

# **PARTY SWITCHING IN NIGERIA:**

(A CASE STUDY OF PDP AND APC)

***BY***

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this project work is a product of my research. It has been written by me and has never been used for any degree project before. All quotations are duly acknowledged via bibliography.

## **DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to my good father Ibrahim Mohammed Kankara and my good Mother Maryam Lawal Bugaje whose prayers and dedication towards my studies brought me to Where I am today.

## CERTIFICATION

This research project has been read and certified by the undersigned:

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# CHAPTER ONE

## GENERAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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

In part, because the political act of changing parties goes by so many different terms, studies of party switching are difficult to track down and are yet to acquire status as a subfield in party politics (Janada, 2009). Despite this, Desposato (2006: 62-63) has pointed out the benefits of studying party switching:

...party switching warrants study for three reasons; First frequent switching makes it clear that parties do matter. Otherwise, politicians would not bother to switch. Second, and more importantly, switching provides a unique window on politicians'

underlying preferences; including their incentives for belonging to political parties... Finally, switching poses a normative problem for representation in mass democracies. Parties are the primary mechanism linking voters and politicians in modern mass democracies.

Apart from the benefits of studying party switching, researchers have demonstrated kin interest in the factors that precipitate defection and the impact of defection on the stability and consolidation of democracy. Other questions that really bogged the minds of researchers are whether defection is democratic, undemocratic or anti-democratic and the workability or effectiveness of anti-defection laws in curbing party switching and its attendant negative consequences.

Traditionally, according to McElroy (2003), party switching is generally viewed as undemocratic behaviour or an “aberration or an indicator of a weak, ill-informed party system, a phenomenon associated with newly emerging democracies or unstable one.

However, the general view or reason for switching seems to suggest an autocratic trend and growing tendency towards a one party system in Nigeria. As a result, the aim of this study is not only to come up with an explanatory framework on party switching in Nigeria, but most importantly to critically analyze and proffer workable solutions to the problems of party switching which has become an increasingly permanent feature in the Nigerian democratic experience.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Party switching has become a common phenomenon among the Nigerian elites. This has not only undermined the democratic process, but also resulted to political party factionalisation and disintegration. Consequently, political party institutionalization has suffered a serious corrosion; party switching has also directly stalled the emergence of a formidable opposition party which is the hallmark of representative democracy.

## **1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this research/study is to:

- i. To find out the relationship between party switching and democratic consolidation in Nigeria.
- ii. To explore the political implication of party switching in Nigeria.
- iii. To assess whether the phenomena of party switching ensure democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

The objectives of this study on the other hand are to:

- i. quest for the abolition of party switching for better democratisation in the country.
- ii. enlighten Nigerians on the implication of party switching for the democratic process.
- iii. seek to highlight the menace caused by the phenomena of party switching to democratic consolidation.

## **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This research/study attempts to answer the following questions:

- i. Is there any relationship between party switching and democratic consolidation in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the political implications of party switching for democratic process in Nigeria?
- iii. Does party switching ensure democratic consolidation in Nigeria?

## **1.5 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS**

This research is designed to assess the following hypotheses:

- i. Party switching could be a threat to the democratic consolidation in a country.
- ii. Abolition of party switching could result to good democratic process.
- iii. Party switching could allow elites to maintain the status quo.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This research/study is significant as it aims to provide lasting solution to the problems of party switching which constitute adverse effects on the democratic process in Nigeria. It is also relevant to researchers, policy makers, practical statesmen, students. The study will also contribute to the body and encourage other writers or researchers to carryout similar work in the field.

## **1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The research is designed to investigate the politics of party switching in Nigeria, its effects toward the development and the stability of the Nigerian democratic system.

However, this research is limited to examining party switching in Nigeria among the two dominant political parties (i.e. the Peoples Democratic Party and the All Progressives Congress), the findings of which would be used to draw inference (conclusion).

## **1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical guide of this study/research is derived from the Rational Choice Theory. The basic idea of the Rational Choice Theory is that the pattern of behaviour in society reflects the choice made by individuals as they try to maximize benefits and minimize costs. In other words, people make decisions about how they should act by comparing the costs and benefits of different courses of action.

