PARTY NOMADISM IN NIGERIA: ASSESSING THE ROLE OF PARTY DEFECTIONS IN NIGERIAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, 2011-2016

AFAMEFUNE PATRICK IKEM & OGHABLEBLESSING EDAFE

Abstract

The defection of politicians from one political party to another in Nigeria has attracted enormous scholarly attention in recent times. Arguably, the emergence of several political parties without ideological colouration has embellished the debate on political parties' defection in Nigeria. This paper assesses the role of party defections in Nigeria's political development between 2011 to 2016. This paper adopts documentary method of data collection and content analysis as the method of data analysis. Relying on the theory of post-colonial state, the paper argues that party defection is not necessarily as a result of the absence of political ideology; rather, it is the manifestation of an ideology rooted in the crass ambition for power, primitive accumulation and elevation of personal differences. Moreover, this negates and discourages viable political culture, institution building and national integration in Nigeria. It recommends, among others, that institutional frameworks should be enacted to make politics less attractive.

Keywords: Nomadism, Party, Ideology, Constitution, Power.

Introduction

The term nomadism is used to describe the Fulani/Hausa cattle herdsman, who move from one particular location to another seeking for greener pasture. However, the term seems to be gaining currency in academic circle as it has been deployed to refer to the constant and mostly unpredictable manner politicians in Nigeria dump a particular political party for another. Hence, it is used interchangeably with "party-switching, floor-crossing, party-hopping, canoe-jumping, decamping, party-jumping" to denote defection (Opadere and Agbana, 2015). In particular, nomadism has become a buzzword since it was first used by the former Information Minister, Labaran Maku, to describe the persistent manner former Vice President Atiku Abubakar defects from one political party to another (Doki et al, 2014). Since then, the word has found a place in political discourse in Nigeria with regard to dumping of one's political party for another.

According to Adejuwon (2013) cited in Edet (2017) historically, the first defection in Nigeria took place in 1951 when members of The National Council for Nigerian and Cameroon (NCNC) were encouraged to defect to the Action Group (AG) which also marked the beginning of ethnic politics in Nigeria (Mbah,2011:4). Consequently, there has been an entrenched culture of party nomadism in Nigeria, hence, several movements made by politicians, who have had cause to dump their party for another political party (Mbah,2011). Subsequently, since 1999 following the return of democracy in Nigeria, one has experienced the almost dominance of one political party, in this case, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) (Nwanegbo et al, 2014).

But, their eventual defeat was partly attributed to the defections that followed after the emergence of some opposition parties. The increasing defections that have characterized party politics in Nigeria have brought some fundamental issues to the fore. This is due to the on-going debate whether political parties in Nigeria have ideology or not (Ibeanu, n.d.). However, there seems to be a general agreement by scholars that political parties in Nigeria are not only institutionally weak, thereby making them susceptible to the whims and caprices of certain powerful interests that negate the collective, more so, they lack ideological root that should define their distinctive representation on issues and programmes (Omotola, 2015). While the former may be true, the latter leaves more to be desired.

First, the national ideological framework as embedded in the 1999 Constitution, particularly, Section 2 (as amended) may prove a valid point as to the presence of party ideology in Nigeria. According to Simbine (2005), when a country has determined a priori, the course of its development, parties can share similar ideological orientations; it is the strategies for fulfilling these that will differentiate the various parties from each other. Hence, the problem is not necessarily the absence of ideology but rather outplay of the high premium placed on power that virtually defines other outcomes.

It is this line of thought that this paper seeks to pursue to establish the fact that party nomadism is not necessarily the absence of ideology but rather it is the manifestation of an ideology rooted in the crass ambition for power, primitive accumulation and elevation of personal interest which has led to poor viable political culture and institutional-building in Nigeria. Consequently, this trend of unfolding party nomadism has to a large extent impinged on the political development, which is manifested in the weakness of political institutions particularly, political parties where most of them have been hijacked by vested interests as it is the case in Nigeria in this present Fourth Republic. Hence, political parties in Nigeria have continued to grapple with undemocratic forces that tend to define and shape the environment in which they operate.

Theoretical Framework

The Marxian theory of the post-colonial state was adopted in explaining the nature and character of party nomadism as it effects the political development of Nigeria between 2011 to 2016. The theory of the post-colonial state is replicated in the works of Ekeh (1972), Alavi (1973), Ake (1985), Ekekwe (1986, 2015) among others who are progenitors of Marxian perspective and have contributed to the explanation and understanding of the post-colonial state. For these scholars, the post-colonial state is built upon the colonial structures which largely monopolized power for primitive accumulation. The tenets of the post-colonial state are as follow;

- That the nature, character and institutional apparatus of the state are replicates of its oppressive and extractive colonial predecessor which serve the local bourgeoisies in collaboration with their foreign counterparts (Alavi, 1972).

