Volume 21 Issue 35
Originally issued as F4



Global Journal of human-social science: F
Political Science
Volume 21 Issue 4 Version 1.0 Year 2021
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Rethinking Prebendialism in Nigeria's Socio-Political Process: The Implication for Democratisation of South- South Region

By Dr. Harrison Otuekong Ataide & Dr. Martins Tom Enebong
Public Administration Obong University

Abstract- This study examines Godfathers' impacts in the Nigerian socio-political process and the implication on the nascent democracy in the South-South Region. The design was exploratory, and the study was descriptive, combining secondary data from books and the internet. The study uncovered that godfathers were patron-occupying state offices as "pre-bends." They became the "gate-keeper"; determines the development initiative to be followed, and employed benefactors of privileges. This study's findings also indicated that the state's character and the natures of politics in Nigeria had impacted negative values, which now threatens the very foundation of the country's blossoming democracy, leading to unhealthy rivalry and competition among godfathers to have control over state powers using their favoured political godsons and denies the electorates of their right to elect a generally acceptable candidate. This act renders no free and fair elections. Also, the struggle for control of state powers has resulted in electoral violence in Nigeria, either before, or during, or after elections.

Keywords: politics, godfatherism, democracy, democratic governance.

GJHSS-F Classification: FOR Code: 360199



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



© 2021. Dr. Harrison Otuekong Ataide & Dr. Martins Tom Enebong. This research/review article is distributed under the terms of the Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). You must give appropriate credit to authors and reference this article if parts of the article are reproduced in any manner. Applicable licensing terms are at https://creative commons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/.

Rethinking Prebendialism in Nigeria's Socio-Political Process: The Implication for Democratisation of South- South Region

Dr. Harrison Otuekong Ataide [α] & Dr. Martins Tom Enebong [σ]

Abstract- This study examines Godfathers' impacts in the Nigerian socio-political process and the implication on the nascent democracy in the South-South Region. The design was exploratory, and the study was descriptive, combining secondary data from books and the internet. The study uncovered that godfathers were patron-occupying state offices as "pre-bends." They became the "gate-keeper"; determines the development initiative to be followed, and employed benefactors of privileges. This study's findings also indicated that the state's character and the natures of politics in Nigeria had impacted negative values, which now threatens the very foundation of the country's blossoming democracy, leading to unhealthy rivalry and competition among godfathers to have control over state powers using their favoured political godsons and denies the electorates of their right to elect a generally acceptable candidate. This act renders no free and fair elections. Also, the struggle for control of state powers has resulted in electoral violence in Nigeria, either before, or during, or after elections. The candid view of this study that godfatherism, as practised in Nigeria, is a potential threat to the sustenance of democracy. The study suggested attitudinal change and positive perception of politics by these groups of people.

Keywords: politics, godfatherism, democracy, democratic governance.

I. Introduction

With the advent of the independent and democratisation process, Nigerian states were crippled and bedevilled by multiple problems such as leadership problems, low institutional quality or poor economic performance, unconstitutional change of government, political violence, etcetera. The state's low quality or performance is because of godfatherism, among others (Kopecky, 2011). The marvel of godfatherism has become a plague in the body politics of Nigeria. With the attainment of political independence, Nigeria's democracy has remained grossly unstable since the country returned to democratic rule in 1999, politics becomes personalised, and patronage becomes essential to maintain power.

Author α: Ph.D in Political Science/Public Administration, FNIM Faculty of Social and Management Sciences Department of Political Science/ Public Administration Obong University. Akwa Ibom State.
e-mail: wasanim2006@yahoo.com
Author σ: Ph.D in Political Science/Public Administration. Faculty of Social and Management Sciences Department of Political Science/ Public Administration Obong University, Akwa Ibom State.

Godfatherism and regionalism politics has featured obviously in Nigeria's independent political history. Godfatherism has its poking glitches numerous, and it is one of the most significant glitches facing the Nigerian political system. The problem is that the godson is a stooge to the father*ism as the adage goes that he pays the piper dictates the tune* (Edigin, 2010:174). The godson's failure to meet the godfather's demands is meted with punitive measures to the extent of denial of re- election. Godfatherism's politics, which has affected the socio-economic country's socio-economic and political development heightened in 1999 politics.

