonial Africa*. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers.
- Nwaneri, F. (2018, 12th, November). Defection: 84 Senators, Reps Change Parties in Three Years. *New Telegraph. Vol. 4, p. 4*
- Nwaneri, F. Chukwu, D. and Nyam, P. (2018). 8th National Assembly: Defection takes to Shine. *New Telegraph* p.11 (4).
- Olu, A. (2017). The game theory and the politics of cross-carpeting in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. *Public Policy and Administrative Research*, 7 (7), 66-72.
- Oluola, S.O, & Agbana, J.O. (2015). Cross-carpeting in Nigerian politics: Some legal and moral issues generated. *Canadian Academy of Oriental and Occidental Culture*, 3 (2), 22-39.
- Omotola, S. (2009). Nigerian Parties and Political Ideology; *Journal of Alternative Perspective in Social Sciences*, 1 (3); 612-634.
- Tsuwa, J.T. and Ugbudu, M. (2018). Godfatherism in Nigerian politics: It's implication on post-election peace building in Nigeria. E.M George-Genyi and J.T. Tsuwa (eds.). *Post-election peace building and democratic consolidation in Nigeria*. Abuja: Don'Afrique Publishers.
- Yio, B. W. (2011). *Party Politics in Nigeria 1999-2010*. *African Journal of Economy and Society*, 11 (1); 207-22
- <https://www.nairaland.com.4607717/three-northern-apc-governors-defect>.