- The state is an instrument of class domination since it lacks autonomy particularly the hegemonic social class, and so, is immersed in the class struggle that goes on in the society (Ake, 1985:2).
- The monopoly of power in the post-colonial state, especially its authoritarian and unitarian tendencies dissuade the practice of good governance and accountability, thus, making it to be privatized by chief executives, hence the display of crude power politics. (Ekekwe,2015)

Therefore, the high premium placed on power has essentially defined the nature of politics and therefore, the incessant movement from one party to another. Even the military could not resist this temptation to maintain its professionalism; hence its intervention in politics until unconstitutional means of capturing power became internationally outdated. Party politics in Nigeria continue to maintain fierceness, thereby; making competition at any level of governance become normless only yielding to efficiency norms rather than legitimacy norms (Alapiki.2015). It is a self-serving ideology driven by politicians that contributes to this anomaly.

It is in this light that party ideology is relegated to insignificance, alternative replacements such as personally defined ideology (be it political, economic, religious or ethnic) that make the attainment of political power achievable. More so, apart from the limited autonomization of the post-colonial state, the state appears feudalized. In essence, this means that the chief executive who attains power by any means (mostly through electoral fraud) privatizes state apparatus as a fiefdom or principality (Ekekwe, 2015). As in Nigeria, state apparatus are used to serve ambitions of chief executives at all levels and implant structures that reinforce political power monopoly. In this situation, the ruling political party becomes part and parcel of the state, and state institutions like the Army, Police, DSS, become personal tool of party leader (Ekekwe, 2015). It is within this context that party defections become frequent in order to align and realign with the power that be, as a guarantee of security of political career on the one hand, and access to the enormous resources controlled by the state on the other.

Conceptual Clarification

Party Nomadism

In Nigeria, we have a nomadic culture among the Fulani herdsmen who move from one location to another to seek greener pasture for their cattle. Nomadism is a derivative from this peripatetic pattern of the people which however has assumed an explanatory or descriptive essence to the incessant dumping of political party by politicians seeking political power. Though this term maybe recent, yet, the defection phenomenon is not in any way new in Nigeria (Mbah,2011).

The term party nomadism is used to refer to switch of political party by a member to another which maybe as a result of discontent with his present party. In fact, terms such as cross carpeting, party-switching, floor-crossing, party-hopping, decamping, party-jumping (Opadere&Agbana, 2015:23), are used to describe party nomadism. Mostly, terms like cross-

carpeting or floor-crossing is used in the parliamentary context, which connotes a situation where members of parliament are seated according to party affiliation as happened in the first republic in Nigeria. The NCNC, the majority party occupying the government side, had the red carpet separating them from the opposition. And when it was time for decampers from NCNC to leave their party, they simply crossed over to the other side where the Action Group (AG) members were seated. However, this may not strictly reduce the interchangeability of these terms to explain party nomadism as seen in extant literature.

In Nigeria, the height of incessant party movement may be blamed on several reasons ranging from a party member differing in political or economic views of his party or promise of higher office or even career advancement (Akoosi- Simbine, 2005). This implies that defections are predicated on ideological or material basis, but some maintain that defections are not basically ideological, because political parties in Nigeria lack distinguishable features (Omotola, 2009, Mbah, 2011, Opadere&Agbana, 2015, Saliu&Ifejika, 2016). Furthermore, other reasons adduced for the justification of the above argument, are role of godfather, genuine cases of derailment in party agenda, nature of state which defines politics of self-interest, zoning formula and party primaries, lack of political accommodation and manipulation of political process (Simbine, 2005).

On his part, Momoh (2015) refers to the arbitrary and undisciplined manner in which politicians move from one party to another as party nomadism. This is against the backdrop of utilizing both the internal and external mechanisms of the party for those who have genuine grievances with the party. Furthermore, he observed two patterns of party nomadism in Nigeria, they include, the linear nomadism which has to do with party member (s) leaving their party to another one, and may subsequently move to other parties without returning to their original party. While the reversed nomadism means the movement from one party to other party (ies) but later returning to the original one. The former illustrates the movement of some founding members of PDP such as AuduOgbeh, who has followed the linear pattern from PDP to AC, now APC. And the later typifies the movement of Governor Ayo Fayose, who left the PDP for Progressive People's Alliance (PPA) to the Labour Party (LP) and returning to his origin party the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Therefore, arising from the above, little or no systemic scholarly endeavour has been done to affirm the presence of ideological leanings of political parties, and to what extent it has impacted on party nomadism in the Fourth Republic.