In their study, Ohio & Ojo (2016:11) disclosed that democracy in Nigeria had not been fully established, as godfatherism has endangered the democratic process and the socio-economic lives of the citizenry. Godfathers is a condition in the Nigerian political process influencing against the democratic establishment, intending to satisfy their selfish interest. They manipulate the democratic system and its operational mode by overpowering public officeholders. A good example is power control exercised by the governor and council chairman, making their subordinates dance to their tone. These political fighters' activities have deprived the people of voting for their ideal applicants as their leaders. They have not led to a corresponding flourishing of fundamental liberal values that are critical to the survival of democracy; it has brought about the transmogrification of authoritarianism, pushing democratic consolidation in Nigeria to the background as a result of godfatherism, which negates peaceful coexistence, law and order, and all tenets of the democratic process by obstructing candidate selection and even executive assortment as the government is installed; which has also directly affected the political arrangement and the national economy of the nation.

The politics of godfatherism is not a new phenomenon in the political movements of Nigeria. However, since the return to democratic rule, the country witnessed a heightened tempo in godfatherism's politics that reduced government legitimacy and voided the citizens' electoral value. According to Oke (2011:36), godfatherism has come to assume a dangerous dimension due to politics' monetisation. Godfatherism is one of the foremost dangers of modern democracy, and ironically, it only survives with government support

© 2021 Global Journals

bringing an unresponsive leadership". Ohiole, and Ojo (2016:11) averred that democracy in Nigeria is not fully established. The principle of godfatherism has endangered democratic process and the socio-economic lives of the citizens".

Godfathers in Nigeria are encouraged by their resolution to regulate public policies in favour of their concerns. For instance, the primary objective of political godfathers is nothing order than grasping control of the treasury of a state. The godfatherism in Nigerian politics is primarily concerned with appropriating government contracts, political/public appointments, and plundering the state's coffers. These godfathers are in an advantaged position to decide the political fate and confidence of candidates aspiring to hold political offices. As such, those that are not only seen but confirmed to be loyal are not given a ticket to be the flag bearer of the party. This action ensures that the godsons will be answerable to them when elected into power. Some contenders defect to other parties because of these conditions where they do not have such influential figures that exacerbate them from their political aspiration (Okolie, 2006:171).

From the preceding expression, it is crystal clear that democracy is a kind of competition among the state's elites for state political control of power in Nigeria as a disaster of democracy which is traced to the political elite's failure as a class. Since 1954, there has been a fusion of the elite such that the political elite also institutes both the economic and social elite. To be sure, the emergent political elite since 1954 has dominated the political territory to the exclusion of new candidates. The old elite has to control the political passage. Where they are not opposing political positions, they desire to constitute themselves as the power behind the curtain, thereby leading to the phenomenon of 'godfatherism (Uadiale, 2012:94).

The phenomenon of godfatherism became a permanent feature in Nigerian politics and has assumed the quest by those that hold the pedals of power to have those they can manipulate to succeed them may have been responsible for the phenomenon. Nigerian politicians like to perpetuate themselves in office and, as a result, prefer to have their surrogates take overpower. Most of these surrogates surrendered their bodies and souls and made themselves helpful tools to serve their godfathers' ambition. Since politics have become a sure path to quick, ill-gotten wealth, many falls for it. When the surrogates begin to assert their independence, the after-effects of the power struggle become ant-productive to governance.

The worst of this is the impact of godfatherism on the willing young legions of youths ready to lay down their lives to sustain the place of godfathers in politics, business, and arcane environments such as Churches, mosques, Lodges, traditional institutions, and the likes, to have access to the pie. The godfather phenomenon is so profoundly seethed in the country that all sorts of schemes, spiritual and arcane enactments are required to keep acolytes, godsons, political associates, friends, and loafers in line. Today, there are cultural groups, interstate associations, and national bodies with massive budgets that fund the godfather enterprise, which burgeons, pillage, and lay the foundation for depleting state and nationwide resources, resulting in the country's slide into a failed state.

