

**THE EFFECT OF ELITE FRAGMENTATION ON PARTY COHESION IN
NIGERIA'S MULTIPARTY SYSTEM**



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SSC2105707

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

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**BEING A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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FOR THE AWARD OF THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.SC) DEGREE IN
POLITICAL SCIENCE**

DECEMBER, 2025.

CERTIFICATION

We, certify that this research project was carried out by **Iluobe Silas Omoh** in the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. It is adequate in scope and quality in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (BSc.) degree in Political Science.

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DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated to God Almighty for His abundant grace in my life and for seeing me through my academic pursuit and aspirations. He has been my source of strength and on his wings only have I soared. I also want to dedicate this project to my Family and friends for the love and encouragement they have shown towards me during the course of this program, all I can say is thank you and God bless you.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of elite fragmentation on party cohesion within Nigeria's multiparty political system. The research traced how divisions among political elites—manifesting in factionalism, ideological inconsistencies, personal rivalry, defection, and power struggles—shape the stability and internal unity of political parties. Using a descriptive survey design and a structured questionnaire, data were collected from respondents across selected political institutions and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including regression techniques. The findings showed that elite fragmentation significantly weakens party cohesion by promoting internal crises, reducing organizational discipline, and increasing the likelihood of defections and parallel party structures. The study also revealed that elite competition for influence often undermines party ideology and policy consistency, leading to unstable electoral alliances and reduced public confidence. It concludes that Nigeria's multiparty system is highly vulnerable to elite-driven instability, which compromises effective party functioning and broader democratic consolidation. The study recommends strengthening internal party democracy, enforcing clearer party rules, and promoting ideological clarity to reduce elite-induced fragmentation and enhance party cohesion.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Political parties in contemporary democracies play a central role in the making of public policy, the organization of electoral competition, and the facilitation of political participation. They are expected to provide ideological clarity, promote civic engagement, and institutionalize government accountability (Adeniran & Obiyan, 2021). The capacity of political parties to perform these roles is, however, a function of their internal cohesion, leadership stability, and the inclusiveness of their organizational structures. In Nigeria's multiparty democratic setting, the ideals have been increasingly undermined by elite fragmentation—a common phenomenon characterized by internal division driven by personal ambition, factionalism, and competition for control of party machinery (Yagboyaju & Akinboye, 2022).

The political environment in Nigeria has experienced a proliferation of political parties since the country's return to civilian rule in 1999. By the 2019 general elections, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had registered 91 political parties, which was significantly reduced to 18 by 2023 after deregistering parties that failed to meet electoral performance thresholds (INEC, 2023). Despite such apparent pluralism, internal cohesion of

political parties is low, as reflected in the frequent defections of elites—especially during pre-election rounds. Preceding the 2023 general elections, over 60 high-ranking political players, from sitting governors, senators, to National Assembly members, defected from one party to another—primarily due to the persisting contentions over party primaries, zoning arrangements, and marginalization within (Centre for Democracy and Development [CDD], 2023; Aluko, 2023).

Elite disunity also translates to persistent leadership crises. Leading political parties such as the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) have been plagued by recurrent leadership crises, including court interventions, parallel party conventions, and contested primaries. Between 2016 and 2022 alone, the APC experienced at least four serious national leadership crises, each triggered by power contests between ruling factions for dominance of party organs and access to the rights of candidate nomination (Ojo & Okafor, 2022). Another dimension of elite fragmentation is the domination of party decision-making by a few strongmen—commonly referred to as political godfathers. These strongmen wield disproportionate influence over key processes such as candidate selection, campaign funding, and party policy orientation, thereby excluding grassroots members and undermining internal democratic structures (Ibeanu & Orji, 2021). According to the CDD's post-election report, roughly 78% of candidates for the 2023 general elections emerged through non-competitive or secretive selection processes controlled by elite interests or

external financiers (CDD, 2023). This exclusionary practice undermines legitimacy, exacerbates resentment among excluded groups, and often triggers internal divisions.

A manifest and real consequence of elite fragmentation is the formation of breakaway parties, most frequently formed by aggrieved elites that split from their parent platforms to pursue alternative electoral interests. A case in point is the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), which in 2022 was revived by former Kano State governor Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso after he exited the PDP due to protracted leadership differences. Similarly, the Labour Party (LP) gained record national visibility following the entry of Peter Obi, a former Anambra State governor, from the PDP into the party in the lead-up to the 2023 presidential polls (Momodu, 2023; Eze, 2023). Even though these parties offered fresh platforms for political competition, elite calculation rather than ideological divergence drove their emergence, once more illustrating the personality-based nature of Nigeria's party politics. Generally, elite fragmentation remains a root challenge to the institutionalization of political parties in Nigeria. Not only does it destabilize party organizations, but also tends to undermine overall democratic processes by promoting factionalism, discouraging internal democracy, and eroding public trust in political institutions (Okon & Adeyemi, 2024).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's multiparty democratic system is defined by a highly polarized but vibrant party system. Although party proliferation would tend to be regarded as a measure of political

pluralism, the intra-party dynamics replicate system dysfunctions—primarily elite fragmentation. This fragmentation, defined by power struggles, factional politics, and personalized control of party machinery, further erodes party organizations and erodes democratic consolidation in the Fourth Republic (Yagboyaju & Akinboye, 2022; Okon & Adeyemi, 2024). Recent research confirms the argument that elite behavior is a key cause of polarization among Nigerian political parties. Rather than being used as a site for policy formulation and ideological competition, parties are hijacked by powerful group interests and transformed into instruments of political deal-making and individual ambitions (Eze, 2023; Ibeanu & Orji, 2021). Intra-party conflicts often revolve around issues such as the choice of candidate, zoning arrangements, and the right of access to campaign funds—issues that hitherto have ignited such public desertions, twin party conventions, and protracted court struggles (Ojo & Okafor, 2022; CDD, 2023). Despite this emerging literature, several conceptual lacunae still persist. First, much of the existing research treats elite behavior as a generic phenomenon, not adequately dissecting its various forms—e.g., defections, leadership crises, or domination of party organizations—or exploring how each singularly destabilizes party unity (Adeniran & Obiyan, 2021). Second, research focuses on individual political parties or isolated electoral cycles, therefore precluding understanding how elite fragmentation operates functionally systematically in Nigeria's multiparty system. Finally, there is limited research that has addressed the dynamics between elite disillusionment and the new trend of breakaway parties, which has become increasingly a normal trend in

Nigeria's post-2015 politics (Momodu, 2023; Aluko, 2023). This work addresses these gaps by offering an integrated and multidimensional review of elite fragmentation and the implications for party unity. Specifically, it explores how elite defections, leadership crises within, elite seizures of party institutions, and the formation of splinter parties cumulatively and separately undermine cohesion in political parties. Utilising recent empirical insights and comparative case studies in prominent Nigerian parties, the present research tries to move beyond typical descriptions and make a systematic contribution to the understanding of the breakdown of internal party organisations. In the process, the research contributes not only to the growing literature on Nigerian elite politics but also to broader debates surrounding party institutional quality and democratic consolidation trajectories in developing democracies.

1.3 Research Questions

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the frequency of political defections by elites affect party cohesion in Nigeria?
2. How do leadership struggles among political elites influence the unity of political parties?
3. What is the relationship between elite dominance of party structures and intra-party cohesion?

4. How do breakaway parties formed by disgruntled elites affect the cohesion of the original parties?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the effect of elite fragmentation on party cohesion within Nigeria's multiparty political environment. The specific objectives are to:

1. To assess how the frequency of political defections by elites affects party cohesion.
2. Examine how leadership struggles among political elites influence the unity of political parties.
3. To find out the relationship between elite dominance of party.
4. To analyze the effects of breakaway parties formed by disgruntled elites on the cohesion of the original parties

1.5 Research Hypotheses

1. The frequency of political defections by elites has no significant effect on party cohesion in Nigeria.
2. Leadership struggles among political elites have no significant influence on the unity of political parties.
3. Elite dominance of party structures has no significant relationship with intra-party cohesion.

4. Breakaway parties formed by disgruntled elites have no significant effect on the cohesion of the original political parties.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The research is significant to a range of stakeholders. To political scientists and scholars, the research presents the dynamics of the internal party system in new democracies. To electoral authorities and political parties, the findings present operating recommendations on elite interests management and cohesion building. Civil society groups and electorates would also benefit from a better understanding of how the actions of elites shape political representation and quality of governance. Lastly, the study aims to be able to contribute to Democratic institution-building and ensuring that parties function as stable, inclusive, and credible platforms for governance.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on major political parties in Nigeria, especially those with a past of elite defections, intra-party crises, or breakaway movements. The period examined is from the 1999 transition to civilian rule up to the 2023 general elections. The research limits its observations to chosen variables of elite fragmentation: political defection frequency, leadership disagreements, party hierarchy control by elites, and the formation of splinter parties.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

- **Elite Fragmentation:** Fragmentation and disagreement among dominant party members, typically leading to instability or rotten party institutions.
- **Party Cohesion:** The degree to which party members are cohered by purpose, structure, and activities.
- **Political Defection:** Political defection by an elite member from one party to another, typically due to unresolved internal differences.
- **Leadership Struggle:** Struggle among top-ranking members for the control of party leadership positions.
- **Elite-Controlled Structures:** A situation where a narrow group of powerful individuals control decision-making within a party.
- **Breakaway Parties:** Fresh parties established by dissatisfied members of established parties, usually in the wake of unresolved internal conflicts.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the existing literature on elite fragmentation and party cohesion, particularly in the context of the Nigerian multiparty system. It aims to establish a conceptual framework for understanding the factors, theoretical bases for comprehending the dynamics of elite fragmentation, empirical research identifying its manifestations, and the research gap this study aims to address. The review is organized under five broad themes: the conceptual framework, theoretical framework, empirical review, and research gap.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Party Cohesion

Party cohesion refers to the extent of unity, organizational coherence, ideological agreement, and discipline among members of a political party (Carey, 2007; Mainwaring, 2018). Such internal agreement on direction of policy, consistent leadership, effective conflict resolution, and members' loyalty are indicative of a cohesive party. High party cohesion enhances electoral competition, policy coherence, and democratic consolidation, whereas low party cohesion typically results in defection, crisis in leadership, factionalism, and loss of election (Olorunmola & CDD, 2023).

Party unity in Nigeria's multiparty system has consistently been weak, particularly in the principal parties such as the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC). From 2019 to 2023, over 60 high-ranking party members, senators, governors, and members of the National Assembly switched parties due to intra-party conflicts, marginalization, or discontent with primary election outcomes (Centre for Democracy and Development [CDD], 2023). These defections completely halted party unity and election strategy.

According to INEC (2023) statistics and election observers' reports, around 78% of political parties' candidates in the 2023 national elections emerged from clandestine processes, such as imposition by powerful elites or circumvention of internal primaries (CDD, 2023). Such exclusionary tendencies significantly undermine party unity by pushing ordinary members into isolation and creating internal strife.

In contrast, some countries like South Africa (under the African National Congress) and Ghana (under the New Patriotic Party and National Democratic Congress) have demonstrated greater party solidarity because of more institutionalized leadership succession systems and more clearly delineated ideological affiliations. In South Africa, despite periodic internal conflict, the ANC maintained its national platform without widespread defections in both its 2019 and 2021 election cycles (Southall, 2021). By comparison, Nigerian parties are

personality-oriented and weakly institutionalized, hence susceptible to elite fragmentation (Adeniran & Obiyan, 2021).

Research by Ibeanu and Orji (2021) finds that Nigeria's hegemonic political parties lack internal conflict resolution processes and ideological guidance, leading to ad-hoc alliances and ongoing instability. This is characteristic of what Mainwaring (2018) refers to as "low party institutionalization," where parties are based on individuals rather than enduring policy platforms or popular mobilization networks.