HISTORY OF Party Nomadism in Nigeria

Prior to the independence of Nigeria, the first noted defection took place following the election of 1951, Nnamdi Azikiwe led National Council for Nigerian and Cameroon (NCNC) won 45 seats out of 80, and was expected to form the next government as leader of his party. But, unfortunately, he was denied the chance of leading the government because of his ethnic origin (Mbah, 2011). The Yoruba members of NCNC were lobbied to cross over to the Action Group (AG) by Chief Awolowo, in order to prevent Nnamdi Azikiwe from being the premier of

Western region. As a result the victory of NCNC was short-lived, within 24 hours, 20 members of NCNC of Yoruba origin crossed over to the Action Group (AG), which gave Chief Obafemi Awolowo the needed strength to consolidate the Action Group (AG) grip in the western region. It is presumed that this ethnic inclination would not have played out if the previous leader of NCNC, Herbert Macaulay, a Yoruba man had not died (Mbah, 2011).

This episode introduced the divisive elements of both ethnic and regional rivalry in Nigeria politics (Mbah, 2011). Therefore, Azikiwe recoiled back to the then Eastern Region to strengthen his political base. Later in the first republic, political parties were noted to leverage their political strength based on the level of prominence and hold they had in their respective regions (Mbah, 2011). This subsequently marked the emergence of other minority political parties such as the United Middle Beth Congress (UMBC) that protested against the increasing exclusive politics perpetrated by the dominant Hausa/Fulani conservative socio-political system. Still, the inherited ethnic sentiments from this episode, has continued to plague political development, to the level that even the zoning formula arrangement has not been able to douse adversarial relations amongst various ethnic groups. Hence, prompting frequent defections to various parties sometimes propelled by opinion leaders of these groups.

In another vein, personality differences among political actors played a prominent role in impinging on party politics. In the western region, clash between Lakode Akintola and Obafemi Awolowo, created adversarial relations that made the former dump the Action Group (AG) to form his own political party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). The contention was centred on quest for Akintola to move the Western region into national scene. Similarly, the personality clash between Kingsley Mbadiwe and Nnamdi Azikiwe led to parting of ways, making the former form a new political party (Mbah, 2011, Opadere&Agbana, 2015).

Nevertheless, the tendency of party nomadism underpinned the activities of parties in the second republic due to either personality difference or other consideration. As Mbah (2011:5) noted t;

... 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. Of course, a number of them defected to National Party of Nigeria (NPN). One important issue of the cross-carpeting of the Second Republic was the decamping 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 decamped to the Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP), on which platform he sought re-election in 1983. Many politicians from the opposition parties decamped to join NPN during this period (Mbah, 2011:5).

Despite this misfortune of the NPN, as a ruling party, it attracted several members of the opposition to its fold. It is however not far fetch to assert that the similitude of political parties characterized these periods' account for their display of defections. (Omotola, 2009, Mbah,

2011). The notable defection that took place in the Second Republic was when Akin Omoboriowo, who was the then Deputy Governor of old Ondo state, elected on the platform of Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) defected to the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). He was subsequently fielded as the Gubernatorial candidate of the NPN in 1983 national election (Agudiegwu&Ezeani, 2015). What followed was a fierce contest between Akin and his erstwhile boss, Adekunle Ajasin, who was of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). The election was said to have been rigged in favour of Akin, given the fact the NPN was in control of the central government (Olupohunda, 2016). Consequently, the political crisis spiked off violence between supporters of both parties that led to destruction of lives and property. This episode was blamed for the truncation of the Second Republic (Olupohunda, 2016).

With regard to the Third Republic, no actual defection was recorded because the transition programme steered by the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida, was truncated by the same regime. Even though two clear-cut ideological political parties, Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC) were created and sponsored by the government in an attempt to insulate political parties from factors that plagued previous Republics. Yet, it was observed that some political leaders in NRC were expressing their support for the winner of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, MoshoodAbiola (Agudiegwu&Ezeani, 2015). While at the state level, some party stalwarts whose party lost in their state were already hobnobbing with the declared Governor and leadership of the party that won in lieu of a possible defection (Agudiegwu&Ezeani, 2015).

The present democratic era has witnessed plethora of defections that any attempt to give account of them may lead to an unmanageable scale. Despite the seemingly leanings of parties, ideology rooted in crave for power and self-defined ambition has almost become the norm, hence, party nomads seek greener pasture for their political goal. Amongst the several associations that sought to be registered as political parties in 1999, only People's Democratic Party (PDP) a centre-right party, which espouses economic liberal policies and the APP (later ANPP) a right-wing party that favoured active state role in the economy, while the Alliance for Democracy (AD) was said to still retain ideological progressive and radical root to the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) of the second republic (Omotola, 2009; Mbah, 2011).

