



CARPET CROSSING AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

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Abstract

This paper examines carpet crossing in the contemporary Nigerian political landscape with a view to establishing its effect on democratic consolidation. Recent trend of events and existing literature show that carpet crossing is incessant and has become an established political culture in Nigeria, with politicians moving from one party to another without genuine reasons or remorse. The paper sought to establish the reasons why politicians carpet cross and investigates the implications of carpet-crossing on the political landscape of Nigeria. Using the descriptive survey design and by adopting Rational Action Theory in its analysis, the paper argues that Nigerian politicians are more concerned about themselves and they carpet cross in a bid to satisfy their political ambitions and self-interests and this has impacted negatively on Nigerian democratic consolidation. The study concludes that carpet crossing has become ridiculous to the country's political landscape and has contributed to the weakening of political parties and the opposition. This fosters unstable democratic structures and has generally contributed to the retarded growth and development of the country. Finally, the study recommends that Nigeria needs good and selfless leaders, who are able to stay focused to engage in politics.

Keywords: Carpet Crossing, Democratic Consolidation, Political Parties, Nigerian Political Landscape.

Introduction

Nigeria returned to democratic governance in 1999, after years of military dictatorship. This brought back hope to Nigerians that the country's political landscape will once again be stable and experience a strong democratic process. However, two decades after, the Nigerian political landscape is still confronted with many challenges and problems which affect its nascent democracy. Democracy as a system of government brought about the formation of political parties. Political parties are there to sponsor candidates to contest and compete to have their preferred candidates emerge as the winner after a free and fair election. An ideal democracy is one by which the electorates/citizens have a major say and contribution in the affairs of the State, but in Nigeria, the reverse is the case. Political parties and their elected candidates control the affairs of the State and their actions are majorly driven by self-interests. Politicians in different political parties seek the best for themselves and not for the common good. This has brought about the issue of carpet crossing, which is one of the challenges that discomfit the Nigerian political landscape. Aleyomi (2013, p. 82) avers that "what democracy depicts in Nigeria continues to manifest clearly individual's quests for recognition or self-preservation rather than the greater purpose of service to the people and nation as enshrined in the letters of the definitions of democracy".



Carpet crossing is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria. It has been happening even before independence. It is on record that the first incidence of carpet crossing was in 1951 in the defunct Western Region House of Assembly when several members of the defunct National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) decamped overnight to the old Action Group (AG) of Chief Obafemi Awolowo to deny Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, the then leader of NCNC, the majority he needed to direct the affairs of the House (Adewale, 2009). Therefore, what we experience in the political landscape in Nigeria today was experienced in the past, even though it is more rampant in recent times.

Ebuetse, (2017) observed that the political happenings in Nigeria may not be interesting to many because politics as it is practiced in Nigeria lacks substance and has no depth and the political landscape seems to be empty and nothing is being taught or learnt by party members and those who are not in politics. Presently in Nigeria, there is a superfluity of political parties including the ones that could be considered as mere associations. From the first and only political party in Nigeria called Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) formed by Herbert Macaulay in 1923, there were about ninety-one (91) political parties after Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) registered twenty-three (23) new political parties in 2018 (Akinkuotu, 2018). INEC later deregistered some political parties in Nigeria from 91 to 18 in 2020. However, some of the 73 deregistered are still active, and new ones are still sprouting.

Even though this multiparty system has given Nigerian politicians and citizens numerous alternatives in terms of political parties to identify with during electoral process, it has also provided ample opportunity for incessant carpet crossing. The issue of carpet crossing has become a challenge and has done more harm than good to the political landscape of Nigeria. Rather than politicians working towards rendering productive service to the nation and the citizenry, they seek for power and personal enrichment. And in order to achieve and retain these, they carpet cross from one political party to another. Even though politicians at different times, claimed to have party switched due to ideological reasons and discords within the party, probing deeper, it could be seen that self-interests have a lot of roles to play in such movements.

