

Inter-Party Carpet-Crossing Among Legislators and Implications for Oversight Functions and Governance in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *This paper examined the implications of inter-party defections by the APC and PDP elites in the National Assembly on law making and governance in Nigeria. It has been observed that emerging political coalitions may not always reflect policy preferences or philosophical differences since they are mostly based on personalities and agreement among political leaders. Political parties are widely acknowledged to have a significant impact on the oversight and accountability of governmental operations and policies. Political parties' refusal to impose such rules stifles efficient public representation at all levels. The survey research method was employed to gather data, while the elite theory was found useful in explaining the study. For the purpose of analysis, the Simple Linear Regression was executed with the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for the testing of the hypothesis at 0.5 significance level. The finding of the study revealed that the APC and PDP elites' inter-party defections in the National Assembly had a substantial influence on the enactment of laws for good governance in Nigeria. Consequently, the study suggested, among others, that political parties in Nigeria should be established on ideologies and not pecuniary benefits and primitive accumulation as it is being witnessed even in the current administration. Besides, being a member of a political party should not be determined by the collection of ticket to vie for elective political office.*

KEYWORDS: Cross-carpeting; defection; election; political culture; political parties.

INTRODUCTION

Political parties are crucial to democracy and are significant components of the executive branch in many political systems. According to Doorenspleet (2003:169), they serve as “the official

instruments of electoral conflict in a democratic state”. Crafting multiple political factions allows unrestricted rivalry for public endorsement. These parties remain pivotal establishments that mould the political framework and act as the primary intermediaries connecting the populace and the administration in nearly all nations, especially within liberal democracies (Thomas, 2001). In fact, these entities provide a platform for civic engagement, creating opportunities for akin individuals to contend for and secure influence within the government structure (Omotola, 2010).

The foundations of the ethno-religious party system have persisted despite changes in the major parties that control Nigerian politics. To promote a national emphasis on party activities and enhance the allocation of political affiliation throughout the nation, the 1979 Constitution established strict restrictions for party establishment and regulation. Public finance for parties was implemented as part of the 1991 establishment of the two-party system with the goal of reducing the dominance of financiers. Political party registration was liberalised by a Supreme Court decision in 2002, which led to an explosion of new parties. Hence, in 2019, there were 92 political parties in Nigeria out of which 73 presented candidates that contested for the position of president, yet the top two contenders hailed from the main parties, the APC and PDP. The bloated number of political parties had created substantial problems for the administration and control of party operations and activities in the country. In 2020 the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) reduced the number to 18 by deregistering 74 parties that had failed to win at least 25 per cent of votes in a least one state in the presidential vote or in one local government area in a governorship election (Dickson and Ita, 2022).

The two most important political parties in Nigeria today are the PDP and APC. The PDP from its founding in 1998 remained a dominant party held both the presidency and the majority of seats in the National Assembly, until it lost power and the position in 2015 (Ita, 2018). The APC, created in 2013 from a merger of three opposition parties took over the presidency two years later with the election of Muhammadu Buhari in 2015. Today’s political parties are mostly used by Nigeria’s upper class to gain political power and influence rather than serving as venues for particular opinions or issues. Defections are common among politicians, especially before elections when they vie for an ideal ground to ensure victory. This changing situation has been more apparent as several APC officials with presidential ambitions have battled for control over the party’s national leadership, which has manifested itself via internal conflicts and schisms.

This fact was reflected at the state level during the September 2020 gubernatorial elections in Edo State. Osagie Ize-Iyamu, a gubernatorial candidate, and the incumbent governor, Godwin Obaseki, switched parties since the 2016 elections, highlighting the few choices and dearth of political ideologies available to the electorates. Intra-party conflicts that shaped the political mindset of political parties in Nigeria were the reasons for their actions. This implies that the Nigerian ruling class has nurtured an attitude of splitting and cross-carpeting, which often occur when their interests are threatened or unmet, in a desperate attempt to meet sectoral, individual, or group interests. The act, which is also known as “floor-crossing,” “party-hopping,” “party-switching,”

“decamping,” “party-jumping,” and “canoe-jumping,” among other names, is used to suggest desertion (Mbah, 2011). According to Agudiegwu and Ezeani (2015), defection has developed into a well-established political culture that has marked Nigeria’s political environment.