Perhaps, to situate the godfatherism phenomenon in the country, we must turn the hand of the clock to 2003-2007 during the Obasanjo administration. After serving two terms, he brought in a successor he thought he could influence. Hence, this perhaps introduced a bizarre and treacherous tradition that has been duplicated, replicated, and improved by acolytes to hold the country in a firm grip of terror, impoverishment, underdevelopment, which has destroyed the political system. That decision to choose someone that he could influence almost tore the country apart. Luckily, the doctrine of necessity was adopted, leading to Dr. Goodluck Jonathan's enthronement as President.

President Mohammadu Buhari himself is a product of many godfathers that pull him from all sides, leaving him confused in managing his economy and governance. It is disappointing that no lesson has been learned from Godfatherism's negative effect on the polity. Even after the man who sought to perpetuate himself in office saw his acolytes rebelled against him and went separate ways. Instead, the field of godfatherism has become widened and emboldened by power mongers to include kidnapping, thuggery, election malpractices, and indescribable vices in high places.

In the South-South, politics, like many other zones, has borne the brunt of godfatherism in politics in such a manner that the key players became a threat to the same people they were elected to govern. For instance, in Akwa Ibom state, the altercation between Governor Udom Emmanuel and his erstwhile godfather, Senator Godswill Akpabio, caused shocks in the state's politics almost plunged the state into violence 2019 polls. Matters came to a lull when Akpabio left for the All Progressives Congress (APC) for greener pasture.

In the Bayelsa state, godfatherism's influence, and attendant negative effect is inestimable. An emerging political culture was in the offering in the early days of the State, but Godfatherism influence from within and outside, in collaboration with godsons circumvented the political growth. Protest votes against Senator Douyi Diri, the candidate Governor Henry Dickson allegedly imposed on the People's Democratic Party (PDP), resulted in Chief David Lyon's victory, Timipre Sylva's surrogate in the polls only for the Supreme Court to overturn it in favour of the PDP. In Edo state, the fight against godfatherism's strong hands has

© 2021 Global Journals

been the albatross pushing the state's development backward. For a time, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), having godfatherism as a culture in the state, was taught how not to force an unpopular candidate on the people in an election lost to APC. Nevertheless, the APC did not learn that lesson either, as recent political development in the state indicates. The APC government of Mr. Godwin Obiasike decamped to the PDP due to a godfather who became wild in a desperate effort to replace a godson that fell out of favour.

Rivers state is the playground of godfathers, head or tail. The hegemonic battles of godfathers in the state are akin to medieval Europe, wherein Kings and Queens fought among themselves for spoils and Lords and Princes fought for sports. Their wars have left the state divided in its ethnic composition, fragmented politically, socially, and economically; because the godfathers and their godsons are engaged in a battle of self-annihilation. Nothing can assuage them, and nothing can reconcile them. The trend is unarguably the same in Cross River and Delta states.

The implication is that the South-South zone is perpetually subjected to unnecessary political battles rubbing negatively on good governance. The political infighting within the states in the precinct has destabilized, any organised political structures in place. The South-South communities are loose and fragile with Republican tradition, devoid of a solid historical and centralised authority. Therefore, the region is open to all sorts of influences, the good, the bad, and the ugly, are capable of being deployed to other uses.

The Nigerian Nationalist leaders and some Nigerian federalism builders, Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Ahmadu Bello, who become godfathers after independence, were lionised, respected, worshipped, and idolised (Fawole, 2001). While people tried to exaggerate their impacts, and their persons looks more ordinary.

Chukwuma (2008) remarked that the godfather settles to dictate 'who gets what, when, and how in distributing scarce resources after the elections have been contested and won. Therefore, godfathers' role goes beyond the votes; and gets pretty robust and more evident. A political godfather has the abilities and capabilities to manipulate the electoral process favouring his chosen godson.

Applying this concept in Nigeria has resulted in democratic failures and disasters, being a denial of electing credible candidates and the imposition of mediocre into political and appointed positions. The most important experience received was pains, poverty, misery, poor service delivery, squalor, poor service performance, and delivery among all godsons. The whole scenario focuses on as been the promotion of political follow-follow mentality and the empowerment of disempowerment.

The competition between members of the political class accounts for most of the election-related violence in Nigeria. Furthermore, the competition for power becomes intensified as politics is a "do-or-die" affair by the political class. Also, the godfathers' domineering role in the country's politics underwrites the weakness and susceptibility of the political assemblies and establishments in Nigeria.