Suffice it to note that the Constitution of Nigeria, Section 68(1) stipulates that politicians may switch party if there are obvious evidence of divisions, or when their party's ideology is no more upheld by their party executives and if their party deviates from laid down principles. But analysing the recent political events characterised by numerous movements from one party to another by different politicians, it is hard to link reasons to the genuine ones stated by the Constitution.

Carpet crossing is a phenomenon that requires an in-depth investigation in order to understand better its motivations and effects on Nigeria's democratic consolidation. One is forced to ask, given the recent gust of carpet crossings, what's the essence? What is the idea and rationale behind these incessant movements? What do the politicians intend to achieve and what are their motivations? What is the implication for the nation's nascent democracy? These questions beg for answers. Therefore, this paper attempts answers to these questions by trying to unravel the basic motives for party switching by politicians in the contemporary political era in Nigeria and to ascertain the effects these movements have on Nigeria's nascent democracy.

Conceptual Clarification

Carpet Crossing

Carpet crossing is an act of moving from one party to another. It is the act of joining an opposition (political party) or following its policies. In Malhotra (2005, p.15), carpet crossing is also referred to as "decamping", "party hopping", "floor-crossing", "party switching," "party- jumping", "defection", "party crossover" and canoe-jumping". In a view similar to the above, Badejo, Agunyai, and Buraimo



(2016) conceives carpet crossing as describing the circumstance whereby members (politicians and/or lawmakers) of a political party willingly leave their party for another, whether for just or unjust reasons. Akinbade (2004) observes that in Nigeria, there is always the propensity for people to cross from the opposition party to the ruling party for greener pastures. Therefore, to him, carpet crossing is to break away from one political party usually in a furtive way.

Democratic Consolidation

Democratic Consolidation means a political process that involves adaptation to the rules, tenets, and procedures of democracy within a given state, in a way that both government and citizens accept it and work towards upholding its continued existence. Thus, Schedler (1998) explained that democratic consolidation involves stabilising democracies, prolonging their existence prospect beyond the short-term, making them resistant to the danger of dictatorial suppression and of constructing dams against ultimate reverse waves. Democratic consolidation can then be defined as “the process of achieving broad and deep legitimisation such that all significant political actors, at both the elite and mass level believe that the system of democracy is better for the society than any other practical alternative they can imagine”. (Diamond, 1999, p.62).

Political Party

There is no generally accepted definition of political parties. Political party can simply mean a group of people who come together to form an association with the aim of contesting and winning elections to assume power of leadership. Political parties are credible platforms through which people seek political offices. Eminue (2005, p. 329) considers “political party as an organisation of individuals, a large majority of whom have broadly similar idea about the nature and functions of government, pursue broadly similar ideology and organise themselves to obtain political power and control governmental machinery with all its advantages and responsibilities, and in the overall interest of the State”.

Anifowose and Enemuo (2005 p.195) outlined three key factors that define a political party to its members and spectators;

- i) It is a tag in the minds of its members and the wider public, especially the electorate,
- ii) It is an organization that recruits and campaigns for candidates seeking election and selection to hold public political offices, and
- iii) It is a set of leaders, who try to organize and control the legislative and executive branches of government.

That implies a political party is a group of people and an organization like any other organizations, but it is distinguished from any other group or organization by its unique purpose which, in a democratic setting, is seeking control of government through nominating its candidates and presenting its programmes for endorsement through the electoral process in competition with other political parties.

Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative research design to examine the phenomenon of carpet crossing and its impact on Nigerian contemporary democratic landscape. This design is in order because it enables an in dept understanding of the motivation, institutional dynamics that aid party cross carpeting. The study adopts a documentary method of data collection. The qualitative method involves establishing information on research work from available published document such as books, journals conference papers, periodicals, research reports, and the internet. The documentary method is appropriate because it provide historical and contemporary evidence on party cross carpeting in Nigeria. The data



was analysed using content analysis using themes such as the manifestation of cross carpeting in Nigeria and its implication for democratic consolidation.