Under this theory (Rational Choice Theory) a number of models emerge to explain why politicians switch party. These models include: “Office-Seeking” Model advanced by Downs (1957) who assumes that the prime motivating factor for party switching is to get into office or power, and that policy if at all important has a purely instrumental function. This model therefore suggests that, personal gain and the lure for office motivate switchers to change parties. Similar to Office-Seeking Model is the “Calculus of Candidacy” Model which suggests that the electoral connection is paramount (Andrich et al., 1992). To Andrich and Bianco (1992) politicians choose the party that maximizes their prospects of re-election. In keeping with theories based on the “Calculus of

Candidacy” Model, it is assumed that Nigerian politicians are utility maximisers who seek to maximize their share of office in order to advance their political interests and career without any ideological considerations.

On the contrary, “Policy-Seeking” Model suggests that, it is the policy that is objective pay-off which party members seek. Though it is not always the case, it may be right to say that those politicians who switch parties because of policy preferences may do it for some ideological considerations. Other theorists argue that, some politicians “may switch with a vengeance” in order to show their colleagues in the old or the new party their electoral power and demonstrate their political ego. The theory of ego demonstration or muscles flexing is also relevant to the analysis of the Nigerian politics. It is often customary for some disenchanted politicians and ‘*god-fathers*’ to switch to alternative political party (ies) after they have lost out during the party primaries. A host of factors could precipitate party switching among which the assumption of rationality is the most critical (Ogundiya, 2009).

## **1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research adopts systematic qualitative content analysis as its method. Therefore, the documents such as newspapers, textbooks, journals, articles and other written records based on the issue of party switching in Nigeria. Therefore, the method of data collection for the research/study is secondary.

## **1.10 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Here the research intends to look at the various definitions of party switching by different scholars and the implication of party switching for democratic consolidation.

## **1.11 PARTY SWITCHING: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Party switching could be seen as an act of changing political party (ies). Thus, party switching is the act of defecting from one political party to another. According to Malthora (2005), party switching is known by different nomenclatures – such as ‘floor-crossing’, ‘carpet-crossing’, ‘party hopping’, ‘dispute’ and ‘canoe-jumping’ (Janada, 2009). Indeed, party defection or switching occurs in every political system. It is a global reality and an integral part of political process. King and Benjamin (1986) investigated the rationale behind party defections and came to conclusion that party defection is most likely to coincide with important political events such as changes in key economic indicators, and in times of military conflict. For Castle and Fett (1996), it is the ideologically cross-pressured members who are most likely to change parties (Nokken, 2002).

However, Malthora, in his analysis observed that in some countries party defections “are a non-issue and not perceived as a problem”, whereas in others, the practice threatens government’s stability and is taken as very serious (Janada, 2009). Understandably, this threat and instability arising from

defections especially in emerging democracies prompted enactment of anti-defection laws in some societies. Most of the anti-defection laws emphasise parliamentary defections. For instance, India enacted various anti-defection laws in 1973, 1985 and 2003 anti-defection laws. According to Malthora, the 2003 law provides that a person can be disqualified from serving in parliament for voluntarily giving up the membership of his original party (Janada, 2009).

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

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 expiration of his 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 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". Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999.

The fluidity in formations, mergers and demergers including the orchestrations of internal party crisis has made that section difficult in application as the boundaries between mergers and demergers in Nigeria party politics appears too thin, thereby creating justification for parliamentary defections. In another vein,



it is imperative to note that in most developing political systems especially in Latin America and Africa, party defections seem not to be motivated by the ideological considerations but several other mundane factors not connected with the foundation of party politics in the regions. For instance, in most colonial states, parties emerge within the context of religious, ethnic considerations and financial capacity of few elites. In fact, many of them are driven by such considerations and are not ultimately seen as devoid of ideological coherence, heavily personality-driven and relying on an ethnic support base (Carother, 2006). Ideology plays a pivotal role in prolonging the life span of a political party. It neutralizes or reduces internal conflicts thereby serving as a binding force. Nnoli (2003) observes that ideology is a very crucial aspect of politics, not only by serving as a cognitive structure for looking at society generally and providing a prescriptive formula, that is a guide to individual action and judgement, but also as a powerful instrument of conflict management, self-identification, popular mobilization and legitimization.

In fact, intra-party crisis in Nigeria underlies the burgeoning state of party defections in Nigeria. For instance, the major parties in Nigeria, like Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC) among others are currently in severe crises. These crises have corresponding impact on the political system, and sometimes ensue in members defecting to other parties. Essentially, internal party democracy is a *sine qua non* for redressing the deep-

rooted animosity among members and reactivating the fortunes of these parties, since they have lost the ideological content. It is through this that parties would be able to select candidates that are capable and alluring for elections. Scarrow (2004) maintains that, internal party democracy would serve as a veritable platform for mediation and conflict resolution.