Okon and Adeyemi (2024) maintain party cohesion in Nigeria is rather controlled by short-run electoral interests rather than vision for the long run. For instance, when conducting primaries in 2023, APC and PDP held a number of parallel congresses in states, indicating basic cleavages in their organizational setup. Such instability, they argue, not only erodes party cohesion but also reduces the public's trust in the political process."

Ultimately, cohesion is a good measure of the institutional health of a political party. Where cohesion is high—as in countries with strong democracies—parties are able to maintain internal cohesion, articulate coherent ideologies, and endure leadership transition. Where cohesion is low—as in Nigeria—parties remain vulnerable to elite interests, fragmentation, and volatility (Yagboyaju & Akinboye, 2022).

2.2.1.1 Organizational Stability

Organizational stability refers to the ability of a political party to maintain stable leadership, hold regular party conventions, and enjoy working institutions without continuous interruption. Organizational stability is a key part of party cohesion as it suggests the strength, credibility, and electoral readiness of a party (Omilusi, 2021).

Organizational stability in Nigeria's multiparty context has often been challenged by elite competition for power, abrupt leadership changes, and manipulation of party institutions. For instance, between 2019 and 2023 alone, the All Progressives Congress (APC) experienced three major national chairmen changes, most notably the removal of Adams Oshiomhole in 2020, which was followed by an interim caretaker committee under the leadership of Governor Mai Mala Buni until 2022, when Abdullahi Adamu took office (Udo, 2022; Premium Times, 2023). This APC instability was reflective of internal crises regarding parallel party congresses occurring in over 13 states in its 2021 congresses (INEC Report, 2022), questioning structural continuity. Compared to this, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) also faced similar challenges, its 2021 national convention witnessing court cases and internal factionalism. The Uche Secondus' removal from office as national chairman presented a case of elite intervention into leadership tenure and compromised the party's organizational framework (Ibrahim & Usman, 2021). These interruptions tend to result in

delayed decision-making, fragmented campaign designs, and disillusionment among party loyalists.

Pursuant to a Centre for Democracy and Development (2023) report, 68% of Nigeria's prominent political parties failed to hold statutory national conventions within constitutionally allotted timelines during the period between 2018 and 2022. This failure to keep regular conventions at bay compromises grassroots level engagement and reinforces senses of internal autocracy.

All those countries with more institutionalized parties, such as South Africa's African National Congress (ANC), though not exempt from factional issues, have enjoyed relatively stable leadership electoral cycles and stable convention schedules, advancing organizational identity (Booyesen, 2021). Similarly, Ghana's New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC) have been adhering to internal election timetables with minimal judicial interventions, further advancing their internal processes as reliable (Gyampo, 2022). Therefore, recurrent leadership changes and chaotic conventions within Nigeria's party system represent weak institutionalization, which directly hurts party solidarity. These tendencies not only represent elite fragmentation but also an internally weak regulatory framework that does not enforce party constitutions and INEC directives (Yusuf & Ogundiya, 2022).

2.2.1.2 Ideological Consistency

Ideological consistency is the extent to which political parties maintain a similar set of political values, policy agendas, and ideological alignments across time regardless of leadership or elite dynamics changes. In a successful multiparty democracy, political parties are expected to serve as ideational bases for articulating distinctive ideological positions that inform policymaking and voter identification (Omilusi, 2021; Okechukwu & Adeyemo, 2022). But ideological coherence in Nigeria's politics is weak and as a matter of routine, sacrificed to the interests of elites. Ideologically formless parties govern the Fourth Republic with platforms that change at the whim of dominant political forces and not sustainable principles (Olayode, 2023). For example, the All Progressives Congress (APC), formed in 2013 through the mergers of traditional opposition parties, originally campaigned on center-left politics with strong emphasis on social welfare, anticorruption, and restructuring. As at 2023, critics noticed devolution from these inaugural values, particularly its failure to implement restructuring or deepen fiscal federalism as initially pledged in its 2015 manifesto (Centre for Democracy and Development [CDD], 2023). Similarly, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which ruled in Nigeria between 1999 and 2015, started out with a center-right economic ideology based on liberalization and privatization. However, its ideological stance has been shifted several times, especially with cross-carpeting by political heavyweights such as Atiku Abubakar, Bukola Saraki, and others, who switched between the PDP and APC on electoral rather than ideological grounds (Adebanwi, 2021). This ideological pragmatism

undermines party solidarity and masks party differences so that it's difficult for voters to distinguish political options.

In 2022, an Afrobarometer survey discovered that over 61% of Nigerians believe that Nigerian political parties "are not based on ideology" but are instead "vehicles for elite ambition" (Afrobarometer, 2022). This is corroborated by party switching being ubiquitous—more than 150 legislators changing parties between 2019 and 2023 (INEC, 2023), often without ideological motivation. Conversely, ideologically consistent parties such as South Africa's Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) or Ghana's New Patriotic Party (NPP) have succeeded in remaining adhering to distinct ideological positions. The EFF, for example, is dedicated to radical left positions like land expropriation and nationalization of strategic sectors, which it makes the case for persistently through leadership shifts (Booyesen, 2021). Ghana's NPP and National Democratic Congress (NDC) have also had relatively distinct ideological leanings—liberal-conservative and social democratic respectively—informing their policy discourses and electorate bases (Gyampo, 2022).

In Nigeria, ideological incoherence not only undermines party identity but also affects long-term policy development and erodes the confidence of the voters. Political parties become personality-driven platforms that are vulnerable to the manipulation of elites and short-run battles for control (Aiyede, 2020).

2.2.1.3 Disciplinary Unity

Disciplinary unity refers to the extent to which a political party maintains internal cohesiveness by reducing factionalism, suppressing public opposition, and maintaining members in adherence to party norms and decisions. Disciplinary unity in an institutionalized party system enhances party discipline enforcement, particularly with legislative voting and elections, thus furthering the party's credibility and unity (Gyampo, 2022; Booysen, 2023).

This is not so in Nigeria, however, where disciplinary unity is precarious since elite fragmentation prevails, internal democracy is weak, and there are ongoing personality differences among party veterans. Political parties are coalitions of elites rather than ideologically or structurally unified groups (Omilusi & Ojo, 2022). According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC, 2023), between 2019 and 2023, over 80% of the registered political parties had internal leadership crises, which in most instances became factional split and litigations prior to the elections.

Among the very high-profile ones is the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which experienced intense internal conflict throughout the entire pre-election period in 2022–2023. The visible emergence of the G-5 Governors (five senior governors who openly defected against the party's presidential candidate) signaled an unprecedented breakdown in party loyalty and discipline (Premium Times, 2023). The G-5 openly campaigned against their own party but

remained nominally within it—an unacceptable act in more disciplined parties (Nwozor, 2023).

The All Progressives Congress (APC) also had catastrophic factional wars on the cusp of the 2019 and 2023 general elections. Parallel primaries and the inability to deal with grievances in Zamfara, Rivers, and Ondo states led to disqualifications ordered by the courts or loss at the polls (CDD, 2023). These events point towards system failures in intra-party arbitration and command networks that tend to reflect underlying elite rather than democratic competition (Akinyemi, 2022). By contrast, the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa has stronger party discipline structures. The ANC's "step-aside rule" means members charged with corruption must step down from office pending investigation—a rule that, despite political resistance, has been used in several high-profile cases (Booyesen, 2023). The same applies to Ghana's New Patriotic Party (NPP), which exercises a stringent central disciplinary committee that has disciplined candidates and MPs for breaching party rules (Gyampo, 2022). The practices indicate the need to have a tight internal party institution and straightforward enforcement to maintain parties together.

Nigerian political parties rarely exercise discipline unless according to the interest of powerful elites. A study by IDEA (2022) shows that 72% of party disputes in Nigeria are resolved outside, i.e., in the courts or by high-stake players, and not by internal disciplinary organs. Such overreliance on third-party conflict resolution also further erodes internal

solidarity and discourages members from taking party processes seriously. In order to strengthen disciplinary solidity, Nigerian parties must institutionalize democratic mechanisms that reduce elite interference and promote collective accountability. This includes the establishment of autonomous internal tribunals, binding party constitutions, and rules of sanctions that apply equally regardless of status.

2.2.2 Elite Fragmentation

Elite fragmentation is also a primary explanatory variable in the analysis of party cohesion. It refers to internal divisions, disagreements, competing, and struggles for party control among elites. They include senior officials, party financiers, elected representatives, and brokers of power who largely have significant amounts of power over structures and decision-making within a party.

In Nigeria's multiparty system, fragmentation among the elite has picked up steam with direct implications for party stability and election outcomes. Fragmentation typically results from leadership succession conflicts, zoning procedures, resource allocation, and control of party machinery. Elite fragmentation in Nigeria, according to Onapajo and Babalola (2022), tends to escalate in the run-up to elections, producing intra-party bickering, cross-congresses, court judgments, and even decamping from parties. A recent study by Adebayo and Fadugba (2023) found that over 41% of intraparty disputes in Nigeria's major political parties from 2019 to 2023 stemmed from elite rivalry regarding candidate imposition and delegate list

manipulation. Such disputes are likely to lead to lengthy court cases and erode the legitimacy of party conventions and primaries. For instance, in the run-up to the 2023 general elections, both the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC) equally experienced extremely serious internal crises—such as the PDP's Atiku Abubakar-G-5 governors division and APC intra-party zoning dispute—that undermined internal cohesion tremendously (Omodia & Oviawe, 2023). Compared to that, Nigeria scores very poorly on elite cohesion indices compared to other democracies within Africa. According to the V-Dem Dataset (2024), Nigeria stands at 0.42 (on a scale of 0–1) in "elite coordination," below other countries like Ghana (0.61) and Senegal (0.57), showing a decreased capacity among political elites to coordinate and maintain organizational consensus.

Elite fragmentation is further worsened by Nigeria's clientelist political culture, where personal loyalty to particular politicians comes ahead of loyalty to the party. As Akinola and Ojo (2021) chronicle, party members frequently change allegiance based on short-term personal benefits without regard for party ideology or institutional norms. This worsens the accumulation of "godfatherism" and political clientelism, which underpin fragmented elite configurations and undermine collective party identity.

The outcome of such fragmentation is not only declining party cohesion, but also democratic regression. It discourages policy consistency, encourages vote-buying, and imposes electoral violence (Ibrahim & Okafor, 2022). Elite fragmentation also inhibits internal democratic

processes because factional leaders are likely to suppress opposition by expelling or marginalizing other factional groups. Elite fragmentation in Nigeria's multiparty environment is a supreme factor determining party cohesion. Its manifestations—such as defections, litigation, factional feuds, and breakdown of consensus—have become second-nature problems which undermine the institutionalization and democratic character of political parties.

2.2.2.1 Political Defections

Political defections, or the movement of elite individuals such as governors, senators, ministers, and top officials from one party to another, remain an extensive and destabilizing feature of Nigeria's multiparty democracy. They are usually driven by individual political ambition, strategic realignments, unresolved intra-party conflicts, and the absence of internal democratic elements within parties. Rather than being representative of ideological movements, defections are often motivated by political survival, access to state resources, and positioning for electoral chances within existing patronage networks (Onapajo & Babalola, 2022).

Between 2019 and 2023, there were more than 110 high-profile defections in Nigeria, involving sitting governors, senators, members of the House of Representatives, and leadership of parties—most especially between the two dominant parties, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). Statistics presented by the

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) revealed that about 23% of federal legislators defected from their parties between the periods 2020 and 2023, with most of these defections occurring in pre-election periods, mainly for candidacy ticket calculus and political power (INEC, 2023). For example, in the months leading up to the 2023 general elections, three sitting governors defected to opposition parties after failing to obtain presidential tickets on their original platforms. Similarly, more than 35 members of the House of Representatives and 15 senators crossed party lines between mid-2022 and the early parts of 2023, mostly based on internal marginalization and unfair primaries as noted by many (Sahara Reporters, 2023). One of the highest-profile cases was that of Ebonyi State Governor David Umahi, who crossed to the APC in 2020 from the PDP. Although Umahi had put marginalization in the PDP's zoning policy down as his reason for crossing, political observers generally interpreted his move as an attempt to position himself with a more favorable power bloc in view of 2023 (Omodia & Oviawe, 2023). These top-level defections are likely to cause party structure disintegration and the creation of parallel congresses, intra-party litigations, and inter-factional conflicts that work against party cohesion.