Without a doubt, political parties play a crucial role in the establishment of democratic regimes. At the moment, the main focus is on determining the extent to which political parties in Nigeria strengthen our fledgling democracy through their ideological stance. Political parties’ involvement in the nation’s early political experiments, however, has led to more issues than solutions. Do political parties in Nigeria have any philosophy at all, one could naturally wonder. This is due to the fact that political parties in Nigeria only vary in their names, which may be the only obvious difference (Olanrewaju, 2015). A political party’s main tool is its political philosophy. And no political party runs an election campaign without releasing at least one manifesto; in contrast to what is available in industrialised democracies, Nigerian parties seem to be intellectually starved. Cross-carpeting between political parties will persist unless party leaders develop and uphold political philosophy in their roles. Only in Nigeria can candidates engage in anti-party campaigns after being denied party tickets to run in elections.

Stating the Problem

When candidates from smaller parties support one of the major political parties in return for a parliamentary seat, they do so with sense of patron-client relationship and entitlement. It is not just the two main political parties that engage in this practice of courting opposition party members into joining them in exchange for pardons for their sins. This inter-party defection, or “political nomadism”, to use Momoh’s (2014: 81) terminology, exemplifies a fundamental facet of Nigeria’s political culture as practiced by these two political parties. This is a result of the absence of internal democracy and individual dominance in Nigerian political parties. Emerging political coalitions may not always reflect policy preferences or philosophical differences since they are mostly based on personalities and agreement among political leaders. Political parties are widely acknowledged to have a significant impact on the oversight and accountability of governmental operations and policies. Political parties’ refusal to impose such rules stifles efficient public representation at all levels.

Nigeria’s Fourth Republic’s party politics have taken a severe nosedive into the bankruptcy and antiquatedness of political theory. In Nigeria, political parties have mostly formed under the leadership of “strong men” without any overarching concept to direct their actions. The comparison between democratic consolidation and the Nigerian political experience would not be out of place. These political parties have lofty manifestos, but their members often want to deviate from them in order to take a different course. An example of this is the APC political party, which ran on the promise of enacting genuine federalism and fighting corruption. However, the President and his Vice President pretended ignorance of these issues despite them being included in their platform.

Political parties in Nigeria have been shown to gather and unite on an ethno-religious basis rather than on the basis of intellectual identity, which has had a severely devastating impact on the polity. Religion and ethnicity have become contentious in Nigeria and have mostly proven detrimental to efforts to consolidate democracy there. The absence of a political ideology among the political parties operating in Nigeria has prevented the nation from reaping significant benefits that might have aided in the expansion and consolidation of her democratic infrastructure. In a discerning observation, Frank (2009) contended that the absence of a civic culture in Nigeria's political arena prompted politicians to forge a political culture that encompassed practices like electoral manipulation, intolerance of dissent, an all-or-nothing mindset, and an entrenched incumbency disposition.

Given the above backdrop, this study assumed that there is a significant relationship between inter-party defections by the APC and the PDP elites in the National Assembly on the one hand, and law making for governance in Nigeria on the other hand. In view of the foregoing, this study is placed with the burden of addressing the question: How has the practice of inter-party defections by the APC and PDP elites in the National Assembly impacted on law making and governance in Nigeria? Consequently, the objective of this is to examine the influence of inter-party defections by the APC and PDP elites in the National Assembly on law making for governance in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications

Inter-Party Defection

Throughout history, the landscape of Nigerian politics has been profoundly characterized by a prevailing pattern wherein the establishment and operational dynamics of political parties have pivoted extensively around influential individuals, often referred to as godfathers or patrons, in a system underscored by clientelism. This emphasis on personal influence has taken precedence over the systematic development and nurturing of robust party institutions. The guiding principles, ideologies, manifestos, and agendas that steer these parties find their orbit around the predilections and vested interests of these influential personalities, rather than emanating from the intrinsic ideology and fundamental principles that should underscore a party's functioning (Oji, 1982).

The consequence of this predominant modus operandi has fostered an environment where the act of shifting allegiances between parties, known as inter-party defection, is a commonplace phenomenon within the political arena. Individuals embark on this trajectory as a strategic means to further their personal agendas, particularly concerning the acquisition and consolidation of political and economic authority and control at the state level. The observation made by Aleyomi (2013) echoes this sentiment, asserting that the phenomenon of party defection is gaining significant traction within African nations, Nigeria in particular, and this trend transcends all three tiers of government.