Following the above, it could be hypothesized that there is serious ideological poverty in virtually all Nigerian political parties which appeared to have generated intra-party conflicts and in turn increased the rate of *party switching*.

## **1.12 ORGANISATION OF CHAPTERS**

For the sake of clarification, the research is divided into four distinct chapters. The first chapter introduces the study and other relevant research procedures which include the introduction, statement of the problem, research questions, aim and objectives of the study, research hypotheses, significance of the Study, scope and limitations of the study, theoretical framework, methodology, literature review and finally organisation of chapters/chapterisation. Chapter two explores the historical background of the area of the study where the research/study explores the historical evolution of the area of the study. Chapter three contains the discussion and analysis of the data collected. Finally, chapter four constitutes the summary, conclusion, the recommendations and the bibliography.

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE AREA OF STUDY**

#### **2.1 HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF PARTY SWITCHING IN NIGERIA**

This chapter explores and outlines the historical background of area of the study (Party Switching in Nigeria) which could be traced from the colonial period to the present day (Fourth Republic).

##### **2.1.1 THE COLONIAL EXPERIENCE**

Party switching in Nigeria pre-dates independence. Therefore, it is as old as Nigerian politics. In 1951 the first celebrated defection episode occurred in Nigeria (Mbah, 2011: 3). This scenario deprived Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of the chance to lead the government business of the Western Nigeria. The Yoruba members of the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC) were lobbied to cross over to the Action Group (AG) to stop Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Igbo man, from becoming the premier of Western Region. When the House met, there was a red carpet, and the speaker's bench was at the centre; the government side was on the right whereas the opposition bench was on the left side. The NCNC, the majority party occupying the government side, had the red carpet separating them from the opposition. The Governor was then the Speaker or the Chairman of the House. He took his seat. Chief Awolowo got up and announced that he had a matter of urgency to rise in order to forestall a situation

that could lead to riots and anarchy, and which many members of the House had decided to correct. Augustine Aderemola; one of the NCNC members got up and remarked “Your Excellency, I do not want to be part of a situation where Yoruba land would be set on fire. So I am crossing over to the other side”. Consequently, the gentleman crossed over to AG on the floor of the Western House of Assembly (Nnanna, 2010:3). This heralded the massive cross over to the Action Group (AG).

As the leader of the NCNC, Azikiwe was to be the Premier of Western Nigeria following the elections of 1951 with Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a Yoruba man, and the leader of Action Group, the leader of the opposition in the Regional House of Assembly. The NCNC won 42 seats out of 80, but within 24 hours, 20 of them had defected to AG. It was Chief Awolowo that exerted pressure on a number of Yoruba elected members on the NCNC platform to ‘cross-carpet’ in the House and join the AG, in order to deny Dr. Azikiwe the premiership in favour of Awolowo. Azikiwe had assumed the leadership of the NCNC following the death of Herbert Macaulay. There would have been no basis for defection if Macaulay a Yoruba man, and not Azikiwe, were elected Premier of Western Region on the NCNC platform in 1951.

As a result of this blatant injection of ethnic rivalry into Nigerian politics, Azikiwe was compelled to ‘return home’ to the East where he became the premier of the government (Natufe, 1999:3). This dangerous precedent set the

pace for the development of Nigerian politics built around ethnic and regional rivalry as well as crisis and instability that followed later. These conditions gave birth to an increase in the number of ethnic-based political parties in the country up until today.

Essentially, this started from Ibadan, where Adisa Akinloye led the defectors. Adelabu, Richard Akinjide and Mojeed Agbaje refused to defect. After the defection, the NCNC majority was reduced to a minority. Their action for their defection to AG was simply to deny Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe an Igbo Politician from becoming the Premier of Western Region. That automatically signalled the beginning of ethnic and regional politics in Nigeria (Mbah, 2011: 4). At that time, to be a member of House of Representatives, one had to be an elected member of the Regional House of Assembly. That was essentially how the expression, “party switching” came into the political dictionary of Nigeria and has remained till today thereby reducing politics in Nigeria to absurd tribal level.