Theoretical Framework

The issue of carpet crossing in contemporary Nigeria's political landscape is considered using the Rational Action Theory as the theoretical framework. The Rational Action Theory is also called rational choice theory. Becker (1976) cited in Ogu (2013, p. 90) recorded that the rational choice theory was early popularised by a 1992 Nobel Memorial Prize Laureate in Economics Science, Gary Becker, who was considered to be the first to apply rational actor models more widely. The theory is based on an assumption that individuals choose a line of action that is aligned to their personal preferences. That is, the kind of choices that would suit them. The key point of the rational action theory is that the pattern of behaviour in society reflects the choice made by persons as they attempt to minimise losses and maximise gains. This simply entails that individuals' actions are considered by comparing the losses and gains of different courses of action.

Elster (1989) cited in Ogu (2013, p. 90) stated that the essence of rational action theory "when faced with several courses of action, people usually do what they believe is likely to have the best overall outcome". Scott (2000) on the other hand, historically opined that the theory as applied in political science was originally adopted from the ideas of choices, costs and benefits intrinsic in the study of economics. Therefore, in recent decades, due to the relative feat of economics in understanding markets, rational choice theory has also become gradually utilised in social sciences other than economics, such as sociology, philosophy and political science.

Abell (2000) noted some assumptions of rational action theory which were cited by Ogu (2013, p. 93) and summarised as follows:

Individuals are those who take actions and as actors in the society, and everywhere, they behave and act always as rational beings, self-calculating, self-interested and self-maximising. Thus, these individual social actions are the ultimate source of larger social outcomes; Individuals choose their actions optimally, given their individual preferences as well as the opportunities or constraints with which the individual faced; the actions of the individual are concerned entirely with his or her own welfare; and that all individuals act in ways that would benefit the more, which entails that every individual is most likely to undertake courses of actions that they consider the best possible option and one that would enormously be to their own advantage.

In the field of Political Science, Downs (1957) cited in Ogu (2013) was considered the first to apply the rational action theory to electoral behaviour, party competition and the studies of election. Downs (1957, p. 5) believed that all political actors or a category of them are rational and can handle affairs effectively. He put it thus, "to be rational is to be efficient in the pursuit of goals, that is, maximising output for a given input, or maximising input for an output". Would Nigerian political actors be considered rational in the gale of incessant carpet crossing which is conspicuously motivated by the desire to retain power and maximise benefits for self? One would surely give a negative answer to the question. This is because it is obvious that the Nigerian politicians are not efficient in the pursuit of common goals, neither are they concerned about the plight of the masses or the electorates who placed them in power. Rather, following the trend of events, they are more concerned about themselves. This has conspicuously posed adverse effects to Nigeria's political landscape.

Mills (1959) opined that, within a given group, there exist some distinctions which could be referred to as the core and the peripheral groups. Therefore, most political parties and the politicians that exist in Nigeria could be categorised into these groups, giving us core parties and peripheral parties. In



Nigeria, with the registration of more twenty-three parties in August 2018, there are now ninety-one (91) political parties and two of them, namely People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressive Congress (APC) take the lead (Akinkuotu, 2018). The core political parties control the affairs of the country and influence the masses for their selfish motives in order to be or remain in power. It is evident that one cannot talk about the political landscape of Nigeria without mentioning democracy and linking it to the political parties and the political actors that form the party. From the political actors of the political parties, we get those who will helm the affairs of State. Therefore, the role played by political actors and the effect of their varied actions on structuring the political landscape cannot be overemphasised. They either impact positively or negatively on the political landscape of the country.

In a more analytical way, Ogu (2013) is of the view that the rational action theory perceives individuals as being rational, self-interested, self-calculating and self-maximising, therefore, it is difficult for individuals to participate in collective action or work towards the good of the public unless the public good would lead ultimately to their own interests. From the foregoing, the issue of carpet crossing in Nigeria could be explained using the Rational Action Theory when viewed from the perspective that political and social development depend heavily on choices and actions made by self-interested political actors. Since the Nigerian political actors have considerable autonomy to interpret laws, modify rules, and alter public responsibilities in ways that protect their interests, development is retarded and the political landscape of Nigeria suffers.