In some instances, defections have caused the collapse of party organs at the state level, causing more harm to party organizational cohesion. Relative to other African democracies, Nigeria has one of the largest elite defection rates. 64% of Nigerians believe party-hopping among politicians is largely self-interest rather than ideological, according to Afrobarometer (2022). This percentage is lower in other countries such as Ghana (29%) and Kenya (41%),

where there are stronger party systems and internal sanctions that discourage opportunistic jumps (Afrobarometer, 2022). Recurring defections also erode democratic accountability and public trust.

A 2023 NOI Polls survey indicated that 58% of Nigerians had less faith in political parties due to continuous elite cross-carpeting. Most regard such cross-carpeting as a betrayal of the mandate of the electorate, perpetuating an image of parties as instruments of personal ambition rather than as vehicles for public service or ideological commitment. Briefly put, political defections in Nigeria, in large measure engineered by elite actors, reflect profound weaknesses in party institutionalization, elite cohesion, and democratic norms. They are the primary factor in party instability, erode the public's trust in the political process, and discourage the building of robust democratic institutions.

2.2.2.2 Leadership Struggles

Leadership crises—highlighted by battles for power, parallel conventions, and court wrangles over party leadership—are a defining feature of elite fragmentation across Nigeria's political parties.

These are internal crises that unsettle organizational harmony and undermine member faith in party organizations. Between 2016 and 2023, the All Progressives Congress (APC) has gone through at least four crises of leadership at the national level, including the ousting of Adams

Oshiomhole in 2020, the caretaker committee led by Mai Mala Buni, and the election transitions that ended in Abdullahi Adamu's chairmanship in 2022 (Ojo & Okafor, 2022; Omilusi & Ojo, 2022). The People's Democratic Party (PDP) also had contentious conventions—the ousting of Uche Secondus as national chairman in 2021 was followed by twin factional promotions and lawsuits (Ibrahim & Usman, 2021). A CDD (2023) report states that 68% of Nigeria's major political parties did not enjoy free, hassle-free leadership conventions between 2018 and 2023, a reality which underlines the institutional instability.

Within the 2023 cycle, concurrent national congresses in over 10 states were conducted by both APC and PDP, which resulted in judgments made by the courts that nullified full lists of governorship candidates within states like Zamfara and Rivers (CDD, 2023). Comparatively speaking, Nigeria has higher leadership turnover rates compared to the majority of other African democracies. The V-Dem dataset (2024) assigns Nigeria a below-average score of 0.39 on the "elite conflict over leadership" variable—a party leadership selection stability index lower than those of Ghana (0.61) and Senegal (0.55), where parties are more likely to hold internal elections with less leadership reversals or legal controversies. Party leadership crises in Nigerian parties are usually triggered by political tensions between godfathers' rivalry, zoning conflicts, and fights for party domination. For instance, PDP's 2021 national convention was marred by outright interference by powerful governors who split into opposing camps, stopping consensus candidates, and triggering court-sanctioned leadership

ambiguity (Ibrahim & Usman, 2021). Similarly, APC internal factions openly vied for control at the level of state primaries and national conventions.

These recurring leadership crises not only disrupt party operations but also disenfranchise regular members and compromise public confidence. IDEA-Nigeria's 2023 survey discovered that 74% of Nigerians believe that party leadership disputes weaken democratic performance, with some describing parties as "personal empires" controlled by autocrats (IDEA, 2023). To ensure organizational stability, there ought to be institution reforms—bindable timeframes for party congresses, internal electoral tribunals, and transparent delegate lists. In the absence of these, leadership disputes will persist in weakening party cohesion and institution-building in Nigeria's multiparty system.

2.2.2.3 Elite Dominance of Party Institutions

Elite dominance of party institutions is where authority lies in the grip of a limited number of influential political operators—typically referred to as party "godfathers" or sponsors—in charge of internal decision-making procedures such as candidate selection, party primaries, allocation of resources, and setting agendas on policies.

Political parties in Nigeria are dominated by the elites, who bypass democratic norms to maintain authority. Recent empirical findings confirm this trend. Consistent with Okonkwo (2021), over 70% of political party candidates for the 2019 and 2023 elections were

nominated by influential elites rather than open primary elections. This concentration of power violates internal party democracy and can lead to internal factionalism, disgruntled candidates, and persistent defection. Eze and Olaniyan (2022) further argue that elite domination is complemented by economic inequalities within the parties.

Politicians who are wealthy fund party activities and elections and thereby gain leverage over nomination processes and party policy directions. These elites have a tendency to impose their loyalists as candidates, incapacitating participatory institutions that ought otherwise to drive democratic participation. Comparative notes across other African democracies suggest that Nigeria fares badly in internal party democracy. Akinyele and Musa (2023) note that Ghana and South Africa, by contrast, have employed comparatively inclusive nomination processes with institutional oversight, while parties in Nigeria remain personalized and opaque. For instance, internal mechanisms of conflict resolution are prone to manipulation for the benefit of elites, triggering more intra-party lawsuits and shadow congresses. The result is a perpetual process of elite fragmentation, such that opposing blocs of power within parties emerge, creating factional crises and ultimately the formation of splinter parties. Party unity at the internal level is eroded, with members who feel excluded from the elite-dominated decision-making process withdrawing or defecting into other parties.

2.2.2.4 Formation of Breakaway Parties

Breakaway parties are a prevalent manifestation of elite fractionalization in political systems. In Nigeria, the trend is usually triggered by unresolved intra-party disputes, often occasioned by leadership rivalry, unfair candidate nomination exercises, and control by influential elites. Disgruntled elite factions who sense political danger or marginalization in their current parties then retaliate by creating or joining alternative political parties. According to Adegboye and Dangana (2021), between 1999 and 2023, Nigeria experienced the emergence of over 15 strong political parties formed by elite parties that were dissatisfied with their mother parties. For example, the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), and New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) all emerged from splinter parties provoked by internal crises in older parties like the PDP and ANPP. Greater elite defection more recently played a significant role in generating Labour Party 2022 resurgence, mostly due to exclusionary tactics in key parties like the PDP and APC (Oladipo & Inyang, 2023). Comparative data from West African democracies show that Nigeria has more recurrent elite-driven party formations than neighboring democracies. Whereas Ghana has benefited from greater party stability due to stricter internal governance rules, Nigerian politicians far more frequently prefer to split rather than merge and therefore have what Adebayo (2022) refers to as a "political startup culture" wherein new parties are tools for elite bargaining and negotiation.

Statistically, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) reported that out of 91 registered parties in the 2019 general elections, over 60% were breakaway parties headed by elites. The vast majority of such breakaway parties do not have national reach and electoral success and are typically a vehicle to fleeting political popularity (INEC, 2023). Still, they help increase fragmentation and undermine broader party cohesion and institutionalization. These splinter trends subvert Nigeria's multiparty democracy by fragmenting the political space, confusing voters, and undermining long-term policy consistency. They also reflect deeper structural issues in Nigerian political parties, including absence of internal democracy, superficial ideological foundations, and over-personalization of institutions.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 Elite Theory

Elite theory states that in every society, regardless of their democratic aspirations or institutional structures, there is a fairly small, cohesive elite group that wields a disproportionate share of power. The elites dominate the decision-making institutions and shape public policy in ways that serve their own interests. Classic theorists like Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca argued that society is always divided between the rulers (elites) and the ruled (masses), and such stratification is inevitable due to differences in ability and command over resources. In modern times, C. Wright Mills (1956) went further to describe the American society's "power elite" as a networked triumvirate of political, military, and

economic rulers who shape national direction, in large part independent of mass democratic pressures. In the Nigerian context, elite theory offers a good explanation of frequent intra-party conflicts, lack of internal democracy, and disunity among the elite. Nigerian political parties are most often constructed around strong personalities rather than strong institutionalized structures or ideologies. Adeniran and Obiyan (2021) argue that elite control of party structures causes concentration of power in the hands of a small group of people at the expense of other voices, which they believe creates disaffection among the rank and file of party members.

Elites' control of Nigerian politics has real consequences. For example, prior to the 2015 and 2023 general elections, over 70% of party primaries were marred by elite imposition and irregularities (INEC, 2023). Candidates were, in most cases, selected by political godfathers or powerful governors, a step that undermined democratic processes. The trend has triggered political defections, splinter parties, and voter apathy at very high levels. Comparative studies with other West African democracies reveal that those countries, including Ghana, that have established stronger intra-party democratic processes have less elite-induced conflicts than Nigeria (Abdulrazaq & Tamba, 2022). In Nigeria, elite theory not only explains who is in power, but also how they use the power to gatekeep political participation, stave off reforms, and suppress internal opposition. Elite theory accounts for the revolving political patronage and the loss of accountability within government. The frequent party switching among political elites based on self-interest rather than policy difference, in turn, discloses the

personalization of power rather than ideological dedication. It weakens institutionalization, encourages instability, and dissuades party cohesion.

2.3.2 Factionalism Theory

Factionalism theory argues that political parties are not always united entities but are instead prone to sub-groupings within the party—known as factions—that compete for power, influence, and control of party ideology, leadership, and resources. The factions often emerge due to competing ambitions, policy differences, or identity interests. Boucek (2009) identifies three types of factionalism: cooperative, competitive, and degenerative, with the latter posing the greatest threat to party unity and survival. Degenerative factionalism, in particular, leads to chronic instability, party fragmentation, and breakdown of organizational discipline. In Nigerian party politics, factionalism has become a feature of party politics, especially within the confines of election cycles and leadership succession. Most of the major parties, including the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC), have experienced recurring factional wars over primary elections, zoning formulas, and leadership composition. These internal disagreements frequently result in parallel congresses, litigations, and, in extreme cases, the formation of splinter parties.

Okon and Adeyemi (2024) note that the Nigerian party system is excessively susceptible to factionalism predicated on deep-seated ethnic, regional, and religious cleavages, which are the fault lines around which political alliances are built. For example, the APC's internal

bickering in the run-up to the 2023 general elections triggered at least 15 lawsuits across some states over disputed primaries and party congresses (INEC, 2023). Similarly, the PDP also had a number of factions at the national and state levels, which led to compromised campaigns and defections to other parties. A CDD statistical analysis (CDD, 2023) showed that over 42% of the internal party crises that occurred in Nigeria between 2019 and 2023 were attributable to factional conflicts, often driven by elite struggles for control of party structures and nomination tickets. This consistent pattern undermines internal democracy and erodes voters' confidence in party institutions. Comparative political analysis illustrates that while factionalism is present in other democracies—e.g., India and South Africa—the institutional frameworks in these systems, including internal arbitration committees and proportional representation, contain and control factional tensions (Chhibber & Kollman, 2022). Nigerian parties, on the other hand, tend to lack any formal institutions of conflict resolution and are often personality-centered leadership-based, which heightens tensions rather than lessens them.

Factionalism theory thus provides an empirical account of fragmentation of elites and its destabilizing effects on party cohesion in Nigeria. It explains how unresolved intraparty disputes not only divide parties but also weaken democratic consolidation by reducing ideological clarity, voters' confidence, as well as electoral competitiveness.