### **2.1.2 PARTY SWITCHING IN THE FIRST REPUBLIC (1960 – 1966)**

In the First Republic (1960-1966), the former Premier of the defunct Western Region of Nigeria, Chief Ladoke Akintola left the then Action Group based on personality clash between him and Chief Obafemi Awolowo and on personal principle, necessitated by the need to move the Yoruba people into Nigeria’s mainstream politics. In the same way as it happened between Akintola and

Awolowo, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of the NCNC and Dr. Kingsley Mbadiwe had an occasion to fall apart in their political relationship which led to Mbadiwe's formation of the Democratic Party of Nigeria Citizens (DPNC), which sought a working relationship with the AG at the Federal Elections in 1959 (Mbah, 2011:4).

### **2.1.3 PARTY SWITCHING IN THE SECOND REPUBLIC (1979 – 1983)**

In the Second Republic (1979-1983), the repackage off-shoot of Action Group, the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and Chief Awolowo's loyalists such as Adisa Oladosu Akintola, Anthony Enahoro, Richard Akinyide, and S.G. Ikoku reconsidered their loyalty to the party. A number of them defected to National Party of Nigeria (NPN). One important issue of party switching of the Second Republic was the defection of Chief Akin Omoboriowo from UPN to NPN as the Ondo state gubernatorial candidate. In the same manner, Alhaji Abubakar Rimi was elected under the ticket of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and Rimi later switched to the Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP), on which platform he sought re-election in 1983. Many politicians from the opposition parties switched to join NPN during this period (Ibid: 5).

### **2.1.4 PARTY SWITCHING IN THE THIRD REPUBLIC (1984 – 1998)**

Nigeria had a two-party system in the Third Republic: the Social Democratic Party (SDP) was the ruling party, while the National Republican Convention (NRC) was the opposition party. The republic was, however, botched by the



annulment of the June 12, 1993 election widely acclaimed to be freest and fairest election in the political history of the country. There was no any record of party switching in the Third Republic (Baiyewu, 2015).

### **2.1.5 PARTY SWITCHING IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC (1999 TO DATE)**

Party switching has become a recurring decimal in the fourth Republic when Nigeria returned to democratic rule. The spate of party switching since 1999 has assumed preposterous dimensions. In 1999, Chief Evan Enwerem, having lost the gubernatorial primaries in the All Peoples Party (APP) in Imo State, defected and joined the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on whose ticket he won a senatorial seat. His defection was rewarded as he was elected the Senate President (Odum, 2002). In Plateau State Alhaji Alhassan Shu'aibu defected from the APP and joined the PDP in 1999. In Cross River State, not less than seven prominent All Peoples Party and Alliance for Democracy members have defected to the Peoples Democratic Party (Ezia, 2015: 6).

Evidently, the direction of defection from 1999 to 2011 shows that it is one-sided, and was essentially into the PDP. Only little percentage seemed to be defecting from PDP to other parties to form a new political party. However, there is nothing wrong in people switching if they do not find the programmes of their party in consonance with their ideals. It becomes dubious when politicians begin to mortgage their consciences as well as seek to pursue their private and selfish interest in the name of defection. This may have stemmed

from the mere fact that politicians are poor and desperate to hold public office as a means of accumulating wealth. In advanced democracies, cross carpeting is done on principle, rather than on selfish and personal interest. What we are witnessing today is political prostitution which lacks political morality.

In 2003, Wahab, Obanikoro, Senator Ogunlere and Senator Musilieu all from Lagos State were elected on the platform of Alliance for Democracy (AD) but defected to join PDP. Chief Arthur Nzeribe (Imo) Senator Nwanunu (Abia), Dr. Usman Kabir (Kogi), the trio defected from All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) to join the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Senator Patrick Osakwe representing Delta North defected from PDP to Accord Party (AP). Not long enough, the elected Senator also abandoned AD and defected to PDP alleging division within the party. Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari the former Speaker House of Representative also jettisoned PDP for CPC (Ezia, 2015: 7).

A chronicle of defection shows that the most important cases of defection are that of the former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar. He was a founding member of the PDP, and defected to the Action Congress (AC) after a running battle with the former President Olusegun Obasanjo. In 2007, he contested the presidential elections on the platform of AC, but lost to the late President Umaru Yar'Adua. A few months ago, Atiku went back to the PDP where he contested the presidential primaries. Before Atiku's defection, Ondo and Edo States witnessed defection of members of the opposition parties to the party of

the incumbent governor. Edo State witnessed a large defection of members of the PDP to the AC, which is the Governor's party (Agina, 2010:3). In that period, Ondo state saw a mass defection of PDP members to the Labour Party (LP) of which the incumbent governor is a member. In both cases, the cross-carpeting were an aftermath of political battles and in-fighting.