Yet, this seemingly difference could not restrain defections to other political parties. For instance, Arthur Nzeribe, Olusola Saraki, Emmanuel Iwanyanwu, who were part of the founding members of the APP, defected to the PDP (Ayorinde, 2007). While, on the other hand, following crisis within the national leadership of ANPP, some of its national members left to the PDP (Mbah, 2011). It should be noted that these decampees were welcomed and subsequently given juicy positions within the new party structure to underscore the patronage system that defines the political system. In 2007, the saga between the former President Obasanjo and his Vice, made the latter to defect to Action Congress (AC) to contest the presidential election but was defeated. He later returned to the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in 2011 to contest the presidential election (Tukur, 2017).

Furthermore, defections of state governors from the opposition to the ruling party, PDP, characterized this era also. After the 2007 elections, Governor Isa Yaguda, elected on the ANPP platform left to the PDP, his Imo counterpart, IkediOhakim, elected on the platform of Peoples Progressive Alliance (PPA) also joined the PDP. And Aliyu Shinkafi of Zamfara state (ANPP) and SaminuTuraki of Jigawa state (ANPP) moved into the PDP (Mbah, 2011). Defections were mostly a one-way thing, to the then ruling PDP (Nwanegbo et al, 2014). The reason was not far – fetched, because the party was in control of the central government, which, also created access and ties to those in power, thereby reinforcing patronage politics through patron-client networks. It has also been observed that some smaller parties operated as appendages of PDP, such as ACCORD party described as a receiving party, deliberately established by some PDP members to act as an alternative platform if denied ticket (Domingo & Nwankwo, 2010).

However, the tide changed when All Progressives Congress (APC) emerged in 2013, after four parties merged to form it. As was observed that members of PDP, then the ruling party started to move to an opposition party when it was not an election period (Nwanegbo et al, 2014), perhaps due to the prospect that the then opposition was going to win. APC was able to boost of heavy weights such as members of the new-PDP led by BawuBaraje, then governors, MultalaNyako (Adamawa state), Rabiukwakwanso (Kano state), Abdulfatah Ahmed (Kwara state), AliyuWamakko (Sokoto state), Rotimi Amaechi (Rivers state), Aminu Tambuwal (former Speaker House of Representatives), eleven (11) Senators and thirty-seven (37) members of House of Representatives (Adeniyi, 2017). It was historic as the political equation changed by not only bringing a party in opposition to power, but by further strengthening democracy in Nigeria (Nwanegbo, et al, 2014). The capture of power from the then ruling party PDP, brushed aside other considerations that blurred the ideological content of the political parties. As the table below shows some defections from 2011 to 2016.

Table 1: Showing Names of Politicians who have been engaged in Party Nomadism from 2011 to 2016.

Name	Former Political Party (ies)	Present Political Party
Nuhu Ribadu	Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
Governor Rochas Okorocha, Imo state	All Progressives Grand Alliance(APGA)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
MultalaNyako Former Governor of Adamawa state	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
RabiuKwakwanso Former Governor of Kano state	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Governor Abdulfatah Ahmed , Kwara state	Peoples Democratic Part (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Aliyu Wamakko Former Governor of Sokoto state	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Rotimi Amaechi Former Governor of Rivers state	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Aminu Tambuwal Former Speaker, House of Representatives	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
BawuBaraje Former National Secretary (PDP)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
ChibodomNwuche Former Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Atiku Abubakar Former Vice President	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Tele IkuruFormer Deputy Governor of Rivers state	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	
BernabasGermade Former National Chairman (PDP)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Timipre Sylva Former Governor of Bayelsa state	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Victor Ndoma-Egba	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)

Prof. Richard King	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Governor Aminu Masari	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Governor Segun Mimiko	Labour Party (LP)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
Peter Obi Former Governor of Anambra state	All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA)	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
Dakuku Peterside	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Sokonte Davies	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Ogbonna Nwuke	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Asita Honourable	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Andrew Uchendu	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Congress (APC)
Labaran Maku	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA)
Joshua Diriyé Former Governor of Plateau state	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to Labour Party (LP), then to PDP again before moving to APC.	All Progressives Congress (APC)

Source: Compiled by the authors from various national newspapers and magazines (2016).

From the above table, it is very clear that quest for power has been central in determining the path to be taken by politicians. Generally, the movement is made in favour of a personally defined interest which in most cases may bear huge divergence from the party, particularly, when the party ticket will be given to them to vie for any elective position

Not a Problem of Ideology: Confronting the Consensus

There seems to exist a near consensus about the lack of ideology by political parties in Nigeria (Omotola, 2009, Mbah, 2011, Ajiboye, 2014 Opadere&Agbana, 2015, Saliu&Ifejika, 2016). However, it is important to disaggregate whether there exist ideology in political parties on the one hand, and determine whether there is adherence by political parties on the other hand. It may be wrong to say that political parties in Nigeria do not have ideologies since such already exists and contained within the stipulated constitutional provision and even in most of their manifestos. But as to the level it influences parties is another issue which could be attributed to the quest for

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

power and its derivable benefits. Hence, it may seem that ideological leanings of political parties appear to be non-existence, which is not totally true.