The theory also points out that individuals have the cognitive ability to evaluate every choice against other choices made, often in line with their personal preferences. In this sense, it is observed that the actions of the average Nigerian politician whose selfish interests are always at the fore and he/she utilises any opportunity to enable him/her realise them. This makes Nigerian political actors to carpet cross from one political party to another, in search of where their interests would be most protected. The average Nigerian politician utilises any opportunity to prioritise personal preferences and thus, devise any strategy to maintain dominance and retain powers. They struggle to advance their political interests without any ideological considerations, ethics or morals.

Carpet Crossing in Contemporary Nigeria Landscape

Carpet crossing has become the defining expression in our kind of political pragmatism. When people see the light and read opportunity in another political party, they flock to it. This could be considered as 'chop-chop' politics. It has become the only kind of politics that is known and the only kind that is practiced in Nigeria (Agbese, 2017). Nigerian politicians have many reasons why they carpet cross. Aleyomi (2013, Oloyede, et al., 2025) believes carpet crossing could be as a result of power tussles, personality clash, division and disagreement on party's position on an issue, realisation of one's personal political ambition, party leaders defaulting on issues agreed by members of the political party probably on power sharing formula, desire to associate with a more high-ranking political head and different views on the philosophy and ideology operations of the political party.

Nwanegbo, et al (2014) observed that absence of internal party democracy has given rise to unhealthy power contest and intra-party feuds. It is believed that intra-party squabbles and disputations have continued to foster the sleazy act of carpet crossing. As was experienced before and after the elections in 2015, 2019 and 2023 the massive carpet crossing in Nigeria and the bleary struggle that characterised the act were/are very fierce and intense, almost cutting the breath of party politics in Nigeria.

Though carpet crossing is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria's democratic landscape, the magnitude at which they have swept through the ranks of the opposition in just three years into the Tinubu's administration for instance, have triggered growing concern. Many have questioned the rationale



behind the current waves of defection amidst the worsening political and economic condition in the country. Many believed that given the severe economic crisis following the removal of fuel subsidy and the worsening security situation, members of opposition parties would rally together to present a viable alternative to Nigerians ahead of the forthcoming general elections in 2027 (Oloyede, et al., 2025). Reversed, however, seems to be the case. Beside the movement of Mallam Nasir El-Rufai the immediate past governor of Kaduna state and a few others from the ruling APC to the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and later the African Democratic Congress (ADC) which is being viewed as potential coalition ahead of 2027 General election, the APC has rather received more defectors from the main opposition PDP and other parties at an alarming rate. Serving governors such as Sheriff Oborevwori of Delta and Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom states, Peter Mba, Enugu state, Douye Diri Bayelsa state, Siminalayi Fubara, Rivers state, Dauda Lawal, Zamfara state; Ahmadu Fintiri, Adamawa state; Abba Kabir Yusuf, Kano state; Caleb Mutfwang, Plateau state; Agbu Kephass, Taraba state, national and state assembly members among others have continued to defect to the ruling APC.

Besides citing divisions in the opposition parties, some defectors like Gov. Eno defended his defection from the PDP into the APC liking it as pursuing an elephant, insisting he would not be distracted by barking dogs along the way. According to him, “joining the APC is a progressive move that would allow Akwa Ibom state to benefit more from the federal government. “I am the one in the driver’s seat today. I know the road without traffic jams, without potholes. That’s why I’ve chosen to take Akwa Ibom on an expressway of development”. He further emphasized the decision was made to align the state with the centre and provide needed support for the president Tinubu’s Renew Hope Agenda’ (Yafugborhi, 2025, Channels Television, 2025). This statement raises important question about the relationship between state governors and the presidency in Nigeria. Governor Eno’s assumption could have significant implications for governors that are still in the opposition parties. Could it be that states not governed by the APC will be at disadvantage when it comes to receiving benefits from the federal government? Does Akwa Ibom state’s new status guarantee increase federal benefits?