These weak and vulnerable political structures and institutions lack the willpower to enhance and encourage democracy in Nigeria. These weaknesses and vulnerabilities are responsible for fragile and weak democracy and the absence of socio-political development in the South-South region. Therefore, the study's main thrust is to examine the phenomenon of "godfatherism" and its impacts on Nigerian body politics, particularly the socio-political process in the South-South democratisation Zone.

II. Review of Related Literature

Godfatherism in Nigeria is a growing concern for scholarly literature on the concept. The literature on godfatherism portrays varied views and opinions. Nevertheless, a general socio-political perspective attempts an incisive definition of the term (Williams, 2004). He stated that godfatherism is seen as a practice that entails the sustenance of political and social relationships in which the subordinate looks onto the superior for the propagation and fulfilment of positive roles, desires, and interactions which binds both together or in which both have an equal stake but with the boss determining what the subordinate gets in the process.

a) Conceptual Framework

Like any other terminology employed by social scientists, this concept of godfatherism is a jargon that is not easily defined. Some related concepts of godfather and godson need some explanation. The godfather is a kingmaker, mentor, boss, and principal. He is someone who has built unimaginable respect and followers (voters) in the community and possessed a well-organised political platform and general acceptance from the electorate that could secure victory for candidates of his choice" (4:269).

Godfatherism is an association formed between a superior and a subordinate, where the person in charge has some level of influence on the subordinate due to the boss status. In another dimension, godfatherism implies a mutual relationship between individuals to determine which one is superior and the other being a subordinate who relies wholly on his principal partner for favours to attain his life goals. In politics, godfatherism portrays a power-based relationship. For instance, Ukhun (2004) emphasises that the implicit feature of godfatherism is power. He stated that "…power is the determinant or fundamental

© 2021 Global Journals

feature of godfatherism and the power could be economic, political, and spiritual, voodoo etcetera" (Ukhun, 2004).

Dickson (2006) also noted that the philosophy of godfather is grounded in the sociology of traditional Igbo society. He further showed evidence of a prevalent relationship between the superior called 'Nnam-ukwu' (my master) and the subordinate called 'Odibo' (the servant) in the Igbo tradition. It is also a situation in which the younger person is taken care of by a more mature and experienced person for economic, social, and moral maturity. Therefore, the role played by the man in this kind of relationship is akin to that of a godfather. Thus, the triple cases showcase above show those persons of lesser social status attach themselves to another person of higher social integrity, usually for economic benefits. However, this practice is not alien to Nigeria but is strange in replicating this practice into our political system.

The politics of godfathers was to 'anoint' a godson to win an election through the godfather's influence, using his wealth, political structure, and political experience of the godfather. Olawawa observed that the politics of godfather has far- reaching adverse effects on the democratisation process in Nigeria than elsewhere. This argument is still probable today. Godfathers in this context are said to be influential individuals in the society who determines 'who, what, when, and how power is exercised. Many godfathers in present-day Nigeria operate like mafia by displaying violent scheming and aggressive 'politicking,' coupled with manipulating devices to have their way by any means. Their philosophy relies on Machiavelli's slogan, 'the ends justify the means. Their reign crisscrossed all spheres of the society: academics, legal, political and religious environment. On the other hand, Godson referred to the beneficiary and recipient of the legacy of a godfather.

Several academic scholars have defined the term godfatherism according to their perception and understanding of the idea. Abioye (2007), cited in Eke and Osaghae, stated that godfatherism is "a term used in describing the relationship that exists between a godfather and a chosen godson; being a kind of politics whereby an influential person in a ruling party will assist someone, usually a godson, to emerge as the party's candidate at all cost, whether by hook or crook. The godfather will assist his godson in emerging victorious in the election whether he is a popular candidate or not. Scott (1972) stated that godfatherism is a special case of dyadic (two persons) who are largely instrumental friendship so that an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron or godfather) uses his influence, position, and resources to provide security, protection, and benefits for a person of lower status (client or godson) to win, and who for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services to the patron or godfather". Olawale (2005) noted that present-day godfatherism is a primordial tradition taken to a criminal extent. However, Ajayi observed that godfatherism thrives across the globe. There is hardly any state devoid of godfathers' existence and influence, but the level of such impact differs from place to place. In America, the political candidates wiggle around, seeks group and individual endorsements for their candidacy. In some other advanced societies, group influence and confirmation could be more valuable than a powerful individual could. The fact remains that a prominent member of society still influences the social order in their voting pattern; notwithstanding, the features of patron-client politics remain constant; with a disparity in power-sharing, existing in the context of face-to-face personal relationship, incorporating a wide range of socio-political and economic forms of exchange, displaying kickbacks, and considering cost-benefit theory availability of vote-giver and vote-accepter. The godfather and godson relationship is not free- floating but rather contractual, written and, spiritually sealed with an oath in a 'shrine' in Nigeria or elsewhere.