Interestingly, the 1999 Constitution (as amended) of Nigeria has always played important role in guiding the political process, which is a resultant effect of the pluralistic nature of the Nigerian society. Hence the collectivist view of the state as custodian and promoter of the general welfare of its citizens. Whether it achieves this fundamental aim is another argument.

As aptly argued by Ibeanu (n.d.) that party ideologies cannot be separated from the national ideology embedded in the constitution. Therefore, the consensus that political parties in Nigeria operate without ideology should be debunked. Also, the erroneous view that lack of ideology explains the crisis inherent in political parties. For him, the crisis of political parties are rooted in three sub-sets, which include; the rule crisis, crisis of identity and the crisis of ideology. The rule crisis entails the variegated rules that guide the operations of political parties such as the constitution, the electoral Act, party constitutions, Electoral Management Bodies guidelines, etc., which, generally, political parties observe in the breach. This is what has been termed lack of internal democracy by some scholars (Ibeanu, n.d.).

Identity crisis is lack of specificity in identity that sustains vibrancy and longevity. That is, in Nigeria, one cannot say that political parties are either ethnic parties, class parties, popular parties, mass parties or even cadre parties (Ibeanu, n.d.). This inherent inconsistent manner depicts for instance, the former ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), which claimed at its inception to be nationalistic, perhaps based on its reach, yet while in power, was operated more as a clientelistic political party. It was this inconsistent nature of its identity that continues to fuel fierce struggle by various groups who only need the reach of the party, and the psychological appeal by a large segment of Nigerians to be elected. Interestingly, it was its claim to national appeal, which prompted its former Chairman, Prince Vincent Obuolafor, to declare in 2009 that the PDP was going to rule the country for the next sixty years (Odunsi, 2016), unfortunately, seven years later the party was defeated and presently ridden in leadership crisis.

With regard to ideology, Ibeanu (n.d.) provides an insight into the ideological basis of Nigerian political parties and its inherent contradiction that is mostly misconstrued as lack of ideology among scholars. According to him, Nigeria political parties could be said to be ideological formations within the market oriented economic and political system contained in the 1999 constitution (as amended). Particularly, section 224, which made reference to Chapter II stipulating the "Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy". Hence, Ibeanu (n.d.) stated thus;

The political, economic and social objectives contained in that chapter can be summarized as pursuit of national unity and integration, a corruption –free market economy and a liberal-welfarist society respectively. Given this constitutional directive, Nigerian political parties naturally gravitate to the centre of the political spectrum, being either left of centre or right of centre but pursuing essentially identical goals of national unity and market economy (Ibeanu, n.d.:3)

However, the inherent contradiction which creates a false consensus of lack of ideological basis of Nigeria political parties is their attraction also to petty-bourgeois ideology which prioritizes capture of power, excessive individualism and opportunism (Ibeanu, n.d.). This unfortunate mixture of conflicting ideologies becomes responsible for the blurriness of what has been referred to as lack of ideology.

According to Section 14 (1) of the 1999 constitution (as amended) which stipulates the ideological limit for which registered political parties may pursue their ideological persuasion. It states thus that “The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a state based on the principles of Democracy and social justice”. Obviously, this constitutional provision gives a national ideological framework as regards the shaping and guiding of ideologies espoused by political parties in the Fourth Republic.

Therefore, it is either tenets or ideals of liberal democracy or social democracy that should be espoused in their programmes and objectives. Section 224 further states that “The programmes as well as the aims and objects of a political party shall conform to the provisions of Chapter II of this constitution”. This provides the ideological spectrum through which leanings of political parties could be gauged. Unfortunately, the insatiable crave for power has made politicians to, if necessary, only yield to efficiency norms rather than legitimacy norms (Ake, 1996), thereby seemingly relegating the significance of ideological content.

Historically, political parties followed similar ideological paths. The Action Group (AG) which emerged from the socio-political Yoruba organization, Egbe Omo Oduduwa, was a leftist with radical socialist programmes as its agenda. While the Northern Peoples Party (NPC) which also emerged from the conservative socio-political organization, Jamaa Muntanen Arewa was “right-wing” political party. And the National Council for Nigerian and Cameroon (NCNC) was a “centre-left” party with welfarist programmes.