Additionally, other defectors were alleged to have received or were promised mouth-watering offers to cross carpet. At the national assembly most of the legislators who cross carpet were allegedly promised an automatic ticket to return to the National Assembly in 2027 without cognizance of their performances. At the National Assembly alone since the inauguration of the current 10th Assembly, over 30 members of the House of Representatives have defected from their various political parties. Out of these numbers majority are from PDP, LP, ADC and NNPP into the ruling APC (Oloyede, et al, 2025).

The scale of party switching and the animosities that accompany it tends to suggest that carpet crossing has become one of the major threats and destabilising factor to party politics and sustainable political landscape in Nigeria. It has caused disintegration in political parties, which has also resulted to the breakdown of political institutions and the confusion experienced in the political landscape of Nigeria (Nwanegbo, Odigbo & Nnorom, 2014).

Tables 1,2,3,4 below is a catalogue of few out of any Carpet Crossing in Nigeria, 1999-2026

Table 1.1 Presidents/Vice President



Name	Previous party(ies)	Current Party
Bola Ahmed Tinubu	AD-AC-ACN	APC
Mohamadu Buhari	APP-ANPP-CPC	APC
Atiku Abubakar	PDD- AC- APC- PDP	ADC

Source: adopted from Ulu and Okogbuo (2024) citing Edet, (2017), Daily Trust, 2024 with update and modification by the authors 2026.

Table 1.2 Governors

Name	Previous Party(ies)	Current Party
Segun Mimiko	AD- PDP- LP- PDP- LP- ZLP-PDP	APC
Saminu Turaki	APP- ANPP- PDP- ACN- APC	PDP
Timipre Sylva	PDP	APC
Ikedi Ohakim	PPA	PDP
Aliyu Wamakko	PDP	APC
George Akume	PDP- AC-ACN	APC
Rotimi Amaechi	PDP	APC
Isa Yuguda	ANPP	PDP
Mahmud Shinkafi	ANPP	PDP
Aminu Tambuwal	PDP- APC	NDC
Bukola Saraki	PDP- APC	PDP
Adamu Aliero	ANPP- PDP- CPC	APC
Nasir El-Rufai	PDP- APC-SDP	ADC
Peter Obi	APGA- PDP- LP	NDC
Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso	PDP- APC- NNPC	NDC
Siriaki Dickson	PDP	NDC
Orji Uzor Kalu	PDP- PPA- PDP	APC
Theodore Orji	PPA	PDP
Segun Oni	PDP-APC- PDP- SDP	APC
Boni Haruna	PDP-CAN	PDP
Multala Nyako	PDP- APC	ADC
Rochas Okorocha	PDP- ANPP- APGA	APC
Chris Ngige	PDP-CAN	APC
Ikedi Ohakim	PDP- PPA- PDP- APC- AC	PDP
Addulfatah Ahmed	PDP- APC	PDP
Attahiru Bafarawa	APP- ANPP- DPP- ACN - PDP	PRP
Aminu Tambuwal	PDP- APC- PDP	ADC
Adams Oshiomhole	AD-LP-ACN	APC
Godswill Akpabio	PDP	APC
Bello Matawalle	ANPP-PDP	APC
Umo Eno	PDP	APC
Dauda Lawal	PDP	APC
Ahmadu Fintiri	PDP	APC
Caleb Mutfwang	PDP	APC
Douye Diri	PDP	APC
Sheriff Oborevwo	PDP	APC



Bala Mohammed	ANPP- PDP	APM
Abba Kabir Yusuf	NNPC	APC
Sinnalayi Fubara	PDP	APC
Peter Mba	PDP	APC
Agbu Kefas	PDP	APC
Ademola Adeleke	APC-PDP	AP

Source: adopted from Ulu and Okogbuo (2024) citing Edet, (2017), Daily Trust, 2024 with update and modification by the authors 2026.

Table 1.3 Deputy Governors

Name	Previous party(ies)	Current Party
Enyinnaya Abaribe	PDP-ANPP-PDP-APGA-ADC	LP
Iyola Omisore	PDP	APC
Tele Ikuru	PDP -APC	PDP
Philip Shuabu	APC	PDP
Hafiz Abubakar	APC- PDP- PRP	APC
Monday Onyema	PDP	APC
Kelechi Igwe	PDP	APC
Ali Olanusi	LP	APC

Source: adopted from Ulu and Okogbuo (2024) citing Edet, (2017), Daily Trust, 2024 with update and modification by the authors 2026.