Within this framework, the decision to shift allegiance from one political party to another is frequently driven by the waning fortunes of a given political entity, often attributed to internal conflicts among party leaders, a failure to uphold principles of internal democracy, factional divisions or camps, and instances of candidate imposition, among other contributing factors. This reflects the landscape where political parties grapple with crises born from discord within their ranks. Furthermore, a significant factor contributing to these shifts is the lack of synergy and cooperation between interest groups and political parties within Nigeria and other emerging democracies. These disconnect manifests due to the tenuous relationships and limited affiliations that exist between political parties and interest or civil society groups (Otjes and Rasmussen, 2017). This divide, in turn, serves as a pivotal determinant propelling the occurrence of defections.

Within the realm of politics, the term “defector” designates an individual who relinquishes their allegiance to a particular state, thereby adopting allegiance to another, a transition that is typically perceived as illegitimate by the initial state. In a broader context, this encompasses the act of severing one’s association with a person, cause, or doctrine to which they were formerly bound, often through ties of loyalty or duty. This descriptive term is also frequently extended to individuals who shift their loyalty to an alternative religion, sports team, political party, or any other rival faction. In such instances, the defector frequently encounters accusations of treason from their original side, underscoring the often-pejorative connotations associated with the label (Eme and Ogbochie, 2014).

The concept of political party defection also encompasses the act of a member leaving one political party to join another, typically stemming from dissatisfaction within their current party. Depending on the individual’s position, this phenomenon can take on varied labels, such as party switching or the act of crossing the floor. An iconic illustration of a political “defector” is found in Winston Churchill, who embarked on a journey that saw him initially entering Parliament as a Conservative in 1901, transitioning to the Liberals in 1904, and eventually reverting back to the Conservatives in 1925 (Aleyomi, 2013).

The terminology “cross carpeting” in politics is aptly applied when distinct parties diverge in their interests, ideologies, beliefs, and manifestoes. Some politicians gravitate towards politics and a particular political party due to personal interests. When these interests aren’t upheld, the politicians commence a pattern of cross-carpeting, hopping from one party to another in pursuit of a more accommodating platform. Regrettably, this manoeuvre prioritizes the politician’s individual interests over the concerns of the constituents who elected them into power. For some, the rationale behind their party defection rests on the perception of the dwindling prospects of their current political party. This downturn is often attributed to issues like internal party leadership crises, inter-party conflicts, and a dearth of internal democratic processes, sometimes compounded by perceived political favouritism (Adeyemi, 2014).

Adeyemi (2014) asserted that the phenomenon of cross-carpeting, as a manifestation of political culture, is not novel; it didn't emerge overnight. Its roots stretch back many years, finding its origin in the early days of political parties during the pre-independence era. The historical backdrop reveals that Nigerian political parties have predominantly revolved around individuals or influential figures, often referred to as godfathers. These figures position themselves as the foremost advocates of ethnic stances, either through alliances with other groups or by standing independently, even in opposition. In this intricate web of party dynamics, substantive matters and ideological underpinnings have typically taken a back seat, at best. This tendency persists despite the labelling of factions as traditionalists and reformists, communists and feudalists, populists and elitists, among other descriptors that permeate society's discourse.

Inter-Party Cross-carpeting in Nigeria: Law and Politics

The maxim that in politics “no permanent friends nor permanent enemy but permanent interests” is well-expressed through defection from one political party to another when the individual's interest appears to be threatened or can no longer be guaranteed by such political party. For years, party cross-carpeting has become an instrument through which Nigerian politicians expressed their discontent with intra-party crises or failure to secure elective or appointive positions (Ndukwe, 2016). The recent defection by politicians of different status ahead of the 2019 general elections is very pathetic and a confirmation of how susceptible and desperate our political class is, even under questionable circumstances. It is, however, necessary to examine the position of the law on party defection and the politics that comes to play.

The 1999 Nigeria constitution left a whole lot of national issues unattended to. This, according to Mbah (2011), is because neither General Sani Abacha nor Abdulsalam Abubakar has the intention of bringing a democratic government into being that will be based on popular participation. While Abacha was drafting the constitution to succeed himself, Abubakar on the other hand, saw it as a tool for speedy handover to democratically elected government. Arguably, the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) acknowledges the right of politicians to change political parties but it must be done within the limit of the law.