Similarly, the President Babangida transition programme was oriented towards entrenching the ideological divide in the 1993 election. Therefore, the regime was careful to create distinct ideological orientations referred to as “a little to the left” (SDP), and “a little to the right” (NRC). Although the election was widely acclaimed to be free and fair, won by Moshood Abiola of SDP, unfortunately, the military regime of Babangida cancelled it. Subsequently, the regime foisted on the country an interim National Government which however was overthrown three months afterwards by General Sani Abacha (Aroge, 2012).

From the foregoing, it is apparent that ideological features have been inherent in varying degrees in the various dispensations, as shown in the table below:

Table 2: List of Political Parties and their Ideological Leanings from the First Republic to the present.

First Republic Parties	Political ideology	Political Leaning
Northern People's Congress(NPC)	Conservative	Right-wing
Action Group (AG)	Socialist	Left-wing
National Council For Nigerian and Cameroon (NCNC)	Welfarist	Centre-left
Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU)	Socialist	Centre-left
United Middle Belt Congress (UNBC)		Centre-left
Second Republic Political Parties		
Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN)	Socialist	Centre-left
National Party of Nigeria (NPN)	Conservative	Centre-right
Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP)	Liberal democracy	Centre-right
People's Redemption Party (PRP)	Socialist	Centre-left
Great Nigerian Peoples party(GNPP)	Liberal democracy	Centre-right
Third Republic Political Parties		
Social Democratic Party (SDP)	Social democracy	Centre-left
National Republican Convention (NRC)	Conservative	Centre-right
Fourth Republic Political Parties		
All Progressives Congress (APC)	Social democracy	Centre-left
People's Democratic Party (PDP)	Conservative	Centre-right
Progressive People's Alliance (PPA)	Progressivism	Centre-right
Labour Party (LP)	Social democracy	Centre-left
Alliance for Democracy (AD)	Progressive	Centre-left

Source: From www.ngvotes.com/ and compiled by the authors (2016)

From the above table, it is obvious that the political parties in Nigeria have ideologies. We can categorize these political parties within the gamut of ideological spectrum stipulated in the constitution.

Implications of Party Nomadism in the Fourth Republic, 2011 - 2016

In this paper, we have maintained that party nomadism does not take place in the absence of party ideology, rather it is the insatiable power-seeking drive by political actors that seem to blur the ideological disposition of political parties in Nigeria, particularly, in this first Republic. As a result, there are implications of this to the political development in Nigeria, just two are listed below.

A Weakened Opposition

The phenomenon of party nomadism in Nigeria may lead to the weakening of opposition parties particularly the PDP, thereby voiding an alternative to the present government. In fact, this may lead to a one-party state (Simbine, 2005), where the vibrancy of opposition politics is decapitated. Already, PDP members are accusing the Buhari led federal government of a deliberate attempt to destroy the opposition through its anti-corruption fight which they say is primarily targeted at PDP (Akowe, 2017). Whether this is true or not, this tends to reinforce the gimmick of accusations and counter-accusations by the political elite to display what seems to be defensive radicalism. It is however noteworthy that opposition politics in Nigeria is generally seen by politicians to be a sort of political Siberia, and may endanger their political career therefore, they engage in the matrix of blame-game.

Exploiting the Loopholes in the 1999 Constitution (as amended)

The context in which the constitution emanated demonstrates its inherent defects that have subjected it to serious debates for change to give it a democratic stint. Nigeria is regarded as practicing constitutional democracy for which unfortunately its guiding document was made by the military, the Constitution therefore contains several defects which led Mbah (2011:12-13) to posit that:

Generals Abacha and Abubakar did not intend to put in place a democratic government based on popular consent. For Abacha, the 1999 constitution was meant for self-succession, while for Abubakar it was rather a mechanism for quick handover to civilian elected democratic government...Consequently, it produced a draft that was full of ambiguities, which have led to the increasing rate of party defections immediately it came into operation (Mbah, 2011:12-13).

It should be recalled that the basis of our argument that political parties in Nigeria are ideological formations, is hinged on constitutional provisions. But, unfortunately, the way and manner the Constitution was drafted robs it of its democratic credentials, and hence, full of ambiguities that make it open-ended which could be exploited for person interest. These inherited pitfalls in the 1999 constitution (as amended) become obvious as it cannot generally handle certain threats to

democratic consolidation such as party nomadism propelled by the quest for political power. For instance, in Section 68(1) (g), there are two clear reasons that a member of parliament may defect to another political party, these include, division in his former party or the merger of his former party with other political party (ies).