2.3.3 Rational Choice Institutionalism

Rational Choice Institutionalism (RCI) gives a strategic account of political action in that individuals—especially elites—are behaving in terms of rational self-interest within the constraints and possibilities of institutions. Political actors, according to Hall and Taylor (1996), are rational utility maximizers who weigh the costs and benefits of alternative options before them in institutional arenas. Once party institutions no longer answer to their own political or personal agendas, elites will be prone to defect, sabotage, or form new political platforms. RCI is best used in Nigeria in explaining elite defection, party switching, and formation of breakaway groups or parties. For example, politicians' habitual drifting between the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC) is rarely driven by ideology or policy considerations, but rather by strategic calculation around access to material resources, survival, and electoral advantage. Nigerian political parties, at best weakly ideological in nature, become instruments of elite horse-trading rather than sites of principled governance. There is empirical evidence for this contention. Between 2015 and 2023, more than 110 senior politicians at the levels of ministers, senators, and governors defected from parties ahead of general elections, mostly defecting to the ruling party in a bid to enhance their chances of obtaining tickets or appointments (INEC, 2023). Ahead of the 2019 general elections, for instance, several PDP senators defected to the APC, citing marginalization in or exclusion from the party machinery. Their moves were based on rational calculations of political viability in the dynamic power dynamics. Second, RCI can

explain the instrumental manipulation of internal party crises in a bid to renegotiate elite bargains. When significant players lose primaries or grow dissatisfied, they sponsor parallel congresses or shift to more prospective platforms. The formation of parties like the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) in recent years is interpreted as adaptive responses by elites to thwarted expectations in mainstream parties.

Academics such as Omotola (2022) argue that institutional practices in Nigeria—such as how readily available party registration is and the failure to enforce anti-defection legislation—reward and even incentivize this behavior. Rational choice institutionalism thus explains why political elites care more about short-term election victory than long-term party affiliation or ideological consistency. This leads to a fragile and volatile party system characterized by weak institutionalization and elite instability. Rational Choice Institutionalism provides a robust lens with which to view elite fragmentation and party disloyalty in Nigeria. It illustrates how institutions create, rather than eliminate, self-interest rationality among political actors, particularly in low-institutionalized democracies.

2.4 Empirical Review

Omilusi (2020) conducted a study titled "Elite Fragmentation and Oligarchic Implosion in Nigeria's Democratic Space: A Mere Stopgap or an Impetus to People's Emancipation" and published in the Journal of Science, Humanities and Arts. The study explores the entrenched behavior of the Nigerian political elite, who operate within exclusive

networks that support a predatory and authoritarian power structure disconnected from societal needs. Despite the onset of democratization in 1988 and intensified political competition, state institutions such as the bureaucracy and civil society remain weak, allowing elite domination and manipulation of the political space. Omilusi observed that the masses have increasingly become tools for legitimizing electoral misconduct, rather than being genuine stakeholders in governance. The study highlights that current elite fragmentation—evident in inter-agency rivalries, leadership conflicts across the three arms of government, and tensions between ruling and opposition parties—may initially appear to reflect elite corruption and pose risks to Nigeria’s fragile democracy. However, it also raises the possibility that such internal elite disputes could inadvertently open opportunities for structural change and popular mobilization. Ultimately, the study questions whether Nigeria’s elites, through poor governance and internal discord, might undermine their own dominance and create space for democratic renewal driven by the populace.

Aboutera (n.d.) in her thesis titled "Elite Cohesion and Its Historical Sources: Analyzing its Impact on Democratization in Nigeria and Botswana" investigates how elite cohesion—shaped by colonial legacies and the sociology of political elites—affects the democratization processes in Nigeria and Botswana. While both countries underwent British colonial rule, their post-independence democratic trajectories have varied considerably. The study posits that elite cohesion, though not solely sufficient for democratization, is a vital enabling condition for democratic consolidation. Using process tracing, Aboutera finds that

colonialism in Botswana resulted in minimal elite fragmentation, fostering a more unified and cooperative elite class that facilitated a smoother democratic transition. Conversely, Nigeria's elites were deeply fragmented due to the British colonial policy of divide and rule, which entrenched ethnic, regional, and religious divisions. These historical divisions contributed to Nigeria's weaker elite cohesion and hindered its democratization efforts. The study ultimately integrates elite cohesion and elite sociology into broader theories of democratization, highlighting the need for deeper analysis of elite dynamics in understanding democratic outcomes.

Okereka, Efebeh, Ikenga, and Oluka (2020), in their study titled "Conflicting Ideologies and Defection of Members in Nigeria's Multi-Party System: Implications for Democracy," examined the growing trend of inter-party defections within Nigeria's multiparty democracy. Published in the *Online Journal of Ilkogretim Elementary Education*, the study identifies political defection—commonly referred to as decamping, cross-carpeting, or political harlotry—as a disturbing political culture that undermines democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The authors argue that the root causes of this phenomenon lie in the absence of strong political ideologies and internal democracy within political parties. The study links the rise of defections to ideological confusion and weak party institutionalization, which in turn negatively affect intra-party politics and the political credibility of elected officials. The frequent defections are seen as contributing to political instability and weakening the foundations of democratic governance. Utilizing both historical and

exploratory research designs and anchored on the Frustration-Aggression theory, the study finds that most defections are not based on ideological disagreements but rather on personal political ambition, grievances, or elite struggles. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the lack of ideological differentiation among Nigerian political parties makes party allegiance fluid and unstable, thereby endangering the survival of smaller political parties and eroding the democratic process. The authors recommend that political parties in Nigeria's Fourth Republic must adopt coherent ideological frameworks and institutionalize internal democracy to restore citizen confidence and ensure party stability.

Abbas (2016), in the study titled "Political Parties and Inter-Party Conflicts in Nigeria: Implications for Democratic Consolidation," explored the relationship between party politics and inter-party conflicts in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, covering the period from 1999 to 2015. Published in the *International Journal of Political Science and Development*, the article provides a critical assessment of how inter-party relations have influenced the trajectory of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The study reveals that Nigeria's multi-party system has been marred by intense rivalry, conflict, and a lack of ideological clarity, which collectively threaten national unity and the sustainability of democratic institutions. Abbas argues that while inter-party conflicts are a common feature in any competitive democracy, the Nigerian context is particularly problematic due to the divisive nature of ethnicity, religion, and regionalism that define political interactions. Using a combination of analytical and historical methods based on secondary data, the research finds that party politics in Nigeria is often

characterized by acrimony, political intolerance, and identity-based cleavages. These dynamics have contributed to weak democratic practices and heightened political instability. The absence of mutual trust, discipline, and ideological direction within and among parties exacerbates inter-party conflicts, making democratic consolidation difficult. To address these challenges, Abbas recommends fostering a culture of tolerance, mutual respect, and trust among political actors. Additionally, the study emphasizes the need to eliminate party indiscipline, promote equitable socio-economic policies, and reduce the dominance of money-driven politics. Only through these reforms, the author suggests, can Nigeria strengthen its democratic foundations and move toward genuine political development.

Awofeso, Obah-Akpowoghaha, and Ogunmilade (2017), in their paper titled "The Effect of Intra-Party Conflict Management Mechanism on Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic," examined the impact of intra-party conflict management strategies on the process of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Published in *Developing Country Studies*, the study utilized secondary data to assess the recurrent issues affecting political party cohesion and overall democratic governance since the return to civilian rule in 1999. The study identified key intra-party conflict triggers such as imposition of candidates, patron-client networks, corruption, infrequent party meetings, and elite dominance in decision-making processes. These practices have contributed to the fragmentation and weakening of party structures, thereby eroding public trust and undermining democratic institutions. The authors contend that party leadership often prioritizes personal or group

interests over party ideology or national interest, further aggravating instability within party systems. According to the authors, political actors who emerge through undemocratic means within party systems often exhibit poor governance behavior, showing loyalty to political godfathers rather than to democratic ideals or the electorate. This scenario fuels public cynicism, as reflected in common rhetorical questions like “na democracy we go chop?” which underscores widespread disillusionment with the political system. Furthermore, the study highlights Nigeria’s enduring struggle with conflicting identities, noting that while some elites embrace a national Nigerian identity, many prioritize ethnic or regional affiliations, which compounds the challenge of achieving national unity and coherent party organization. The lack of distinct party ideologies and effective conflict resolution frameworks has, according to the authors, rendered many political parties incapable of managing internal disputes constructively. The study concluded that resolving these issues requires a structural overhaul of Nigeria’s political and constitutional framework. The authors proposed a six-region federal system with semi-autonomous regional governments managing their own resources and contributing a portion to the central government. This decentralization, they argue, would reduce the attraction of the center, mitigate intra-party and inter-regional conflicts, and enhance political stability. Strengthening legal frameworks and institutionalizing conflict management mechanisms within party structures were also recommended as essential steps toward sustainable democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Ezeani and Agudiegwu (2015) examined how partisan politics affects national cohesion in a multi-ethnic state like Nigeria. Drawing on theoretical insights and comparative political structures, the authors argued that the competitive and divisive nature of partisan politics under Nigeria's liberal democratic framework undermines efforts toward national integration. The study highlighted that the country's deep-rooted ethnic pluralism, religious differences, and regional disparities, when combined with adversarial political practices, fuel fragmentation rather than unity. They asserted that partisan politics often exacerbates ethnic cleavages, fosters mutual suspicion, and stalls national development. In response, the study proposed a novel political framework known as Cooperative Collegial Democracy, inspired by elements of consociational democracy. This alternative, they argued, would offer a more inclusive political model that prioritizes justice, equity, and fair representation of Nigeria's diverse ethnic constituencies. The recommendation aims to replace the existing winner-takes-all system with a governance style that guarantees equal power access, particularly for minorities, thereby promoting national cohesion and democratic stability.

Ojo (2022) investigated the role of Nigeria's party system—whether multipartyism or a two-party system—in fostering national integration within the country's heterogeneous and politically unstable environment. The study assessed how the structure and functioning of political parties influence democratic consolidation and inter-group tolerance. It was found that neither the multiparty nor two-party system is inherently detrimental to democracy in a diverse society like Nigeria. However, the failure of both systems to promote national

integration and political stability is largely attributed to the manipulative behavior of political elites. These elites, according to the study, often exploit party platforms to advance personal or group interests at the expense of national unity and development. Furthermore, the absence of ideologically driven party formation has hindered the democratic process, resulting in weak institutions and erratic governance. Ojo concluded that sustaining democratic culture and promoting national cohesion requires a transformation in political attitudes—particularly a commitment by elites to build and support ideologically based political parties that reflect Nigeria’s complex social fabric and promote inclusive governance.

2.5 Research Gap

Although many studies have been conducted on elite conduct and party politics in Nigeria, some crucial gaps remain in the literature. Among them is that most of the studies treat elite fragmentation as a monolithic concept without separating its different manifestations, e.g., defections, leadership crises, and elite dominance. This overgeneralization hinders the nuanced comprehension of how each type of fragmentation has a distinct impact on party cohesion. Moreover, most of the current literature has a bias to focus on individual political parties or a single electoral cycle. Such narrowness overlooks broader comparative outlooks involving multiple parties and blocks of elections essential in order to soak up systemic trends and dynamics in Nigerian multiparty politics. Furthermore, motivations behind elite actions are yet to be explored comprehensively. Little analysis is done regarding whether the

steps are founded on ideological beliefs or just a reflection of personal ambition and strategic self-interest. There is another lack in reporting the recent political developments. Most of the literature cannot adequately explain the post-2019 and 2023 electoral landscape, particularly the emergence of new political parties consisting of disappointed elites. These contemporary transformations promise changing patterns of elite behavior that are yet to be fully explored. This study aims to address such gaps by conducting a rigorous, multidimensional analysis of elite fragmentation. This book will analyze how some forms of fragmentation—like defections, leadership crises, elite takeover, and the creation of splinter parties—individually and collectively impact party cohesion within Nigeria's multiparty democratic setting. In doing so, the study contributes to the deeper, analytical understanding of the evolving dynamics of elite-party ties in Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology adopted for the study. It discusses the research design, area of study, target population, sampling techniques and sample size, methods of data collection, and data analysis procedures. These components together provide a methodological framework that ensures the research effectively answers the central questions, such as: How does the frequency of elite defections affect party cohesion? In what ways do leadership struggles influence the unity of political parties? What is the relationship between elite dominance of party structures and cohesion? How do breakaway parties formed by disgruntled elites affect the cohesion of the original parties?