Table 1.4 Senators/ House of Representative Members

Name	Previous party(ies)	Current Party
Chuba Okadigbo	PDP- APP-ANPP	PDP
Ike Nwachukwu	PDP-ANPP	PDP
Salisu Maori	PDP	ANPP
Jim Nwobodo	AD-PDP-UNPP-APC	PDP
David Mark	PDP	ADC
Gbenga Aluko	PDP-LP-PDP	APC
Omololu Meroyi	AD-PDP-LP	PDP
Dorcas Odunjiri	AD	PDP
Appolos Amodi	PDP	APC
Wahab Dounmu	AD	PDP
Laken Balogun	PRP-NPP	PDP
Ahmed Lawal	ANPP-CPC	APC
Victor Umeh	PDP-APGA-LP-	NDC
Nelson Effiong	PDP	APC
Husseini Mohammed Jallo	PDP	APC
Musa Mai Doki	APC-PDP	APC
Kawu Sumaila	NNPP	APC
Adamu Tanko	PDP	APC
Donatus Matthew	LP	APC
Elisha Abbo	PDP	APC
Andy Uba	PDP-AC-PDP	APC
Nelson Effiong	PDP	APC
Yahaya Abdullahi	PDP	APC
Ned Nwoko	PDP-APC	PDP



Magnus Ngie-Abe	PDP-APC	SDP
Ali Ndome	ANPP-PDP	APC
Dino Melaye	PDP-APC-PDP	ADC
Shehu Sani	AD-CPC-APC-PDP	APC
James Barka	PDP	APC
Joshua Obika	LP	ADC
Murphy Omoroyi	PDP	ADC
Ireti Kingibe	LP	ADC

Source: adopted from Ulu and Okogbuo (2024) citing Edet, (2017), Daily Trust, 2024 with update and modification by the authors 2026.

The catalogue above is just a few among several political cross carping in Nigeria since 1999. It has to be noted that carpet crossing is not entirely wrong, but in a situation where personal interest is allowed to override internal democracy, then, democracy is battered, and this has adverse effects on the governance of the State, which generally affect democratic consolidation in the country. It could be inferred from recent happenings that due to self-interests of politicians, genuine reasons for carpet crossing are crucified on the altar of flimsy reasons and politicians keep switching party without shame or remorse for their actions. Whatever the perspective from which one views the issue of carpet crossing and no matter the reasons for the action, it remains an ugly phenomenon that is capable of wearying and destabilizing Nigeria's democratic journey.

Carpet Crossing and its Consequences on Nigeria's Democratic Landscape

Cross carpeting has consequences on the Nigerian democratic landscape if it is not properly checked. It is evident that Carpet crossing has contributed to the weakening of political structures, political parties and the opposition. It has also caused an unstable democratic system, existence of political parties without strong ideologies, promoted electoral rigging, poor management of electoral process and chaotic political environment. It could be noted that carpet crossing is not peculiar to a particular political party. It is rather a general practice. Therefore, the recently experienced gust of carpet-crossing raises pertinent questions on the extent of development and sustainability of Nigeria's democracy. The phenomenon definitely has the capacity of wrecking Nigeria's political landscape and can mar the growth of Nigeria's political system.

Amadu (2023) identified some of the implications to include among others that carpet crossing creates a tendency toward a one-party state where the political party in power entirely dominates the democratic system. The ruling party which produces the President and majority of the state governors, as well as control both chambers of the national assembly, enjoys the privileges to dominate the opposing political parties and make them nominal and unproductive. Therefore, this limits the powers of the opposition parties to actively oppose unpopular public policies or engage the dominant party on issues of national importance. Zikirullahi (2025) acknowledged the constitutional right of politicians to associate freely but raised alarm that the current wave of defections was endangering Nigeria's democratic equilibrium. He further stated that "This mass defection is gradually turning the country into a one-party state. Such a scenario diminishes the effectiveness of opposition parties, stifles political discourse, and limits the electorate's choices.