While this section intends to strengthen political parties by dissuading defection of members, it failed to put into consideration the inherent crave for power by politicians, who may create division to facilitate their defection. In 2014, members of the National Assembly who were part of the new-PDP defected to APC (Olaniyi, 2014). It created agitations in the National Assembly for the respective leaders of both the House of Representatives and Senate to declare the seats of the defectors vacant. The defectors hinged their action on the division in PDP but the Federal High court ruled contrary. Still they were able to obtain a court injunction to refrain the leadership of the National Assembly from declaring their seats vacant (Aziken&Ovuakporie, 2014).

Similarly, Section 109(1) (g), of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) also contains same proviso against defection but still, no Member of Parliament seat has been declared vacant. The ambiguity that surrounds the clause “division in the political party” which leaves the burden of proof to the defector (s), mostly defined to suit their personal interest has been utilized to move to another party without losing their seat.

As rightly observed by Mbah (2011) that this provision is essentially focus on legislators while excluding the executive arm of government such as the President, Vice-President, Governors and deputy governors. Therefore, regardless the defection of executive member (s), the law bears no restrain. Nevertheless, this does not in any mean that we have higher members of executive defecting than the legislators.

Conclusion/Recommendations

This paper disagrees with the already settled consensus that political parties in Nigeria are void of ideology, hence have resulted to incessant defections (Omotola, 2009, Mbah, 2011, Ajiboye, 2014 Opadere&Agbana, 2015, Saliu&Ifejika, 2016). But on the contrary, they fail to recognize that the seemingly blurriness of ideology in the country is a clash of ideologies and not a lack of it. Drawing from the constitutional provision as stated in Section 14 (1) of the 1999 constitution (as amended), this paper argued that political parties comply with this national ideological framework. However, the contradiction exists when this national ideological framework clashes with the petty-bourgeois ideology which prioritize power, excessive individualism and opportunism (Ibeanu, n.d.). Subsequently, resulting in persistent movement of politicians from one party to another. Power is essentially seen as a privilege and not as a responsibility that would make public office-holders accountable, transparent and respect the rule of law. The centrality of power, and its derivable benefits such as affluence, self-accumulation, has further entrenched a political culture that shows disregard for institutional framework that should guide conduct. Also, further encouraging nomadic movement is the exploitation of the obvious

loopholes in the 1999 Constitution (as amended). On the whole, all these have fueled party nomadism in Nigeria not necessarily because of lack of ideology.

It is against this backdrop that the paper recommends certain measures to reposition political parties in Nigeria. One, since parties have ideologies, certain sanctions should be instituted against party nomads by binding defector (s) for a stipulated period (maybe four years) from seeking any elective position, and, making sure that party nomads who are given party tickets to any elective position be withdrawn in other to dissuade others.

More so, there should be a deliberate shift from the elitist means of generating party funds, thereby alienating the masses, rather, the masses should be encouraged to become committed financial members of their respective parties, by so doing, it may push for accountability and mass-ownership of political parties. Divesting political parties of the vested interest that may have captured them, will create a more democratic ownership structure and identity. To a large extent, this will entrench internal democracy within political parties and create a specific, defined basis for collectivism.

Finally, the continuous exploitation of the constitutional provision in Sections 68 (1) (g) and 109 (1) (g), calls for reconsideration to give a lucid position of when division exists within a political party, as against the blanket reasons advanced by defectors, which mostly is to advance their political adventure.

References

- Adeniyi, Olusegun (2017). *Against the Run of Play.*, Lagos: Kachifo Limited
- Agudiegwu, M. O. & Ezeani, Emeffena (2015)., " Party Defections and Survival of Democracy in Nigeria",. International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences. Vol.4, Issue 6, pp. 103-112
- Ake, C. (1985). *Political Economy of Nigeria*. Longman, Lagos
- Akowe, Tony (2017). "Buhari Anti-Corruption War Unfair to Opposition- Umar". Retrieved from www.thenationonline.net/buhari-anti-corruption-war-unfair-to-opposition-umar/
- Akubo, A. et al (2014). "Political Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic",. Global Journal of Political Science and Administration, Vol. 2(3), pp.77-108.
- Alapiki, H. (2015). " The State and the Culture of Terrorism in Nigeria: Unveiling the Real Terrorists.", An inaugural lecture series: No. 118, delivered at the University of Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Alavi, H. (1972). " The State in Post-colonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh." New Left Review, 1(74), 59–81