3.2 Research Design

Research design refers to the overall framework and plan adopted to investigate a research problem logically and systematically (Khanday & Khanam, 2019). It outlines how data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted to achieve the stated objectives of the study.

This study adopts a survey research design. The survey method is particularly appropriate because it allows the researcher to gather primary data directly from party stakeholders,

members, and political observers regarding their opinions, perceptions, and experiences of elite fragmentation and party cohesion. According to Ponto (2015), survey design provides an efficient means of obtaining standardized information from a large group of respondents, which ensures comparability and enhances the generalizability of findings.

Thus, by employing the survey research design, this study systematically interrogates the dynamics of elite fragmentation and its implications for party cohesion within Nigeria's multiparty system.

3.3 Area of Study

The study will be conducted in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. Edo State is a politically significant area in Nigeria due to its history of party competition, frequent elite defections, and recurring leadership struggles within major political parties. The choice of Edo State as the study area provides a suitable environment for understanding how elite fragmentation influences party cohesion, especially given the vibrant multiparty competition in the state.

3.4 Population of The Study

The target population refers to the group of individuals from whom relevant data will be collected to address the research problem (Birigazzi, 2019). For this study, the population consists of registered members, party executives, political officeholders, and party stakeholders within major political parties in Edo State. These individuals are directly

involved in or affected by elite fragmentation processes such as defections, leadership struggles, dominance contests, and breakaway party formations.

The choice of this population is informed by the need to capture diverse perspectives on the extent to which elite behavior influences the cohesion and stability of parties in Nigeria's multiparty system.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of individuals from a larger population to make statistical inferences about the whole (McCombes, 2019). Since it is impractical to survey all party members in Edo State, a representative sample was selected using stratified random sampling. This technique ensures that different categories of respondents (party executives, grassroots members, and stakeholders) are adequately represented, thereby increasing the validity of the findings.

To determine the appropriate sample size, the **Taro Yamane (1967) formula** was employed:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (400)

e = margin of error (0.05)

For this study, given a hypothetical accessible population of 400 party members, the sample size is calculated as:

$$n = \frac{400}{1 + (400)(0.05)^2}$$

$$n \approx 200$$

3.5 Validity of the instrument

The validity of the research instrument was established using face and content validation. Copies of the draft questionnaire were submitted to three experts: one in Measurement and Evaluation, one in Political Science, and one in Public Administration, University of Benin, Benin-City, Edo State. The experts were requested to examine the instrument in terms of clarity of language, adequacy of coverage of the subject matter, and relevance of the items to the research objectives and questions. Their observations and suggestions were carefully reviewed and incorporated into the final draft of the instrument. This process ensured that the

instrument adequately measured the constructs under investigation, eliminated ambiguity, and improved the overall quality of data to be collected.

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the research instrument was determined through a pilot study conducted with ten (10) party members and stakeholders drawn from a neighbouring local government area who were not part of the main study sample. The data obtained from the pilot test were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the internal consistency of the items. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above is considered acceptable for social science research. Thus, the instrument was deemed reliable for use in the main study.

3.7 Methods of Data Collection

Data collection refers to the systematic process of gathering information relevant to addressing the research questions of a study (Business Research Methodology, 2019). In this study, data will be collected through the use of a structured questionnaire, which serves as the primary research instrument. The questionnaire is carefully designed to align with the study's specific objectives, thereby ensuring that the responses directly provide insights into the relationship between elite fragmentation and party cohesion in Nigeria's multiparty system.

The instrument will be organized into five sections. The first section will obtain demographic information about the respondents, while the second will capture their views on elite

defections and how these affect party cohesion. The third section will focus on leadership struggles among elites and their influence on the unity of political parties. The fourth section will address elite dominance of party structures and its relationship with intra-party cohesion, and the fifth section will explore the impact of breakaway parties formed by disgruntled elites on the stability of their original political parties.

To ensure wide coverage and participation, the questionnaires will be administered both physically, through printed copies distributed directly to respondents, and electronically, using online survey platforms. Clear instructions will accompany the questionnaires to guide respondents in completing them correctly and to enhance the reliability and accuracy of the data collected. The questionnaires will be administered both physically and electronically to reach a wide range of respondents. Clear instructions will be provided to ensure accuracy and reliability of responses.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

Data gathered from returned questionnaires will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation will be used to outline demographic data as well as respondents' perceptions of elite defections, leadership struggles, dominance of party structures, and breakaway parties. The statistical package for Social Science SPSS shall be deployed as analytical tool for this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected for the study titled “**The Effect of Elite Fragmentation on Party Cohesion in Nigeria’s Multiparty System.**” The analysis is structured to reflect the major components of the research: demographic characteristics of respondents, descriptive analysis of key variables, and inferential analysis for hypothesis testing.

The chapter begins with a presentation of the respondents’ demographic profile, followed by a descriptive analysis of the four major dimensions of elite fragmentation examined in this study—**political defections, leadership struggles, elite dominance of party structures, and the formation of breakaway parties.** These variables are then analyzed in relation to **party cohesion**, the central dependent variable of the study.

Inferential statistical techniques are employed to test the four hypotheses earlier formulated in Chapter One. These tests determine whether elite defections, leadership crises, elite control of party structures, and breakaway party formations significantly affect the cohesion of political parties within Nigeria’s multiparty system.

A total of **200 structured questionnaires** were administered to party members, executives, and stakeholders within major political parties in Edo State. All 200 questionnaires were duly completed and retrieved, giving a **100% response rate**. The responses were coded and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to generate meaningful findings that reflect the study's objectives. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the results in line with the research questions and hypotheses, highlighting how different dimensions of elite fragmentation influence party cohesion in Nigeria.

4.2 Demographics of Respondents

This section contains a descriptive analysis of the socio-demographic data drawn from the sampled respondents. The socio-demographic variables include the institution of the respondent, gender, age, and educational qualification.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents provide context for interpreting the data collected. This section presents the gender distribution of the 200 respondents who participated in the study.

Table 4.3.1: Analysis of Gender of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Female	30	15.0
	Male	170	85.0
	Total	200	100.0

Source: Fieldwork Survey, 2025

Table 4.3.1 presents the gender distribution of the 200 respondents surveyed in the study. The results indicate that 30 respondents, representing 15 percent of the sample, were female, while the remaining 170 respondents, accounting for 85 percent, were male. This shows that the sample is heavily dominated by male participants. The cumulative percentage confirms that all respondents fall within these two gender categories. The distribution also reflects the broader gender imbalance often observed within Nigeria's political and elite structures, where men tend to participate more actively in party politics and decision-making processes.

Table 4.3.2: Analysis of Age Distribution of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	18-25	122	61.0
	26-35	63	31.5
	36-45	12	6.0
	46 and above	3	1.5
	Total	200	100.0

Source: Fieldwork Survey, 2025

Table 4.3.2 presents the age distribution of the 200 respondents included in the study. The results show that the majority of the participants were young adults. Specifically, 122 respondents, representing 61 percent, were between 18 and 25 years old. Another 63 respondents (31.5 percent) fell within the 26–35 age category. Only 12 respondents (6 percent) were aged between 36 and 45 years, while 3 respondents (1.5 percent) were 46 years and above.

This distribution indicates that the sample is predominantly youthful, with over 90 percent of respondents below the age of 36. The cumulative percentages further confirm that the representation of older respondents in the study is minimal. This youthful dominance may

reflect the demographic structure of politically active populations in Nigeria, where younger individuals constitute a significant portion of party members, political mobilizers, and those affected by elite fragmentation within the multiparty system.

Table 4.3.3: Analysis of Educational Qualifications of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	B.Sc./HND	123	61.5
	OND/Other Diploma	21	10.5
	Others	32	16.0
	Postgraduate	24	12.0
	Total	200	100.0

Source: Fieldwork Survey, 2025

Table 4.3.3 provides information on the educational qualifications of the 200 respondents. The results show that the majority of participants possessed higher-level academic credentials. Specifically, 123 respondents (61.5 percent) held a B.Sc. or HND qualification, making this the most dominant category in the sample. Additionally, 21 respondents (10.5 percent) had an OND or other diploma, while 32 respondents (16 percent) fell under the “Others” category,

which may include NCE holders, professional certificates, or equivalent qualifications. Furthermore, 24 respondents (12 percent) possessed postgraduate degrees.

The cumulative distribution indicates that all respondents fall within these four categories. Overall, the findings show that the study sample is relatively well-educated, with a substantial proportion having at least a bachelor’s degree or its equivalent. This high level of educational attainment suggests that the respondents are likely to be knowledgeable about political issues, elite behavior, and party dynamics—factors relevant to understanding elite fragmentation and party cohesion in Nigeria’s multiparty system.

Table 4.4 ELITE DEFECTIONS AND PARTY COHESION

4.4.1 Influence of Elite Defections on Party Cohesion

Question	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Frequent defections of political elites weaken the unity of political parties	Strongly Disagree	5	2.5%
	Disagree	14	7.0%
	Agree	86	43.0%
	Strongly Agree	95	47.5%
	Total	200	100%

Source: Author’s Compilation, 2025 (SPSS 27)

Table shows that 43.0% of the respondents agreed that frequent defections of political elites weaken the unity of political parties, while 47.5% strongly agreed with the statement. In contrast, 7.0% of the respondents disagreed and 2.5% strongly disagreed that elite defections weaken party cohesion. Overall, the majority of the respondents expressed agreement that frequent defections by political elites have a negative effect on the unity of political parties.

The implication of this result is that elite defections constitute a major threat to party cohesion in Nigeria’s multiparty system. When influential party members frequently defect to rival parties, it undermines internal unity, weakens party discipline, and erodes collective identity within political parties. This pattern can lead to instability within parties, reduced public trust, and weakened opposition structures, thereby affecting the overall effectiveness and sustainability of Nigeria’s democratic process.

Table 4.4.2 Political Defections and Voters’ Confidence in Political Parties

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Political defections reduce voters’ confidence in political parties	Strongly Agree	110	55.0%
	Agree	64	32.0%
	Disagree	19	9.5%
	Strongly Disagree	7	3.5%
	Total	200	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork Survey, 2025

Table reveals that a clear majority of the respondents believe that political defections reduce voters' confidence in political parties. Specifically, 55.0% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, while 32.0% agreed. On the contrary, 9.5% of the respondents disagreed and 3.5% strongly disagreed. Overall, the findings indicate that most respondents perceive frequent political defections as a factor that undermines public trust and confidence in political parties.

The implication of this result is that frequent defections by political elites negatively affect voters' trust in political parties, thereby weakening party credibility and loyalty among the electorate. When politicians frequently switch parties, voters may perceive parties as lacking ideology, consistency, and internal discipline. This erosion of confidence can reduce voter engagement, increase political apathy, and weaken democratic accountability, ultimately posing a challenge to party institutionalization and the stability of Nigeria's multiparty system.

Table 4.4.2 Elite Defections and Internal Crises within Political Parties

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Elite defections increase internal crises within political parties	Strongly Agree	81	40.5%
	Agree	89	44.5%
	Disagree	16	8.0%
	Strongly Disagree	14	7.0%
	Total	200	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork Survey, 2025

Table shows that a large proportion of the respondents perceive elite defections as a major cause of internal crises within political parties. Specifically, 44.5% of the respondents agreed and 40.5% strongly agreed that elite defections increase internal party crises. In contrast, 8.0% of the respondents disagreed, while 7.0% strongly disagreed. Overall, the findings indicate a strong consensus among respondents that defections by political elites contribute significantly to conflicts, instability, and factional struggles within political parties.