The constitutional framework, outlined in section 68 1(g), sets forth clear guidelines concerning the circumstances under which a member of the Senate or the House of Representatives should vacate their seat. According to this section of the constitution, if an individual elected to the House under the sponsorship of a particular political party decides to become a member of a different political party before the expiration of the House's elected term, they are required to relinquish their seat. However, a notable exception applies in cases where the shift in party affiliation is a consequence of either a division within the original political party or a merger involving two or more political parties or factions, with one of them being the sponsor of the individual's previous election (constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999:34). Despite the apparent clarity of this constitutional provision, certain areas remain contentious and ambiguous, as highlighted by Nwaneri (2017).

The constitutional clauses outlined above distinctly address the issue of legislative defection, imposing an obligatory requirement on lawmakers contemplating defection. They are required to provide evidence that their original political party has undergone a division or factionalization, or that their party has undergone a merger with one or more other political parties or factions. However, these provisions remain notably silent with regards to individuals in the executive branch of the government. This includes key figures like the president, vice president, governors, and deputy governors. These constitutional loopholes provided Nigerian politicians with a way out to cross-carpet at will and made party cross-carpeting to be on the rise (Mbah, 2011). Even with the above constitutional provisions regulating the defection of the parliamentarians, the last part of the provision provided a way out of the regulation for a prospective defector since division within a political party is almost inevitable. In as much as the constitution was not explicit on the nature and extent of division that could lead to defection, defectors always validate their actions owing to divisions or factions within their political parties (Aleyomi, 2013).

Since neither the legislature nor judiciary has explicitly defined the ground on which one can carpet crossed without vacating one's seat in the legislative chamber, no litmus-paper test, therefore, to determine the existence of a division or not within a political party. It is for the court to give the provision its working definition (Eme and Andrew, 2014). In an attempt to bring the country out of this constitutional entanglement, an amendment was proposed to the constitution by sixth National Assembly. Sadden enough, the exact section which sought to strip any defecting members of the National Assembly and House of Assembly of their seats could not get the required two-thirds support from the states. In 2012, an attempt was also made when the bill was re-introduced by two members of the House of Representatives, Eddie Mbadiwe and Chairman of the Committee on Rules and Business, Albert Sam-Tsokwa (Eme and Andrew, 2014).

In a significant legal milestone of 2015, the Supreme Court decisively addressed the intricate issue of legislative defection through its ruling in the case of Labour Party versus Ifedayo Abegunde. The pronounced judgment, delivered unanimously by a panel of the Supreme Court, was spearheaded by the then Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Mahmud Mohammed. This ruling had far-reaching implications, as it demanded immediate action from Abegunde, a member of the House of Representatives, who was ordered to vacate his legislative seat due to his defection from the Labour Party (LP) to the now-defunct Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN). The Court's stance was grounded in its determination that Abegunde was no longer deemed fit to retain his position within the legislative assembly.

The apex court's verdict underlined a crucial aspect - at the time of Abegunde's defection to the ACN, there was an absence of any significant division within his original political affiliation, the Labour Party (LP). The Court underscored that the legitimacy of Abegunde's defection would have been established had there been an evident division in the national structures of the LP that could potentially disrupt the party's seamless functioning. Importantly, the Supreme Court clarified that the so-called "division" or "factionalization" within the Labour Party, which

Abegunde had cited as the basis for his defection, was restricted solely to the state level (Ezea, 2017). This landmark ruling by the Supreme Court not only served as a reference point for addressing defection-related issues but also reinforced the necessity for substantial and verifiable grounds for legislative defections within the Nigerian political landscape.

Meanwhile, as the 2019 general elections get underway, the trend at which most members of the former ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) are moving into the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) is more of politics than ideology. While some analysts see the defection to be informed by the quest to cling to power (Nwaneri 2017), other attributed it to the desire of the politicians to pick up appointments and remain politically relevant. Ifeanacho Oguejiofor, the Director of Publicity of APGA, believes that the defection is a move by some defectors to evade the anti-corruption crusade of the APC-led federal administration (Owete, 2017).