In Abia State, Comrade Uche Chukwuemerijie elected on the platform of the then ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) defected to the Progressives People Alliance (PPA). Chief Sergeant Awuse, former Chairman Board of Directors, Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) defected from (PDP) to become the gubernatorial candidate of Democratic Peoples Party (DPP). Alhaji Attahiru Bafarawa, former governor of Sokoto State elected on the platform of All Peoples Party (APP) abandoned the party to form the Democratic Peoples Party (DPP) and became its presidential candidate in 2007 general elections. Alhaji Attahiru Bafarawa discarded the party he harboured to establish for the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN). Chief Orji Kalu left the PDP to form the Progressives Peoples Alliance (PPA) and became its presidential candidate in 2007 general elections. Chief Orji Kalu damped membership of PPA for CPC. The former military head of state, Rtd. General Muhammad Buhari who contested against for President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2003 and 2007 elections under the banner of ANPP found his way to Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). He was the presidential flag bearer of the party in 2011 election.

Ahead of the 2015 general elections, the opposition parties namely ACN, CPC, ANPP and a faction of APGA for the first time in the history of the country's politics formed a strong merger that gave birth to the leading opposition party called All Progressives Congress (APC). At the peak of the merger, some chieftains of the APC such as former governor of Kano State, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, his Sokoto and Borno counterparts, Alhaji Attahiru Bafarawa and Senator Ali Modu Sheriff defected to the PDP accusing some APC leaders of overbearing influence (Ezea, 2015: 11).

As the 2015 general elections draw nearer, it appears that the country operates a two-party system, as only the PDP and the APC seem to be holding sway nationally (Baiyewu, 2015: 13).

At the peak of the intra-party crisis within the PDP that rocked the party under leadership of Alhaji Bamanga Tukur as the national chairman of the party, five governors defected to APC. Just a few days after the PDP lost the presidential election to the APC; there have been mass defections of politicians from the PDP to APC.

From the Southwest to the North, it is hurricane defection of politicians to the APC. It is only in Southeast that such moves have not been witnessed openly. Some of these defectors include former National Legal Advisor PDP, Mr. Olusola Oke, former governor of Edo State, Osarhiemen Osunbor, the former Minister of Justice Mike Aondoakaa, Prof. Tony Ijobor (SAN), Major General

Lawrence Onaja (Rtd), former Speaker House of Representatives, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, former governor of Sokoto State, Alhaji Aliyu Magatarda Wammako, former governor of Kano State, Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, Rotimi Amaechi among others (Ibid: 16).

Party switching certainly predates Nigeria's independence. However, this has been shaped and sharpened by colonialism and sustained by the structures of post-colonial state. It was colonialism that set the pace for modernization and economic development in Nigeria, while dramatically changing the existing patterns of social, political and economic interactions among peoples and groups. Colonialism had far reaching and uniform impact on the development of the Nigerian ruling class, their character and behaviour. There are two ways the defections occur.

First, there is great movement of 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.

The second movement starts after the party primaries. At this point 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 elections.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **PARTY SWITCHING IN NIGERIA BETWEEN PDP AND APC**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter looks at the issues/cases of party switching in Nigeria between the two dominant political parties: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC). In so doing, the research/study attempts to examine the relationship between party switching and its implications for the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. The fact that, the All Progressives Congress (APC) is a newly formed political party, the research will explore the cases of defection between the two dominant political parties (All Progressives Congress and Peoples Democratic Party) right from the formation of the APC.

#### **3.2 THE DYNAMICS OF PARTY SWITCHING IN NIGERIA**

In Nigeria, the number of politicians that have defected from one party to another in this current regime is alarming. Many attribute this defection or switching to the level of desperation of the politicians in pursuing an elective post, prospects of acquiring political appointment and the power, fame and wealth etc, yet to some the defection of some party members has a propensity to promote democratic consolidation in the country.

In Nigeria, there have been a myriad number of the cases of party switching before and even after the 2015 general elections especially between the two

dominant political parties; the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC). In the country, before the 2015 general elections and immediately after the victory of the opposition party coalition; the APC over the PDP, many politicians and members from the losing side henceforth begin to embark on mass defection to the victorious party. As at last count, many former leaders, ex-government appointees, lawmakers, well-known contractors and even some support groups of the former President Jonathan's presidential campaign then have joined the APC. Although, there was no certain proportion of defectors from APC to PDP, but APC had much greater proportion especially after the party had won the presidential seat in the 2015 general elections.