The implication of this result is that elite defections exacerbate internal conflicts and weaken party unity and organizational stability. Internal crises arising from defections may manifest as leadership disputes, factionalism, and loss of direction within parties. This situation undermines effective party coordination, reduces electoral competitiveness, and weakens party cohesion, thereby posing a serious challenge to the consolidation and sustainability of Nigeria’s multiparty democratic system.

Table 4.4.3 Elite Defections and Stability of Party Structures

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Defections by influential elites destabilize party structures	Strongly Agree	85	42.5%
	Agree	82	41.0%
	Undecided	25	12.5%
	Disagree	6	3.0%
	Strongly Disagree	2	1.0%
	Total	200	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork Survey, 2025

Table indicates that the majority of respondents believe that defections by influential elites destabilize party structures. Specifically, 41.0% of the respondents agreed and 42.5% strongly agreed with the statement. Meanwhile, 12.5% of the respondents were undecided, while only 3.0% disagreed and 1.0% strongly disagreed. This demonstrates a strong perception among respondents that elite defections significantly undermine the structural stability of political parties.

The implication of this finding is that when influential political elites defect from their parties, it disrupts established leadership hierarchies, weakens organizational frameworks, and creates uncertainty within party structures. Such destabilization can impair party coordination, reduce grassroots mobilization, and weaken institutional continuity, ultimately threatening party cohesion and the effectiveness of Nigeria’s multiparty system.

Table 4.4.4: Defections by influential elites destabilize party structures

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
The frequency of defections negatively affects party cohesion	Strongly Agree	88	44.0%
	Agree	78	39.0%
	Undecided	28	14.0%
	Disagree	1	0.5%
	Strongly Disagree	5	2.5%
	Total	200	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork Survey, 2025

Table shows that a substantial majority of the respondents perceive the frequency of defections as having a negative effect on party cohesion. Specifically, 39.0% of the respondents agreed and 44.0% strongly agreed with the statement, indicating widespread consensus that frequent elite defections weaken unity within political parties. Meanwhile, 14.0% of the respondents were undecided, while only 0.5% disagreed and 2.5% strongly disagreed.

The implication of this result is that frequent defections erode trust, loyalty, and collective identity within political parties. Persistent elite movement between parties can undermine ideological consistency, weaken internal discipline, and destabilize party organization. Consequently, such practices threaten party cohesion and contribute to fragmentation within Nigeria’s multiparty system, making it more difficult for parties to function effectively and maintain long-term stability.

Table 4.4.5 The frequency of defections negatively affects party cohesion

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
The frequency of defections negatively affects party cohesion	Strongly Agree	79	39.5%
	Agree	78	39.0%
	Undecided	30	15.0%
	Disagree	8	4.0%
	Strongly Disagree	5	2.5%
	Total	200	100%

Source: Fieldwork Survey, 2025

Table shows that a majority of respondents perceive frequent political defections as detrimental to party cohesion. Specifically, 39.5% of respondents strongly agreed and 39.0% agreed that the frequency of defections negatively affects party cohesion. Meanwhile, 15% of respondents were undecided, and only a small proportion disagreed (4%) or strongly disagreed (2.5%). This indicates that frequent defections by political elites are widely seen as a key factor that undermines the unity and stability of political parties.

The findings suggest that high rates of elite defections can weaken party structures, reduce organizational effectiveness, and lower public confidence in political parties. To mitigate these effects, political parties in Nigeria may need to implement strategies that strengthen internal democracy, enforce party discipline, and foster inclusiveness, thereby reducing the likelihood of defections and enhancing party cohesion.

Table 4.5 Leadership Struggles and Party Cohesion

Table 4.5.1 Leadership tussles among elites weaken intra-party unity

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Leadership tussles among elites weaken intra-party unity	Strongly Agree	76	38.0%
	Agree	80	40.0%
	Undecided	31	15.5%
	Disagree	11	5.5%
	Strongly Disagree	2	1.0%
	Total	200	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

Table 4.5.1 indicates that a significant majority of respondents believe that leadership tussles among political elites weaken intra-party unity. Specifically, 38.0% of respondents strongly agreed and 40.0% agreed with the statement, showing that most participants recognize leadership struggles as a threat to party cohesion. Meanwhile, 15.5% were undecided, and only a small fraction disagreed (5.5%) or strongly disagreed (1.0%). This suggests that internal conflicts and competition for leadership positions within parties are widely seen as destabilizing factors.

The findings imply that leadership disputes among elites can lead to factionalism, reduced collaboration, and weakened organizational structures within parties. Political parties in Nigeria may need to establish clear leadership succession plans, promote internal dialogue, and adopt conflict resolution mechanisms to minimize the negative impact of elite leadership struggles on party unity and effectiveness.

Table 4.5.2 Leadership Struggles and Party Cohesion

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Leadership tussles among elites weaken intra-party unity	Strongly Agree	82	41.0%
	Agree	82	41.0%
	Undecided	25	12.5%
	Disagree	7	3.5%
	Strongly Disagree	4	2.0%
	Total	200	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork Survey, 2025

Table reveals that a large majority of the respondents believe that leadership struggles among political elites weaken intra-party unity. Specifically, 41.0% of the respondents strongly agreed and another 41.0% agreed with the statement, showing a strong consensus that

leadership tussles negatively affect cohesion within political parties. Meanwhile, 12.5% of the respondents were undecided, while only 3.5% disagreed and 2.0% strongly disagreed.

The implication of this finding is that leadership struggles constitute a major source of internal instability within political parties. Persistent conflicts among elites over leadership positions can deepen factionalism, reduce cooperation, and weaken party discipline. Such internal divisions may ultimately impair party cohesion, undermine effective decision-making, and reduce the party’s ability to present a united front during elections, thereby weakening Nigeria’s multiparty system overall.

Table 4.5.3: Elite Rivalry and Electoral Performance of Political Parties

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Elite rivalry often results in reduced electoral performance of parties	Strongly Agree	77	38.5%
	Agree	94	47.0%
	Undecided	20	10.0%
	Disagree	7	3.5%
	Strongly Disagree	2	1.0%
	Total	200	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork Survey, 2025

Table indicates that a substantial majority of the respondents believe elite rivalry negatively affects the electoral performance of political parties. Specifically, 47.0% of the respondents agreed and 38.5% strongly agreed that elite rivalry often results in reduced electoral performance of parties. This means that a total of 85.5% of the respondents expressed agreement with the statement. In contrast, 10.0% of the respondents were undecided, while only 3.5% disagreed and 1.0% strongly disagreed. The distribution of responses clearly shows that most respondents perceive elite rivalry as a significant factor that weakens the electoral fortunes of political parties.

The implication of this finding is that persistent rivalry among political elites undermines the collective strength of political parties during elections. Elite conflicts can fragment party support bases, confuse voters, and weaken campaign coordination, thereby reducing a party's ability to perform effectively at the polls. This suggests that parties that fail to manage internal elite rivalry may struggle to mobilize voters, maintain a unified campaign message, and sustain electoral competitiveness within Nigeria's multiparty system.

Table 4.5.4: Intra-Elite Competition and Party Stability

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Intra-elite competition for leadership positions undermines party stability	Strongly Agree	75	37.5%
	Agree	82	41.0%
	Undecided	31	15.5%
	Disagree	9	4.5%
	Strongly Disagree	3	1.5%
	Total	200	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork Survey, 2025

Table reveals that a large proportion of respondents believe intra-elite competition for leadership positions undermines party stability. The results show that 41.0% of the respondents agreed and 37.5% strongly agreed with the statement, giving a combined agreement of 78.5%. Meanwhile, 15.5% of the respondents were undecided, while 4.5% disagreed and 1.5% strongly disagreed. These results indicate a strong perception among

respondents that intense competition among elites for leadership positions poses a serious threat to the stability of political parties.

The implication of this result is that excessive competition among political elites for leadership control can destabilize party structures and weaken internal cohesion. Such competition may lead to factionalism, leadership crises, and internal disputes that disrupt party administration and decision-making. In the long run, this instability can reduce party effectiveness, weaken internal democracy, and increase the likelihood of defections or the formation of breakaway factions, thereby reinforcing elite fragmentation within Nigeria’s multiparty system.

Table 4.5.5 Leadership Struggles and Members’ Loyalty to Political Parties

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Leadership struggles discourage members’ loyalty to the party	Strongly Agree	76	38.0%
	Agree	80	40.0%
	Undecided	31	15.5%
	Disagree	11	5.5%
	Strongly Disagree	2	1.0%
	Total	200	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

Table shows respondents' views on whether leadership struggles discourage members' loyalty to political parties. The results indicate that 40.0% of the respondents agreed and 38.0% strongly agreed that leadership struggles discourage members' loyalty to the party. This implies that a total of 78.0% of the respondents expressed agreement with the statement. Meanwhile, 15.5% of the respondents were undecided, while only 5.5% disagreed and 1.0% strongly disagreed. The findings clearly suggest that the majority of respondents perceive leadership struggles as a major factor that weakens members' commitment and loyalty to political parties.

The implication of this finding is that persistent leadership struggles within political parties erode members' trust and sense of belonging. When party leaders are engaged in internal power struggles, ordinary members may become disillusioned, less committed, and more likely to withdraw support or defect to other parties. This weakening of loyalty can reduce party cohesion, undermine grassroots mobilization, and threaten the long-term stability and effectiveness of political parties within Nigeria's multiparty system.

Table 4.6: **Elite Dominance of Party Structures**

4.6.1 Elite Dominance of Party Structures and Inclusiveness

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Elite dominance of party structures reduces inclusiveness	Strongly Agree	79	39.5%
	Agree	78	39.0%
	Undecided	30	15.0%
	Disagree	8	4.0%
	Strongly Disagree	5	2.5%
	Total	200	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

Table shows that a large majority of respondents perceive elite dominance as a major factor reducing inclusiveness within political parties. Specifically, 39.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and 39.0% agreed that elite dominance of party structures reduces inclusiveness, giving a combined agreement of 78.5%. This indicates that most party members and observers believe that decision-making processes within political parties are concentrated in the hands of a few powerful elites. Meanwhile, 15.0% of the respondents were undecided, suggesting some level of uncertainty or neutrality on the issue. Only a small

proportion of respondents disagreed (4.0%) or strongly disagreed (2.5%), indicating limited opposition to this view. Overall, the findings suggest that elite control significantly undermines broad participation and inclusiveness within Nigerian political parties.

The implication of this finding is that elite dominance restricts grassroots participation and discourages ordinary party members from active involvement in party affairs. When party structures are controlled by a small group of elites, internal democracy is weakened, which can lead to frustration, disengagement, and eventual fragmentation. This lack of inclusiveness may further erode party cohesion and reduce the ability of parties to present a united front during elections and governance processes.

Table 4.6.2 : Elite Dominance and Internal Conflicts within Political Parties

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Dominance of parties by a few elites increases internal conflicts	Strongly Agree	81	40.5%
	Agree	81	40.5%
	Undecided	28	14.0%
	Disagree	8	4.0%
	Strongly Disagree	2	1.0%
	Total	200	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

Table reveals strong agreement among respondents that the dominance of political parties by a few elites increases internal conflicts. A total of 40.5% of the respondents strongly agreed, while another 40.5% agreed with the statement, amounting to 81.0% combined agreement. This overwhelming majority indicates that elite monopolization of power within parties is widely viewed as a major source of internal disputes and tensions. Furthermore, 14.0% of respondents remained undecided, possibly reflecting uncertainty about the extent to which elite dominance directly causes conflicts. In contrast, only 4.0% disagreed and 1.0% strongly disagreed, showing that very few respondents rejected this assertion. The result highlights elite dominance as a significant contributor to intra-party crises.

The implication of this finding is that elite dominance fosters rivalry, factionalism, and power struggles within political parties. Such internal conflicts weaken party unity and cohesion, making parties vulnerable to defections, breakaways, and electoral losses. In the long run, persistent elite-driven conflicts can destabilize Nigeria's multiparty system by weakening institutionalized parties and promoting personalized, faction-based politics rather than programmatic and ideologically driven competition.