Frank (2009), observed that the philosophically absurd political parties, carpet crossing, factionalization, politics of cultural colouration, permanence of office, vituperative acrimony, monetary loyalty, emoluments, partisan alliance/gang-up, alienation of the electorate, lack of a sense of cooperation, the threat of rebellion, dispute over territory, and political alliance/gang-up are among the current aspects of the political climate that have been ravaging Nigerian politics. The author emphasised how the aforementioned factors influenced statesmen's personalities via different socialisation processes. Awofeso and Irabor (2016) view defection of politicians to the APC as a bid to further their political career. The authors remarked that cross-carpeting was structured towards ethnic/religious predisposition, intra-party strife, and the narcissistic interests of the political elite from a historical perspective. Along with these undemocratic patterns, lack of ideology and party disciplines were the main determinants of cross-carpeting in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The authors concluded that in order to curb the threat of constant cross-carpeting between elected office holders, political parties must firmly adhere to party discipline and philosophy.

Theoretical Framework

The Elite Theory as developed by Gaetano Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto was utilised as the framework of analysis for this study. According to Pareto (1935), the term 'elite' refers to the few people who have achieved success and risen to a superior echelon in their respective fields of endeavour. The ruling elites were the subject of Pareto's investigation because he thought it to be governed by a combination of force and cunning. He further separates the wealthy and powerful into ruling elite and non-governing elite. The traits of certain Nigerian politicians are exposed by this position, especially those who have entered politics as high government officials and former military generals. This is an example of Roberto Michel' "Iron Rule of Oligarchy," where individuals use their position in the Party and as a "General" to intimidate others while being at the top of their professions and showing no signs of slowing down. Here, it is said that political parties no longer function as intended since only a select few make decisions and allocate resources. Additionally, this has hampered the growth of the nation's democratic system.

According to Michel (1911), every organisation is ultimately converted to ‘oligarchy’, which is the law of the few selected, regardless of its initial purposes. The majority of people, according to Michel, are indifferent, lazy, and servile. They cannot exercise self-government. They must thus depend on individuals to help them accomplish their social objectives. Forums for such representation include political parties, trade unions, and other groups. Elite theorists contend that since the elites are better organised and knowledgeable of class, they are able to use such coercive tactics against the bourgeoisie. Additionally, as a movement or party expands, more and more responsibilities tend to be given to an inner group of leaders. As a result, over time, the organization’s members become incapable of leading and managing them, giving officers more freedom and a greater sense of ownership over their positions. They become almost irremovable as they tenaciously hold on to their existing positions of authority and privilege. If laws are enacted to restrain a leader’s power, it is the laws - not the leader - that progressively erode (Obah-Akpowoghaha, 2013). In the sense that an elite might belong to more than one class, it is important to underline that elitist categories are not mutually exclusive. Additionally, this grouping might vary at times. For instance, under a military rule, the armed forces class may also be considered political elite, especially if they are in charge of allocating state funds (Varma, 2006).

In Nigeria, the influence of the elite is so strong that voting outcomes are determined before the end of a hiring process or election, and if the results turn out differently than expected, the elites try to manipulate them by economic and political methods. At both the state and national levels, this was highly prevalent throughout the elections of 1999, 2003, and 2007. One instance that comes to mind is the political disagreement that led to Chief Audu Ogbeh’s forcible removal as Party Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the past as a consequence of him and Olusegun Obasanjo, the previous president of Nigeria (Aleyomi, 2013). This shows up as factional executives and party cross-competing that eventually leads to dual or numerous managers inside a single political party. The implication is that the ruling class will use their influence to either accomplish out to the public or to manipulate elections in order acquire political power. This explains the way political parties prioritise the wealthy in terms of interest accumulation and articulation at the expense of the general populace. The link among political parties and the establishment of democracy in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic has been explained using the Elite theory, which has been shown to be relevant by the theoretical exposition shown above.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research method was used for this work. To this end, the data were obtained through a structured questionnaire. The population of the study was drawn from registered voters in Akwa Ibom State, regardless of their party affiliations, as the study’s focus was on the country’s prevailing political culture as demonstrated by the attitudes of the two political parties (PDP and APC). The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) reported that as of 01 August, 2022, there were 2,447,438 registered voters in Akwa Ibom State. The population of the research

was subjected to the sample size calculation procedure developed by Krejcie and Morgan in 1970. To this end, the sample of the study was 384.

Data Presentation and Analysis

After administering 384 copies of questionnaire, 377 copies were successfully retrieved and used for the purpose of analysis and testing of hypothesis.