Onubi (2002) noted that democracy means "rule by the people" thus, it is a government of the people and the people. Therefore, it is the majority government. Agbaje (1999) stated that democracy is an idea, process (series of events leading to change or course of action) of the government system.

Democracy is a way of life of a people making free choices of what one does, where to live, and how he uses his earnings; the operation of the institutions, be it the home, the church, local, state, and federal government; leveraging on the right of justified property ownership; having equality of opportunity social justice and fairness; absence of social and class barriers, and the solution of mutual glitches through the exercise of the permitted will of the people.

Democracy, just like godfatherism, is a concept that is not amenable to definitional unanimity, more so as there exist several versions of it. Common among the types are the Athenian classical democracy, Marxists-Leninist democracy, Liberal democracy, and lately, Radical democratic conception, to mention a few. Democratic discussion is in controversies, ideally is true democracy, given scholars' divergence of views on the concept and practice of democracy. For the sake of this study, however, we are concerned with liberal democracy, otherwise known as representative democracy and how the politics of godfatherism in Nigeria impede it.

Democracy is discussed in a liberal perspective as a form of government of a popular representation; or a form of government wherein supreme power is with the people, who indirectly exercised authority through a system of representation and delegated authority periodically, being a representative constitutional

© 2021 Global Journals

government". Therefore, democracy is a government of the people, exercised by the people and for the people. This kind is a liberal democracy with some universal values of a free press, openness, transparency of government, accountability, equity, respect for the rule of law and constitutionalism, inclusiveness, participatory, consensus-orientation, efficient service delivery, and effectiveness. Thus, the concept of democracy in Nigeria has been misconstrued with the mere civil rule because the practice has not witnessed freedom of choice, constituted authority, respect for the rule of law, sagacity, and service delivery.

El-Rufai (2003), cited in Eke and Osaghae, noted that Liberal democracy's general concern is to provide the framework for the aggregation of the long-term interest of the majority in channelling public resources in the pursuit of that interest.

However, where the custodians of Liberal democracy are corrupt in their aggregate interests, which exists and persists, then the chances of development targets are missed, and the 'Hobessian' society would eventually emerge. Therefore, societies that have adhered to minimum liberal democratic principles have raised their living standards to a guaranteed level by observing and complying with simple rules, including private sector-led growth, investment promotion, macro-economic stability, and fiscal discipline deregulation of financial markets, and anti-corruption measures. Eventually, these become a stable and predictable judicial system and internal security.

Democracy aims to promote a sound and egalitarian society using an integrated effort by the masses towards a better society (Ademolokun, 2000). Admittedly, the principle of democracy is the only mechanism through which the interest, well-being, rights, and lives of the citizenry are unquestionably protected and guaranteed (Attah Amana et al., 2009). Democracy as a form of government started in ancient Greece (Athens) (Mbachu, 1990). Although the constitution guarantees freedom to form and hold an opinion, the Nigerian situation is such that the competitors for power have taken control of an issue beyond their competence. They are making personal profits out of it at the expense of corporate existence, economic revival, and nation-state integration. In this vein, other factors such as political and economic equality, fraternal feelings are key issues for a successful working of the democratic system. In other words, a democratic government should not only be responsible or acceptable to the "demos"-people or the masses-but indeed, political power itself and its expression should emanate from the popular will.

Fundamentally, democracy is a set of institutions that fulfil two essential requirements:

(a) Elicit the accurate judgment of countless people as to who should represent them, and how the country has to be governed. This type of democracy means minimum universal suffrage, political parties, and the organisation of new voting in fair elections at relatively frequent intervals; and
(b) To ensure that those selected by the community do what the voters wants them to do or else be replaced if they do otherwise; which means that the process of governance in a democratic rule is fundamentally a dialogue between the leaders and the led.