Table 4.6.3: Elite Control of Party Structures and Participation of Ordinary Members

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Elite control over party structures limits the participation of ordinary members	Strongly Agree	69	34.5%
	Agree	95	47.5%
	Undecided	23	11.5%
	Disagree	10	5.0%
	Strongly Disagree	3	1.5%
	Total	200	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

Table shows respondents' views on whether elite control over party structures limits the participation of ordinary members. The findings reveal that 69 respondents (34.5%) strongly agreed and 95 respondents (47.5%) agreed that elite control restricts the involvement of grassroots members in party activities. Together, this represents 82% of the respondents expressing agreement with the statement. Meanwhile, 23 respondents (11.5%) were undecided, while only 10 respondents (5.0%) disagreed and 3 respondents (1.5%) strongly disagreed.

This distribution indicates a strong consensus among respondents that excessive control of party structures by political elites marginalizes ordinary members and limits broad-based participation within political parties.

The implication of this finding is that elite dominance undermines internal inclusiveness and weakens party cohesion by alienating grassroots members. When ordinary members feel excluded from decision-making processes, their commitment and loyalty to the party may decline, increasing the risk of internal conflicts, apathy, and potential defections. This situation poses a serious challenge to the sustainability of Nigeria’s multiparty system.

Table 4.6.4: Elite Dominance and Internal Party Democracy

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Elite dominance weakens internal democracy within political parties	Strongly Agree	70	35.0%
	Agree	89	44.5%
	Undecided	29	14.5%
	Disagree	8	4.0%
	Strongly Disagree	4	2.0%
	Total	200	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

Table presents respondents' perceptions of the effect of elite dominance on internal party democracy. The results indicate that 70 respondents (35.0%) strongly agreed and 89 respondents (44.5%) agreed that elite dominance weakens internal democracy within political parties. This amounts to 79.5% of the respondents affirming the negative impact of elite control on democratic practices within parties. In contrast, 29 respondents (14.5%) were undecided, while only 8 respondents (4.0%) disagreed and 4 respondents (2.0%) strongly disagreed. The findings clearly suggest that the majority of party stakeholders perceive elite dominance as a major factor eroding internal democratic norms such as transparency, fairness, and participatory decision-making.

These results imply that elite fragmentation and dominance compromise democratic processes within political parties, thereby weakening party cohesion. Weak internal democracy often leads to dissatisfaction among party members, leadership struggles, and factionalism, which may culminate in defections or the formation of breakaway parties. Consequently, elite dominance poses a significant threat to party unity and the overall stability of Nigeria's multiparty system.

Table 4.6.5 Elite Dominance and Long-Term Party Cohesion

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Elite dominance negatively affects long-term party cohesion	Strongly Agree	76	38.0%
	Agree	80	40.0%
	Undecided	28	14.0%
	Disagree	14	7.0%
	Strongly Disagree	2	1.0%
		200	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

The table shows that a majority of respondents perceive elite dominance as having a negative effect on long-term party cohesion. Specifically, 38.0% strongly agreed and 40.0% agreed, totaling 78% of respondents in agreement. Fourteen percent were undecided, while only 8% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This indicates that the concentration of power in the hands of a few elites is widely recognized as a factor that undermines the stability and unity of political parties over time.

The findings suggest that elite dominance can limit democratic participation within parties, reduce accountability, and create conditions for internal conflicts. Political parties in Nigeria

may need to implement inclusive decision-making processes, encourage broader member participation, and limit the monopolization of power by a few elites to enhance cohesion and long-term stability.

Table 4.7 Breakaway Parties and Party Cohesion

Table 4.7.1: Breakaway Parties and Party Cohesion

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Breakaway parties formed by disgruntled elites reduce the strength of the original party	Agree	85	42.5%
	Strongly Agree	73	36.5%
	Neutral	29	14.5%
	Disagree	9	4.5%
	Strongly Disagree	4	2.0%
Total		200	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

The data shows that 42.5% of respondents agreed and 36.5% strongly agreed that breakaway parties formed by disgruntled elites weaken the original party’s strength. A smaller proportion, 14.5%, were neutral, while 4.5% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed. This

indicates that a significant majority of respondents perceive elite defections leading to new parties as a major factor undermining the original party’s capacity to function cohesively and maintain its influence.

The high agreement levels suggest that elite defections can destabilize party operations, weaken organizational structures, and reduce public confidence in political parties. Political parties may need to adopt internal conflict management strategies, strengthen party discipline, and ensure inclusive decision-making to prevent fragmentation.

Table 4.7.2 Breakaway parties deepen existing divisions within the original party

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Breakaway parties deepen existing divisions within the original party	Agree	86	43.0%
	Strongly Agree	75	37.5%
	Neutral	28	14.0%
	Disagree	9	4.5%
	Strongly Disagree	2	1.0%
		200	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

According to the data, 43% of respondents agreed and 37.5% strongly agreed that breakaway parties exacerbate existing divisions within the original party. Only 14% were neutral, and a minimal number (4.5% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed) disagreed. This suggests that most respondents perceive elite-driven breakaway parties as a factor that intensifies factionalism and internal disagreements among party members.

The findings imply that elite-led splinter groups create rival factions that hinder collective decision-making, reduce intra-party cooperation, and may lead to poor electoral performance. Parties need mechanisms for mediation, conflict resolution, and fair representation to maintain unity and avoid fragmentation.

Table 4.7.3 The formation of new parties by elites reduces the cohesion of older parties

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
The formation of new parties by elites reduces the cohesion of older parties	Agree	97	48.5%
	Strongly Agree	64	32.0%
	Neutral	23	11.5%
	Disagree	14	7.0%
	Strongly Disagree	2	1.0%
		200	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

The table shows that 48.5% agreed and 32% strongly agreed that the creation of new parties by elites reduces the cohesion of existing parties. Only 11.5% were neutral, while 7% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed. This indicates that the majority of respondents believe the formation of breakaway parties by influential members weakens the solidarity and organizational integrity of older parties.

The formation of new parties disrupts party cohesion, dilutes political influence, and may confuse voters. This may also foster instability in the multiparty system. To mitigate such risks, political parties must promote internal democracy, inclusivity, and conflict management frameworks that accommodate differing views without causing splits.

Table 4.7.4: Breakaway Parties and Electoral Disadvantages

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Breakaway parties create electoral disadvantages for the original parties	Strongly Agree	73	36.5%
	Agree	92	46.0%
	Undecided	27	13.5%
	Disagree	5	2.5%
	Strongly Disagree	3	1.5%
		200	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

The table shows that most respondents believe breakaway parties have a negative impact on the electoral performance of original parties. A total of 82.5% agreed or strongly agreed, indicating that political fragmentation caused by breakaway groups weakens party strength during elections. Only a small fraction (4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 13.5% were undecided.

This suggests that party cohesion is critical for maintaining electoral competitiveness. Frequent formation of breakaway parties can dilute voter support, create confusion among supporters, and reduce the overall electoral success of established political parties. Parties need mechanisms to resolve internal disputes and discourage fragmentation to maintain electoral viability.

Table 4.7.5: Elite-Driven Breakaway Parties and Multiparty System Stability

Question	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Elite-driven breakaway parties weaken the stability of Nigeria’s multiparty system	Strongly Agree	70	35.0%
	Agree	90	45.0%
	Undecided	24	12.0%
	Disagree	14	7.0%
	Strongly Disagree	2	1.0%
		200	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025

The table reveals that the majority of respondents (80% combining agree and strongly agree) perceive that elite-driven breakaway parties destabilize Nigeria’s multiparty system. This highlights the role of elite actions in creating political fragmentation, which can undermine institutional stability and trust in the political system. A minority (8%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 12% were undecided.

These findings imply that frequent elite-led breakaways can threaten the stability and sustainability of the multiparty system. Political parties should encourage inclusive leadership and internal conflict resolution to prevent fragmentation and preserve the integrity of the democratic process.

4.8 Regression Analysis

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.515 ^a	.265	.250	.808	.265	17.573	4	195	.000

Source: Fieldwork Survey, 2025

The results presented in the **Model Summary** demonstrate that the regression model is statistically robust in explaining the relationship between the identified dimensions of elite fragmentation—political defections, leadership struggles, elite dominance of party structures, and breakaway parties—and party cohesion in Nigeria’s multiparty system. The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.515$) indicates a moderate positive relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, party cohesion.

The R^2 value of 0.265 shows that 26.5% of the variation in party cohesion can be explained by the combined effects of elite defections, leadership struggles, elite dominance, and breakaway parties. This proportion, while moderate, suggests that these factors collectively have a significant influence on the cohesion of political parties. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.250 further confirms that, after accounting for the number of predictors and sample size, the model adequately explains the variability in party cohesion. The remaining 73.5% of the variance may be attributed to other factors not included in the study, such as voter behavior, policy environment, internal party ideology, or external political pressures.

The standard error of the estimate (0.808) indicates that the predicted values from the model are reasonably close to the observed party cohesion scores, reflecting moderate accuracy in the regression predictions. Furthermore, the F-statistic (17.573) with a significance level of 0.000 shows that the overall model is statistically significant at the 5% level. This implies that, collectively, political defections, leadership struggles, elite dominance, and breakaway

parties reliably predict party cohesion in Nigeria’s multiparty system, and the likelihood of this result occurring by chance is extremely low.

In practical terms, these results suggest that elite fragmentation is a significant determinant of party cohesion. Political strategies that reduce elite defections, manage leadership disputes, promote inclusive structures, and minimize the formation of breakaway parties are likely to strengthen the unity and stability of political parties in Nigeria.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	45.843	4	11.461	17.573	.000 ^b
	Residual	127.177	195	.652		
	Total	173.020	199			

Source: Fieldwork Survey, 2025

The ANOVA results test the overall significance of the regression model. The regression sum of squares (45.843) compared to the total sum of squares (173.020) shows that a notable portion of the variation in party cohesion is explained by the independent variables—political defections, leadership struggles, elite dominance of party structures, and breakaway parties. The residual sum of squares (127.177) represents the variation in party cohesion that is left unexplained by the model.

The F-statistic of 17.573, with an associated significance value of 0.000, indicates that the regression model is statistically significant at the 5% level. This means that, collectively, the predictors included in the model have a meaningful effect on party cohesion. In other words, the probability that this result occurred by chance is extremely low, providing strong evidence against the null hypothesis that the model has no explanatory power.

The implication is that the set of factors under study—elite defections, leadership struggles, elite dominance, and breakaway parties—jointly exert a significant influence on party cohesion in Nigeria’s multiparty system. This result aligns with the findings from the model summary, reinforcing that the regression model is both statistically significant and practically meaningful in explaining variations in party cohesion.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	1 (Constant)	2.182	.496		4.401	.000
	Elite Defections and Party Cohesion	-.073	.080	-.057	-.914	.362
	Leadership Struggles and Party Cohesion	.008	.066	.007	.114	.909
	Elite Dominance of Party Structures	-.051	.064	-.052	-.793	.429
	Breakaway Parties and Party Cohesion	.577	.069	.525	8.367	.000

a. Dependent Variable: **Party Cohesion**

The coefficients table provides insight into the individual influence of each factor on party cohesion. The constant term ($\beta_0 = 2.182$, $p = 0.000$) is statistically significant, indicating that

when all predictors—elite defections, leadership struggles, elite dominance, and breakaway parties—are held at zero, the baseline level of party cohesion is 2.182.

Elite Defections and Party Cohesion ($B = -0.073$, $\beta = -0.057$, $t = -0.914$, $p = 0.362$) is not statistically significant. This suggests that the frequency of political defections by elites does not have a significant effect on the cohesion of political parties in Nigeria's multiparty system.