Table 1: Responses on inter-party defections by law makers

S/N	Statement	SA	AG	DA	SD	Total
1.	Inter-party defections of lawmakers impinge on their law-making activities in the National Assembly.	173	157	38	9	377
2.	Inter-party defections of lawmakers impact negatively on the governance process in the country.	80	193	67	37	377
3.	Inter-party defections of lawmakers do not help with consolidation of democracy.	91	202	52	32	377
4.	Inter-party defections of lawmakers do not allow for effective opposition in the polity.	41	97	146	93	377

Key: SA: Strongly Agree; AG: Agree; DA: Disagree; SD: Strongly Disagree.

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Interpretation of Responses on Inter-Party Defections by Law Makers

According to the chart above, on item one, 45.9% strongly agreed, 41.6% agreed, 10.1% disagreed, and 2.4% very disagreed that legislators' interparty defections affect their ability to enact laws in the National Assembly. According to the results for the second question, inter-party defections of politicians have a detrimental influence on the nation's governing process. Of those who responded, 21.2% strongly agreed, 51.2% agreed, 17.8% disagreed, and 9.8% very disagreed. Three percent of respondents strongly agreed, fifty-three percent agreed, thirteen percent disagreed, and eight percent very disagreed that the consolidation of democracy is not aided by legislators switching parties. In answer to the following question, it was discovered that 10.9%, 25.7%, 38.7%, and 24.7% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that inter-party defections of parliamentarians do not allow for effective opposition in the polity.

Table 2: Responses on governance, internal democracy, political crises and political apathy

S/N	Statements	SA	AG	DA	SD	Total
5.	Law-making remains a top priority for law makers despite their decamping from one political platform to another in the national Assembly.	97	196	58	26	377
6.	The process of law making is always followed through irrespective of inter-party defections in the National Assembly.	7	25	126	219	377
7.	Internal democracy will be difficult to attain in the face of godfatherism.	237	115	12	13	377
8.	Party squabbles and crises are inevitable due to godfatherism.	119	184	49	25	377

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9.	Political crisis is a major feature of intolerance of opposition party.	154	158	50	15	377
10.	Opposition parties hardly make significant contributions to governance due to political intolerance.	91	202	52	32	377
11.	The percentage of voters' apathy has continuously increased due to the activities of political thugs during elections.	146	91	41	93	377
12.	Majority of the masses have refused to carry out their electoral obligations for fear of being attacked by political thugs working for the political elites.	88	130	69	90	377

Key: SA: Strongly Agree; AG: Agree; DA: Disagree; SD: Strongly Disagree.

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Interpretation of Responses on Governance, Internal Democracy, Political Crises and Political Apathy

According to the chart above, on item seventeen, 25.7% strongly agreed, 52.0% agreed, 15.4% disagreed, and 6.9% strongly disagreed, demonstrating that MPs' top priority is still passing laws despite their shifting allegiances inside the national Assembly. Despite interparty defections in the National Assembly, the results for item 18 showed that 1.9% highly agreed, 6.6% agreed, 33.4% disagreed, and 58.1% strongly disagreed that the legislative process is always carried out. According to the replies for item 19, internal democracy will be difficult to achieve in the face of godfatherism in 62.9% strongly agreed, 30.5% agreed, 3.2% disagreed, and 3.4% strongly disagreed.

According to the results for item 20, party disputes and crises are unavoidable owing to godfatherism, with 31.6% strongly agreeing, 48.8% agreeing, 13.0% disagreeing, and 6.6% severely disagreeing. According to the replies for question number twenty-one, political crisis is a significant indicator of intolerance in the opposition party for 40.8% of respondents, 41.9% of respondents agreed, 13.3% of respondents disagreed, and 4.0% of respondents strongly disagreed. Regarding question number 22, 24.1% strongly agreed, 53.6% agreed, 13.8% disagreed, and 8.5% strongly disagreed that political intolerance prevents opposition parties from making meaningful contributions to government. According to the replies to the following question, 24.7% strongly disagreed, 10.9% disagreed, 25.7% agreed, and 38.7% strongly agreed that the actions of political thugs during elections have caused an increase in the proportion of voters' indifference. 23.3% strongly agreed, 34.5% agreed, 18.3% disagreed, and 23.9% strongly disagreed with the statement that the majority of the populace has chosen not to fulfil its electoral duties out of fear of being assaulted by political thugs working for the political elites.

Test of Hypothesis

H₀: The impact of inter-party defections by the APC/PDP elites in the National Assembly on law making for governance in Nigeria is not significant.

H_A: The impact of inter-party defections by the APC/PDP elites in the National Assembly on law making for governance in Nigeria is significant.