From Katsina, the home state of the president General Muhammad Buhari, two former gubernatorial aspirants on the platform of the PDP in the state, Alhaji Kabir Barkiya, and Alhaji Tukur Jikamshi, have defected to the APC. Also a former Military Governor of Borno, Col. Abdulmumini Aminu (rtd), eight serving members of the Katsina State House of Assembly and two former commissioners, Nasidi Danladi and Aminu Jamo have also defected from PDP to APC.

One of the most significant switching is the defection of the former Speaker House of Representatives, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal which spurred a very serious political upheaval at the National House of Assembly. Tambuwal was



denied entrance to the House by some members of the House especially those under the platform of the then ruling party, PDP. Tambuwal had during plenary told his colleagues that he heeded the calls of the members of his constituency to dump the PDP.

The Speaker said, “based on the provision of the 1999 constitution, and having regard to the development of the PDP in my own state, Sokoto, I hereby announce my membership of the APC. Let me register my profound application to all of you my colleagues for the unflinching support you have continued to extend to me for the overall national interest and development of our democracy” (Oladimeji, 2015:2).

The defection ended the months of speculations over his political future. It also threw up questions on whether he would resign as speaker, be impeached or remain in office (Ibid: 3)

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

A pioneer member of the PDP and its former National Legal Advisor, Chief Olusola Oke, and a three-time Senator from Ondo Central, Gbenga Ogunniya, led some other leaders and their supporters to defect to the APC. Also a former Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives and founding member of the PDP, Prince Chibudom Nwuche, has resigned his membership of the party, citing frustrations at the party's non-adherence to internal democratic rules. In Cross River State, a PDP stalwart and former ambassador to Mali, Chief Sonny Abang, has resigned membership of the former party and joined the APC.

Owelle Rochas Okorocha, the controversial governor of Imo State, won the hardly-contested governorship election in Imo State in 2011 under the APGA. He has been a member of almost all the political parties in Nigeria. He is also a one-time presidential aspirant. Governor Okorocha surprised everybody in February in 2014 when he took his supporters from the faction of APGA and defected to the newly formed APC. Rotimi Amaechi, the controversial governor who became governor of Rivers State through court ruling in October 2007 after he was controversially substituted before the election also joined the train of politicians that defected to APC late 2014 after irreconcilable differences with the presidency that lasted for months amidst conflicts and tension that almost consumed Rivers State (Ibid: 6).

Chief Tom Ikimi, the former minister of Foreign Affairs under the late General Abacha, was the founding member and in board of trustees of the now-defunct

APP. In September 2001, he defected to the PDP. In 2006, he was among the founding members of the now-defunct AC and led the party to win governorship elections in 2007, and also in 2012 in Edo State. Ikimi was also saddled with the responsibility of heading the Merger Steering Committee of the defunct AC, ANPP, CPC and faction of APGA that coalesced into APC, following his inability to clinch the party's chairmanship position. In August 2014, he defected to the PDP.

Another important figure, the pioneer chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu who was the presidential flag-bearer of the now-defunct AC in the 2011 presidential election also defected to the PDP in August this year (2015) citing the pursuit of a “*good cause*” rather than selfish desires as his reason.

In Kano State, Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso became governor of the State in 1999, but lost his re-election in 2003. In 2011, he was re-elected for a second term. Kwankwaso left PDP for the APC arguing that neither the presidency nor the party leadership had shown any respect to him or his office.

With more cases of switching from the PDP to the APC in the days ahead, what is now agitating the minds of political analysts is the likely implication of the gale of defections on the quest for a virile democratic environment. The question is how the PDP will and other parties in Nigeria survive in order to continue to play their vital role in acting as checks to possible excesses of the

now-ruling party, APC. Because without a strong opposition party, Nigeria can easily move into the realm of one-party system where all the elements of democracy will assume different characters (Ezea, 2015).

Some Nigerian politicians attribute political defections to intimidation and lack of internal democracy in their party. Others attribute their political defections to lack of followership of their parties outside the shore of the region. Yet to some, Nigerian politicians switch parties in order to improve or contribute to the process of democratic consolidation in the country.

However, this study comes to terms with the prevailing view that most of the politicians in Nigeria defect to other parties because of their self interest rather than for the common good which has injuriously affected democratisation in Nigeria.