- Alumona, I.K. (2016).” The State and Internal Security in Nigeria: A Study of Anambra State, 1999-2014;” in Omotola Shola & Ikenna: The State in Contemporary Nigeria: Issues, Perspectives and Challenges. Ibadan: John Archers Publishers Limited
- Anifowose, R. & Enemuo, F. eds. (2008), “Elements of Politics”; Lagos: Sam Iroanusi Publications.
- Aroge, S. T. (2012).” Civic Education as a Panacea to Electoral Malpractices in Nigeria.” Business and Management Research, Vol.1, No.1, pp.141-146
- Ayorinde, Oluokun (2007). “One-Party Monster”. retrieved from www.saharareporters.com/2007/05/08/one-party-monster
- Aziken, Emmanuel & Ovuakporie, Emman (2014).” Decamping Legislator: Caught in the Act”,.retrieved from www.vanguardng.com/2014/04/decamping-legislators-caught-act/
- Campbell, J. (2010).” Nigeria Dancing on the Brink.”, USA: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Collier, P. (2010).” Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places.” London: Vintage Books.
- Doki, Terna et al (2014).” Atiku’s many Political Adventures”,.retrieved from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/others/atiku-s-many-political-adventures/16435.html>
- Domingo, P. & Nwankwo. 2010.” Review of International Assistance to Political Party and Party System Development: Case Study Report: Nigeria”,. London: ODI.
- Edet, Lawrence I. (2017).” Politics of Defection and its Implication on Nigeria’s Democracy”,. Global Journal of Human-Social Science: Political Science.pp.1-6.
- Ejiofor, U.L. (2010). *Nigeria: Preface to Ideology*. Ebonyi: Willy Rose & Appleseed Publishing Co.
- Ekeh, P. P. (1975). “Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement.”, Comparative Studies in Society and History, 17 (1), 91–112
- Ekekwe, E. (1986). *State and Social Classes in Nigeria*. Essex: Longman
- Ekekwe, F.N. (2015).” Between Power, Parties and Principalities: Where Are the People?” An Inaugural Lecture Series, No. 118, delivered at the University of Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Ibeanu, Okechukwu, (n.d.).” Party Ideology, Party Supremacy and Democratic Governance in Nigeria’s 4th Republic: Some Reflections”

- Mbah, P. (2011).” Party Defection and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria, 1999-2009:” Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences. Vol. 2 (2-3) pp. 1-21.
- Momoh , A. (2015).” The Problems and Challenges of Managing Party Democracy, Intra-Party conflicts, Divisions and Defections in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic.”Being a paper presented at Post-2015 Elections Conference on “Security and Governance Challenges in Africa’s Largest Democracy , Organised by Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development, May18th-19th ,2015.
- Odunsi, Wale (2016). “Why I Boasted that PDP will rule for 60 years- Ogbulafor”. Retrieved from www.dailypost.ng/2016/07/11/why-i-boasted-that-pdp-will-rule-for-60-years-ogbulafor/
- Olaniyi, Muideen (2014). “PDP: Caught in a Web of Defections”. Retrieved from www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/politics/pdp-caught-in-a-web-of-defections/99201.html
- Olanrewaju, J.S. (2015).” Political Parties and Poverty of Ideology in Nigeria.”, Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences. Vol. 6 (3), pp. 1-16.
- Olupohunda, Bayo (2016). “Ondo and Echoes of 1983.”,retrieved from <http://punchng.com/ondo-echoes-1983/>
- Opadere, O.S. &Agbana, J.O. (2015). “Cross Carpeting in Nigerian Politics: Some Legal and Moral Issues Generated.”, Canada: frontiers of Legal Research, Vol. 3(2), pp. 22-38.
- Salin, H.A. &Ifejika, S.I. (2016), “The Missing Rob of Nigeria’s Democracy”, in Aloysius-Michaels O. et al eds. Governance, Economy and National Security in Nigeria. A Publication of the Nigerian Political Science Association.
- Seteolu, D. (2005). “The Nigerian State, The Political Class and Histogram of Elections in Nigeria;”, in Godwin O. and Abubakar M. eds: Elections and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria. Proceedings of 23rd Annual Conference of the Nigerian Political Science Association. pp. 34-42.
- Shola, O.J. (2009).” Nigerian Parties and Political Ideology.”, Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences. Vol. 1 (3) pp. 612-634.
- Simbine, A.T.O. (2005) “Political Vibrancy and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria”, in Godwin O. and Abubakar M. eds: Elections and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria. Proceeding of 23rd Annual Conference of the Nigerian Political Science Association. pp. 17-33.
- Smith, B.C. (2003).*Understanding Third World Politics: Theories of Political Change andDevelopment...*,New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Taiwo, C.A. & Olabiyi, A. (2016). "PDP :BoT Plots to Takeover Party ," . Daily Sun, May 25, 2016. p.9.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended)

Tukur, Sani (2017)." Atiku Abubakar: Timeline of a Serial Defector", retrieved from www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/250477-atiku-abubakar-timelines-serial-defector.html

Ujo, A.A. (2008)." Political Parties and Electoral Competition in Kaduna State (1979-1983)," Nigeria: Joyce Graphic Printer & Publishers.