Table 3: The National Assembly's senior APC/PDP members' inter-party defections and their effects on Nigerian law-making were examined using regression analysis.

β = regression coefficient; Statistical Package for Social Science-SPSS-Ver. 20.0

Groups	N	B	R	R Square	Df	t calculated	t critical	P value	Decision
Inter-party defections					1				
Law making for governance	377	0.114	0.149	.022	375	2.915	1.96	.004	H ₀ : rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Decision Rule: If computed t exceeds critical t, reject the null hypothesis. As a result, when the p value is less than (<) 0.05, the independent variable significantly influences the dependent variable, and when the p value is more than (>) 0.05, there is no significant effect.

Interpretation: The influence of APC/PDP leaders' inter-party defections in the National Assembly on the creation of laws for Nigerian administration is seen in the regression output table for the first hypothesis. According to the coefficient of determination (r-square), the elites of the APC and PDP in the National Assembly accounted for just 2.2% of the overall variance in the laws governing administration in Nigeria. The regression analysis's findings also showed a significant effect of APC/PDP leaders' inter-party defections in the National Assembly on the creation of laws for Nigerian administration (= 0.114, t computed =2.915, t tabulated =1.96, p< 0.05). In light of this, the null hypothesis, according to which there is no substantial effect of top members of the APC and PDP defecting to other parties in the National Assembly, is rejected.

Discussion: Inter-party Defections by the APC/PDP Elites in the National Assembly and Law Making for Governance in Nigeria

The results of the first hypothesis lead to the conclusion that the APC/PDP elites' inter-party defections in the National Assembly had a substantial influence on the enactment of laws for Nigerian government. This conclusion is based on the fact that the disputes that arise as a result of such movements; defections and opposite defections, decamping, and whatever terminology or labels that these events are accompanied with - bring a lot of disorientation to the statutory responsibilities and other oversight responsibilities that are meant to be carried out by the law

makers in order to govern the state. The stance of this conclusion relates to Nwokeoma's (2020) assertion that it is thought that candidates supported by political parties win elections in Nigeria via the vote of the people. According to this reasoning, lawmakers should represent specific districts since they have a mandate from those constituencies as a result of the acceptance of their political programme. This ideal is being mocked by the growing, random, and rash prevalence of cross-carpeting, which therefore lowers the likelihood of excellent representation. In fact, it would seem that politicians today are more concerned with securing their own personal political future than they are with proposing laws and participating in legislative activities that advance the interests of the voters who chose them. The recent drama that broke out in the Imo State House of Legislature serves as a prime example. Imo State's spectacle simply serves to highlight the awful truth of the electorate's disposable nature, particularly in the wake of elections.

This conclusion is also consistent with Yakubu and Bamalli's (2019) assertion that opposition politics in Nigeria do not seem to be a lucrative endeavour. The writers emphasised that we often hear of situations in which Nigeria's governing parties marginalise opposition parties and turn them to mere spectators. Because joining the opposition would require giving up the perceived luxury (patronages, advantages, as well as assurance) that embracing the governing party may provide, the winner-take-all mindset that permeates the political sphere ultimately helps to disincentivize any pretence of opposition membership. Therefore, it follows that legislators who leave their post solely to advance their own personal goals may have little to offer in terms of engaging in effective legislative endeavours which help achieve the hopes, opinions, principles, and desires of their people and, as a result, impede exemplary government.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal of the present research was to explore the influence of cross-carpeting by political elites of APC and PDP on law making for governance. Gaetano Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto's Elite Theory was used to explain this research. This thesis underlined how every institution-regardless of its initial goals-is ultimately reduced to "oligarchy," or the rule of the select few. The majority of people, according to the writers, are indifferent, lazy, and servile. They cannot exercise self-government. Elite theorists contend that the democratic elites' employment of repressive tactics against the bourgeoisie stems from their increased organisation and awareness of class. These are the tactics that the two major political parties under examination in this research use. The fact that even minor parties engage in these political games is important to note, particularly when they are courted or influenced by the major parties for support.

Flowing from the analysis of this paper, it is suggested that:

- (i) Political parties in Nigeria should be established on ideologies and not pecuniary benefits and primitive accumulation as it is being witnessed even in the current administration.
- (ii) Being a member of a political party should not be determined by the collection of ticket to vie for elective political office.

- (iii) The government should come up with the law that will regulate the affairs of the political parties in a manner that will discourage incessant defection.

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