### **3.3 FACTORS THAT PROMOTE PARTY SWITCHING IN NIGERIA**

As pointed out by Muhammad Jega (2015: 2), “the objectives that seem to attract politicians to defect are the prospects of acquiring political office and the power; fame and wealth that come with it. Service to people and fatherland is a constant but meaningless slogan”. From this opinion, it could be established that the defection of most Nigerian politicians to another party is for search of personal gain rather than for humanitarian service.

It is important to note that, there are different factors that influence defection of politicians to another party in Nigeria. Some politicians switch to another party

to get into office/power. Therefore, personal gain and the lure of office motivate some defectors to change parties. Another factor similar to the above mentioned factor is that politicians switch to parties that maximise their prospect of re-election because they lose hope in their dumped party. This suggests that the motive for defection is mainly to advance the political interests of the defectors and to create access to the wealth of the nation. What is also pertinent is that, defection occurs when the defector could not fulfil or realise his/her political aspiration under his/her original party. Reason has been that politics in Nigeria is associated with wealth. Therefore, elective post is the major avenue of upward mobility, status, power and wealth (Ogundiya, 2009). Many politicians in Nigeria are therefore in politics, not because of any high quest to serve for altruistic reasons, but for personal enrichment and self-aggrandisement: political appointments, contracts, and all forms of patronage (Ibid: 5).

Another reason for defection ‘galore’ in Nigerian politics is ‘*godfatherism*’ and the high prevalence of political bureaucratic corruption. It is proposed here that, party switching is likely to be prevalent in Nigeria due to the high level of corruption in the country and party system and absence of effective anti-graft law. In Nigeria, politics is money and money is politics. Importantly, access to public office is a ticket to wealth. In Nigeria, politics is the fastest route to illegitimate wealth and many multimillionaires with dubious background are being produced daily by the state. All, except few chieftains of industries,

company directors, bank executives and manufacturing magnates in the country do not have contact with politics/and or politicians.

Government in Nigeria is a big business, the most lucrative investment in the country. In view of this, politicians are always in search of greener pasture. Consequently, elections into political office have become a do or die affair in Nigeria. In this regard, Bratton (2008:1) writing on ‘vote buying’ and violence in Nigerian election campaigns asserts that:

Elections are struggle over the access to the resources controlled by that state, which are the biggest prize in society. Given these high stakes, politicians resort to a variety of means-whether fair or foul- to attain public office.

Another factor that is implicated in party defection or switching in Nigeria is the nature and character of Nigerian politics which in Nigeria has assumed zero sum game dimensions, where ‘winners take all’. The ‘insider elite’ always assume the role of discriminate distributor of state resources. Expectedly, the ‘outsider elites’ are absolutely at the receiving end of the discriminate distributions. Secondly, the zero sum game dimension of politics also account for the movement of politicians to the party in power. The fact that the ruling party is the major beneficiary of party switching authenticates this argument. This led us to another proposition that party switching is prevalent in Nigerian party system where politics has assumed a zero sum game dimension which has consequences on country’s democracy such as contract killings, political assassinations etc that are anathema to Nigeria’s democratic survival.

On the other hand, some switchers defect from one party to another because they prefer a higher office to a lower one, and prefer lower one to no office at all. But some of the Nigerian politicians are utility maximisers who seek to maximise their share of office in order to advance their political interests without any ideological consideration. Contrary to the foregoing, is policy preference as a factor which motivates some Nigerian politicians to switch parties. Though it is not always the case, it may be right to say that those politicians who switch parties because of policy preferences may do it for some ideological considerations.

However, some defectors argue contrarily to the above position. To them, their defection to another party is to bring about positive change in the country which they see impossible with their original party.

### **3.4 IMPLICATIONS OF PARTY SWITCHING FOR DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION**

It is pertinent to take a look at the implications of the scenario of party switching in Nigeria. The nature, dimension and frequency of party switching in the country in the past sixteen years of democratic experiment gives credence to the allusion of some scholars that Nigeria has not in real sense of the word, experienced democracy.

Kura (2011) maintains that political parties are seen as inevitable in establishing the necessary link(s) between the state, civil society and democratic

consolidation. He further argues that they are the gatekeepers and the measuring political barometer for indicating the degree and effectiveness of the practice of democracy. Being the heart of democracy, they make and/or mar a stable political system. Some of the functions/roles of political parties include: governance, representation, policy making and execution, interest aggregation and articulation, peaceful change of government, making government effective and responsive (opposition parties function also as pressure group), accountability, social and integration functions. In sum, wherever a political party exists, it tends to perform common functions at different stages of economic, social, political and judicial development.