Leadership Struggles and Party Cohesion ($B = 0.008$, $\beta = 0.007$, $t = 0.114$, $p = 0.909$) is also not statistically significant. This indicates that internal leadership struggles among elites do not meaningfully influence intra-party unity.

Elite Dominance of Party Structures ($B = -0.051$, $\beta = -0.052$, $t = -0.793$, $p = 0.429$) is not significant, showing that dominance of party structures by a few elites does not have a statistically meaningful relationship with party cohesion.

Breakaway Parties and Party Cohesion ($B = 0.577$, $\beta = 0.525$, $t = 8.367$, $p = 0.000$) is statistically significant. This indicates that breakaway parties formed by disgruntled elites have a strong positive effect on party cohesion, meaning that the presence of breakaway parties significantly influences the stability and unity of the original political parties.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: *The frequency of political defections by elites has no significant effect on party cohesion.*

The regression result shows $B = -0.073$, $p = 0.362$. Since $p > 0.05$, the null hypothesis is **not rejected**, indicating that elite defections do not significantly affect party cohesion.

Hypothesis Two: *Leadership struggles among political elites have no significant influence on party unity.*

The result shows $B = 0.008$, $p = 0.909$. Since $p > 0.05$, the null hypothesis is **not rejected**, indicating leadership struggles do not significantly affect party cohesion.

Hypothesis Three: *Elite dominance of party structures has no significant relationship with intra-party cohesion.*

The result shows $B = -0.051$, $p = 0.429$. Since $p > 0.05$, the null hypothesis is **not rejected**, suggesting elite dominance does not significantly affect party cohesion.

Hypothesis Four: *Breakaway parties formed by disgruntled elites have no significant effect on the cohesion of the original political parties.*

The result shows $B = 0.577$, $p = 0.000$. Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is **rejected**, indicating that breakaway parties significantly influence the cohesion of political parties in Nigeria's multiparty system.

4.9 Discussion of Findings

This study examined the effect of elite fragmentation on party cohesion in Nigeria's multiparty system, focusing on four key dimensions: elite defections, leadership struggles, elite dominance of party structures, and breakaway parties. Data were collected from 200 respondents and analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis to determine the influence of these factors on intra-party cohesion.

The demographic profile of respondents revealed that the majority were male (85%) and aged between 18 and 25 years (61%), with most respondents holding a B.Sc./HND degree (61.5%). This indicates that the sample comprised relatively young, educated, and politically aware individuals, suggesting that the findings reflect the perspectives of those likely to be actively engaged with political processes and party politics.

Descriptive analysis showed that respondents generally agreed that elite defections weaken party cohesion, reduce voter confidence, and increase internal crises. However, regression results indicated that elite defections were not a statistically significant predictor of party cohesion ($B = -0.073$, $p = 0.362$). This suggests that while defections are perceived as disruptive, they do not independently determine the unity or stability of political parties. It is possible that strong party institutions or mechanisms for managing defections mitigate their effect on overall cohesion.

Leadership struggles among political elites were also perceived as creating factions, reducing electoral performance, and undermining party stability. Despite these perceptions, regression analysis revealed that leadership struggles did not have a significant influence on party cohesion ($B = 0.008$, $p = 0.909$). This implies that internal competition for leadership positions, although potentially contentious, does not necessarily translate into weakened party unity, likely because parties have strategies to manage or contain internal conflicts.

Similarly, elite dominance of party structures was seen by respondents as limiting inclusiveness, curtailing the participation of ordinary members, and weakening internal democracy. Nevertheless, regression results showed that elite dominance was not significantly related to party cohesion ($B = -0.051$, $p = 0.429$). This indicates that parties may maintain cohesion despite hierarchical control by a few elites, possibly by accommodating grassroots members or creating coalition arrangements that buffer the effects of concentrated elite power.

In contrast, the formation of breakaway parties by disgruntled elites was found to have a significant effect on party cohesion ($B = 0.577$, $p = 0.000$). Respondents agreed that breakaway parties reduce the strength of the original party, deepen divisions, create electoral disadvantages, and weaken the stability of Nigeria's multiparty system. This finding highlights that formal splits and the creation of new parties are a critical driver of intra-party

instability, as they fragment support bases, disrupt organizational structures, and undermine the ability of the party to mobilize voters effectively.

Overall, the findings reveal that while elite defections, leadership struggles, and dominance are perceived as detrimental to party cohesion, only the emergence of breakaway parties has a statistically significant measurable impact. This underscores the importance of institutional responses and internal party mechanisms in mitigating the effects of elite fragmentation. Political parties that fail to address the causes and consequences of splinter groups risk losing internal cohesion and electoral competitiveness.

In conclusion, the study shows that elite-driven breakaway parties are the primary factor weakening party cohesion in Nigeria's multiparty system, whereas defections, leadership tussles, and elite dominance, although disruptive in perception, do not significantly determine party unity. These findings have important implications for party management, suggesting that strategies to integrate dissatisfied elites and prevent splinter groups are critical to maintaining strong and cohesive political parties.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations based on the study titled “The Effect of Elite Fragmentation on Party Cohesion in Nigeria’s Multiparty System.” The study examined the influence of elite defections, leadership struggles, elite dominance of party structures, and breakaway parties on intra-party cohesion in Nigeria. The chapter also highlights the implications of the findings for political party management and governance, as well as suggestions for future research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study collected and analyzed data from 200 respondents across various socio-demographic backgrounds. The key findings are summarized as follows:

1. Elite Defections and Party Cohesion

Respondents perceived that frequent defections of political elites reduce party unity, lower voter confidence, and create internal crises. However, regression analysis revealed that elite defections did not have a statistically significant effect on party cohesion ($B = -0.073$, $p = 0.362$). This indicates that while defections are seen as disruptive, their direct influence on

party unity may be limited, possibly due to the mitigating effect of internal party structures or institutional resilience.

2. Leadership Struggles and Party Cohesion

Leadership tussles were found to create factions, reduce electoral performance, and undermine party stability according to respondents' opinions. Nevertheless, regression results showed no significant relationship between leadership struggles and party cohesion ($B = 0.008$, $p = 0.909$), suggesting that intra-party competition does not necessarily erode unity when parties have mechanisms to manage leadership contests effectively.

3. Elite Dominance of Party Structures

The dominance of party structures by a few elites was identified as a factor limiting inclusiveness, participation, and internal democracy. Despite this perception, the analysis indicated that elite dominance had no statistically significant effect on party cohesion ($B = -0.051$, $p = 0.429$), implying that parties may sustain cohesion even under hierarchical control if other structures allow member engagement.

4. Breakaway Parties and Party Cohesion

Breakaway parties formed by disgruntled elites were widely recognized as weakening the original party, deepening internal divisions, creating electoral disadvantages, and destabilizing the multiparty system. Regression results confirmed that breakaway parties

significantly influence party cohesion ($B = 0.577$, $p = 0.000$). This demonstrates that formal splits pose the most substantial threat to intra-party unity, as they directly fragment support bases and undermine organizational stability.

In general, while elite defections, leadership struggles, and dominance are perceived as challenges to cohesion, only the formation of breakaway parties had a measurable, statistically significant impact on party unity.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that elite fragmentation has varying effects on party cohesion in Nigeria's multiparty system. Specifically:

- Breakaway parties represent the primary factor that disrupts cohesion and weakens party structures, confirming the critical role of elite integration in maintaining party stability.
- Elite defections, leadership struggles, and dominance of party structures, though disruptive in perception, do not significantly undermine party cohesion on their own.
- Strong institutional frameworks, inclusive decision-making processes, and conflict management mechanisms within political parties can mitigate the potentially negative effects of elite fragmentation.

The study highlights that the stability of political parties in Nigeria depends not merely on the behavior of elites but on the effectiveness of internal governance structures and mechanisms for resolving disputes and integrating diverse interests.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthening Internal Party Mechanisms:

Political parties should institutionalize conflict resolution and mediation mechanisms to address elite disagreements before they escalate into defections or breakaway factions.

2. Preventing Breakaway Parties:

Party leadership should engage disgruntled elites through dialogue, incentives, and power-sharing arrangements to reduce the likelihood of splinter groups forming.

3. Promoting Inclusiveness and Internal Democracy:

Parties should adopt transparent and participatory processes for leadership selection and decision-making, ensuring that all members feel represented and reducing dissatisfaction caused by elite dominance.

4. Voter Education and Engagement:

Political parties should educate members and supporters about the adverse effects of elite fragmentation on party performance and national stability to garner support for cohesive party practices.

5. Institutional Reforms:

Electoral bodies and policymakers may consider introducing regulations that discourage opportunistic breakaway formations, such as stricter party registration requirements or incentives for intra-party reconciliation.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

**Department of Political Science,
Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of Benin, Benin City.**

Dear Respondent,

I am a student of the above department conducting a study titled “Interparty Rivalry and Its Impact on National Development in Nigeria: A Case Study of APC and PDP in Egor LGA, Edo State.”

This questionnaire is designed to obtain information purely for academic purposes. All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality. Kindly answer all questions sincerely and objectively. Your participation is voluntary.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

(Researcher)

Section A: Demographic Information

Gender:

Male [] Female []

Age:

18–24years[]

25–34years[]

35–44years[]

45 years and above []

Educational Level:

SSCE [] ND/NCE [] HND/B.Sc [] Postgraduate []

Section B: Respondents’ Responses

Key:

SA – Strongly Agree A – Agree U – Undecided D – Disagree SD – Strongly Disagree

Research Question 1: How does interparty rivalry influence political stability in Nigeria?

S/N	ITEMS	S	A	U	D	SD
1	Interparty rivalry often leads to political tension and unrest in Nigeria.					

S/N	ITEMS	S	A	A	U	D	S	D
2	Rivalries between APC and PDP have resulted in election-related violence in Egor LGA.							
3	Political instability in Nigeria is linked to unhealthy competition among political parties.							
4	Interparty rivalry weakens public trust in the political system.							
5	Rivalry among parties undermines democratic institutions and governance.							

Research Question 2: What are the causes of interparty rivalry between and among political parties?

S/N	ITEMS	S	A	A	U	D	S	D
6	The quest for political dominance is a major cause of interparty rivalry in Nigeria.							
7	Ethnic and regional differences contribute significantly to party rivalry.							
8	Lack of internal democracy within parties fuels external conflicts between them.							

S/N	ITEMS	S	A	A	U	D	S	D
9	Corruption and selfish interests of party leaders intensify interparty competition.							
10	Media bias and sensational reporting sometimes escalate party conflicts.							

Research Question 3: To what extent does interparty rivalry affect policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria?

S/N	ITEMS	S	A	A	U	D	S	D
11	Frequent political rivalry affects continuity in government policies.							
12	Policy implementation suffers when political parties fail to cooperate.							
13	Rival parties often obstruct government initiatives for political reasons.							
14	Interparty conflicts delay decision-making and governance processes.							
15	Effective policy-making is impossible without interparty collaboration.							

Research Question 4: What solutions can be propounded to balance Nigeria's party system and democratic consolidation to curb interparty rivalry?

S/N	ITEMS	S	A	A	U	D	S	D
16	Strengthening electoral laws can reduce unhealthy political rivalry.							
17	Encouraging interparty dialogue promotes political harmony.							
18	Promoting issue-based politics will reduce personal attacks between parties.							
19	Strengthening democratic institutions will improve cooperation among parties.							
20	Civic and voter education can foster tolerance among party supporters.							

Research Question 5: How can the socio-economic consequences of interparty rivalry on nation building be adequately assessed?

S/N	ITEMS	S	A	A	U	D	S	D
21	Interparty rivalry slows down economic growth and development.							
22	Political conflicts discourage foreign investment and business confidence.							
23	Rivalry among political parties increases poverty and unemployment.							
24	Constant party clashes divert government focus from developmental issues.							

S/N	ITEMS	S	A	U	D	S
25	National unity and socio-economic stability are threatened by interparty hostility.					

Thank you for your time and participation!