Carpet crossing encourages corrupt practices and misplacement of public policy priority in Nigeria. Politicians with corrupt tendencies from opposition political parties, defect to the ruling party in order to escape legal actions against them. As a result of the defections of different political actors who only care for political power and their selfish interests to the ruling party, scarce public resources are



expended on trivial issues rather than on important matters that can satisfy general needs of the people.

Carpet crossing breeds instability in the party system due to fragmentations and factions within political parties. The APC's growing influence under the Tinubu led government may breed internal rivalries that could, if not carefully managed, undermine the party's cohesion in some states. In Delta for instance, the dynamics are very complex. The movement of the Governor, Oborevwori, with the entire PDP structure, into the ruling APC was seen as a political masterstroke by the ruling party. Conversely, the move may have set the stage for an intense turf war within the APC in Delta, pitting Oborevwori against his former arch-rival and the APC 2023 governorship candidate, Senator Ovie Omo-Agege. This also applied to Kebbi State where the cross carpeting of Senators, Musa Maidoki, Yahaya Abdullahi led by Senator Adamu Aliero is also believed to have rekindled an old rivalry between Aliero and former Governor Atiku Bagudu, who is the current Minister of Budget and Economic Planning. Kano state is also an example where the defection of Gov. Abba Yusuf to the APC has set a stage for another battle against his political 'god father' Sen. Rabi'u Kwankwaso for the soul of the state ahead of the 2027 general election. Therefore, the APC may appear to be consolidating power ahead of the 2027 general election, the emerging internal rivalries in some states like Delta, Kebbi, Kano and any other state to come, might pose a significant headache for the party, if not carefully managed.

Finally, Cross carpeting encourages political apathy and undermines electoral integrity: Citizens often perceive defections as acts of political betrayal, leading to disenchantment with the democratic process. This perception contributes to low voter turnout and decreased political participation during elections. The trend of defections also weakens electoral integrity by creating an atmosphere of uncertainty and distrust among voters. It fosters political opportunism, where politicians defect to the ruling party to secure electoral advantages or government positions further weakening democratic consolidation (Dappa, et al 2025).

Conclusion and the Way Forward

The incessant practice of carpet crossing in recent times has become the order of the day for political parties and politicians in Nigeria. It has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerian politics and has become a cause of concern for Nigerians and even the international community. It is considered to be one of the major challenges facing the country, which has adversely affected stability and sustenance of the political landscape of Nigeria. The rate of carpet crossing by politicians in Nigeria is ridiculous to the country's image, as it seems to have become part of Nigerian political culture. Even though carpet crossing is not unconstitutional, but the way the politicians go about it in Nigeria has become a concern for the citizens. It is seen that politicians carpet cross not necessarily because there is internal division as stipulated by the constitution but due to self-interest, political ambition, desire to retain power and other reasons that favour them. It is therefore clear that carpet crossing has adversely affected the political landscape and contributed to the retarded growth and development of the country. Therefore, carpet crossing is seen as a threatening phenomenon to the consolidation of the political landscape of Nigeria, thus the need to re-examine the conditions for carpet crossing.

Nigeria needs good and selfless leaders who will transform its political landscape and foster its growth and sustenance. Therefore, there is need to encourage more reputable individuals to engage in politics. The populace should be educated and sensitised not to join the bandwagon of recycling leaders. Citizens should be sensitised on the adverse effects of carpet crossing and be encouraged not to support politicians that carpet cross at will. Nigerians should be educated to identify serious and unserious politicians and should be politically active to go to the polls at each time to determine adequate leaders that will have concern for the common good. Still on issue of education, the



politicians should also be educated and sensitised on the adverse implications of carpet crossing on the political landscape of the country. There should be a review of the constitution to strengthen the section of carpet crossing. If an outright ban could not be made on carpet crossing, their tougher legislations, sanctions and penalties should be imposed to discourage politicians from carpet crossing at will.

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