In Nigeria it is argued that, indiscriminate and unguarded party switching in the country has produced the following anti-democratic consequences: the gradual erosion of legitimacy of democracy as the most preferred system of government in the country; the speedy whittling down of the legitimacy of political leaders at every level of government in the country; defection has rubbished the underlying philosophy and principle of representation by reallocating voters choice without consultation. The cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations of the electorates have assumed negative and downward trends as a result of party prostitution. Party switching has also resulted to political party factionalisation and disintegration. Consequently political party institutionalization has suffered a serious corrosion; party switching has also



indirectly stalled the emergence of a formidable opposition which is the hallmark of representative democracy. Therefore, periodic alternation of power, regarded as the cornerstone of democracy, among the political parties has become a mirage. Even the then ruling party (PDP) boasted of holding on to power at the centre for the next 60 years. This justified the fear that Nigeria is regressing towards a one-party authoritarian state.

Following from the above, it can be contended with little fear of contradiction that, party switching largely has been responsible for the speedy democratic recession that the country is witnessing. The 2003, 2007 and 2011 general elections were characterized by flagrant violation of the rules of the game. As noted by Wonbin Cho and Logan (2009: 2) “democratic consolidation requires widespread agreement on the rules of the game among those competing for power”. Such agreement must be built on a broad and deep belief among both elites and the mass public that, a democratic regime is the most appropriate for society. Undoubtedly, the spate of party switching has grossly eroded such belief among the mass public in Nigeria.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUMMARY, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 4.1 SUMMARY

This study examines Party Switching in Nigeria: (A Case Study of PDP and APC). It is aimed at determining whether the phenomena of party switching or defection have contributed towards the consolidation of democracy or contributed to the corrosion of democratic process in Nigeria.

Chapter one provides the introduction which outlined the main reasons or objectives that motivated the researcher to carry out this study and its relevance/importance to research. It highlights the research problems and tried as much as possible to address the key questions in the data analysis. The objectives of the study were achieved at the end of the study. The chapter also contains the literature review which delineates the opinion of different scholars and authors on the topic under study. While, chapter two gives the brief history of the area of the study (i.e. the historical evolution of the party switching in Nigeria).

Chapter three examines the issues of party switching in Nigeria between Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Peoples Congress (APC). It also attempts to look at the implications of such phenomenon (party switching) for the democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Lastly, chapter four summarises and concludes the work by providing useful recommendations for the regulation of the unguarded party switching in Nigeria thereby mitigating its negative consequences on the democratic process in the country.

## **4.2 CONCLUSION**

The result of the data collected in this research shows that party prostitution otherwise seen as party switching or defection has become part of the Nigerian political culture. Though considered not to be undemocratic and unconstitutional in some instances is regarded as antidemocratic in its consequences. The number of defection related violence, maiming, and assassinations that the country had witnessed warrants the conclusion that; party switching is anathema to democratic consolidation. Unguarded, ideologically baseless party switching has corroded the philosophical and moral bases of democracy which is political accountability. Many defectors in Nigeria have no consideration for the electorates in their bid to switch parties. Worse still, it is done without decorum.

In face of all evidence, party switching in Nigeria gives room for the ruling class/elite to perpetuate themselves in power as many of the Nigerian politicians change parties in order to retain power. Therefore, party switching is seen as a means of maintaining the status quo by the Nigerian politicians.

### 4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the fact established so far, it shows clearly that party switching significantly contributed to the corrosion/recession of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The researcher therefore calls for the implementation of the following recommendations:

- i. The National Assembly should immediately legislate against party switching or the legalisation on party switching by the National House of Assemblies should be reviewed.
- ii. In addition, there is need for a proper orientation of the political elites about the negative effects of the party switching on democratic process in the country.
- iii. The ideological basis of all the political parties should be strengthened. In this regard, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC); the nation's highest electoral regulating agent, should revisit the ideological posture of all registered political parties with a view to discredit or deregister the ideologically baseless ones.
- iv. There is a need for more stringent rules against party switching or defection because of its antidemocratic consequences in order to give room for the development and advancement of sustainable and durable democratic culture; a *sine qua non* for democratic consolidation.

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