However, Sergent (1975) saw democracy as:

(a) Citizens involvement in political decision making;
(b) There exists some degree of equality among citizens;
(c) Citizens retention of some degree of liberty, and freedom;
(d) A system of representation; and
(e) An electoral system of majority rule.

Therefore, democracy entrenches and expands, or seeks to entrench and expand, the citizens' rights, ability, and capacity in a given society. It is always the best form of government whereby people elect their leaders in society. That is, the people exercise their governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by them. It, therefore, means that democracy provides institutions for the expression and the supremacy of the people or popular will on key issues bordering on social and policymaking. Democracy is concerned with freedom, but it is not freedom to be irresponsible.

Ademolokun (2000) aims to enhance a sound and egalitarian society through the masses' integrated effort towards a better society. Despite the differences in conceptualisation and of democracy and its practices, Ojo (2006) noted that all versions of democracy (liberal or capitalist, socialist and African brand) share the fundamental objectives of "how to govern the society and that power is in the hands of the people.

In a similar dimension, Chafe (1994) argues that democracy means that the people are involved in running their political, socio-economic, and cultural affairs. Perhaps the most basic idea in a democracy is that people are equal and have an equal right to lend a voice to say who rules and how. Therefore, real political authority comes from the people, and administration is legal only when the ruled consent.

The citizens' well-being largely depends on the extent to which the democratic institution is sustained and strengthened. Bonnie and Khinde (2007) said, because of good governance, selfless leaders and mutual trust between the leaders and led could be guaranteed if the citizens solely engineer choice of who should govern the society at any given time on one hand and a steady and sustained democratic machinery on the other hand. Though, every nation has embraced the principle of democracy because it is the only

© 2021 Global Journals

mechanism through which the interest, well-being, rights, and lives of the citizenry could be unquestionably protected and guaranteed.

b) Theoretical Framework

It is a universal spectacle in management and social sciences to investigate facts within a theory and not in a secluded method. Theoretical orientation exists basically in bridging all the proofs to investigation (Goode and Hatt, 1952). In an empirical or hypothetical study, it is necessary to develop a sound theory explaining the wise concepts and relationships of variables in a study. The most essentiality of theoretical insight in a study is also pigeon-hold in the fact that social science research is theory-based, and its operations are guided by relevant principles of human behaviour (Goode and Hatt, 1952).

This study adopts the elite theory in examining the overbearing influence of godfatherism on Nigerian nascent democratic experiences. Vilfredo Pareto developed the concept in 1935. The theory supposes that power rotates among the elites at the masses' expense. Pareto (1935) argued that the political elites always insulate and isolate themselves from their social order and, by so doing, can reproduce themselves from within the same order. They do not allow non-elites to join their membership. They, therefore, maintain a safe, functional distance from the rest of the people. They reproduce themselves on either an individual and selective basis in the same process, referred to as the "circulation of elites." Their yardstick for elite recruitment is often parochial, and the process is a manner that does not interfere with the traditional order of the dominant elite class. Pareto (2006) went further to argue that the predominant group often frustrates all efforts at a collective circulation of elites and would relatively support individual recruitment.

However, Mosca (1939) disagrees with Pareto that elite recruitment is only possible individually. Pareto believed in the possibility of one social class replacing another and posited that a non-elite member could join the elite class through 'collective social mobility; which refers to the status that people attain because of their social, economic, and professional efforts. Mosca (1939) also believes that there are already many societies are 'sub-elite. These people facilitate communication between the elite and the non-elite and are potential tools for relatively large-scale elite recruitment. This argument makes it possible for both sub- elite and non-elite to become recruited into Nigeria's elite political class. The elite theory sees elites as players governing the state and national resources and occupying key positions related to power networks (28). Thus, the elite class's perception is more carefully connected to "the Weberian knowledge of power, understood as the competence of executing one's will, even against the will of the general populous" (29:696). Godfatherism serves as a medium for such selective elite recruitment in Nigeria. The resultant effects of the above in Nigeria polity are under-development, abject poverty, acute youth unemployment, poor health prospects, and misinterpretation of politics.

The elite theory's relevance to this study is its ability to justify how godfatherism's politics facilitate people's transition into the elite political class. Liberalism in Nigeria promotes radical elitist democracy and a money-inspired electioneering system, leaving the masses as 'onlookers' and denying Nigerians the much-needed institutional, socio-economic, and political advancement (4). The elite theory is very much concerned with structures, especially authority structures. It is the assumption that elite class action has a causal effect on the relationship between the state and society since the elites have greater influence/control than the masses. According to Mosca (1939), the elite theory points to the concentration of power in the hands of a minority group that 'perform all political functions, monopolise power, and enjoy the advantages that power brings.' Thus, public policy is the value and preferences of governing elites. The Nigerian polity represents a situation where the welfare of the citizenry is wholly mortgaged for the interests of a few politicians with their mentors (godfathers). Therefore, the voters are penurious, and the crooked rich-godfathers are enriching themselves the more.

III. Effect of Godfatherism on Nigeria's Democratic Consolidation

The emergence of godfatherism in Nigeria posed a serious threat to democratic dividends and good governance's socio-economic development and stability. One of the most disturbing and damaging influences in the Nigerian fourth republic godfatherism was the campaigning for a really free, fair, and credible electoral process. The electorates as its right elects who governs them and represent their interests freely.

Chukwuemeka (2012) stated that the privilege associated with electing people of their choice to govern them are denied when godfathers foisted candidates of their preference and imposed such on the generality of the people, which is unwholesome to the tenets of democratic rule.

When public officers are unaccountable to the people, who voted them into public office, invariably, the loyalty of such public officer tilted towards their godfathers; which action negates one of the critical characteristics of governance and democracy. This scenario is inimical to good administration and political stability, due process, transparency, accountability, and predicated the rule of law, in public affairs management. Godfatherism has robbed the citizens of the honour of enjoying the dividends of democracy because the government has become reluctant to initiate and

© 2021 Global Journals

implement policies that would advance the well-being of the citizens' generality, and this was as a result of the fact that godfatherism in Nigeria was predatory. The primary motive of volunteering into politics was to acquire wealth (money) from the resources of government to which their godsons held sway (Chukwumeka, 2012).

Consequently, the financial resource accruable to the state from the federation account, was for the betterment of the citizens' living standards, and was of paramount interest.

In case godsons refuses to settle their godfathers as agreed, hell will let loose. We draw instances from the case of Alhaji Olusola Saraki and Rtd Navy Commodore Mohammed Lawal between 2003–2007; Senator RashidiLadoja of Oyo State and Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu between 2003 and 2007; Chief Chris Uba and Dr 209 Chris Ngige between 2003–2006; and from Abakaliki Local Government Area, Ebonyi State, between Hon. Emma Uguru and Mr. Matthew Uguru, the Chairman from 2007–2011, whose stories were awful and devastating (Joseph, Ibeogu & Nwankwo, 2014).

The endpoint and consequences of these (godfatherism) in our polity are that of deterioration in economic activities of the Education sector, the Agricultural and health sectors, housing and security challenges leading to political wrangling, and blockade of infrastructural development etcetera.

IV. Impacts of Godfatherism on Nigerian Politics

The role of the political godfather in Nigerian politics has also worsened the socio-economic conditions of Nigerians. The phenomenon has bred political corruption, widens the gap between the rich and poor, and increased Nigeria's unemployment. Again, a wide range of political literature asserts that socio-economic conditions such as poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion, inequality in income and wealth, and erratic economic growth are a potential threat to democracy. Corruption, poverty and lack of development were some of the reasons cited by the military government of General Mohammadu Buhari 1984-1985 when they overthrow the civilian administration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari 1979-1983.

i. Godfatherism is the co-operating association and tendencies of both the godfather and the godson in looting and siphoning resources met for the state's development into their private pockets.
ii. Godfatherism has led to placing people in various governmental positions who do not have the necessary leadership qualities to bring about good governance and development. The godfather sits at home, setting the pace of development and influencing government decisions on who gets what, when, and how.
iii. Another major problem of godfatherism is developing self and his immediate family members, abandoning the voters, the constituencies, and the nation. Hence, the electorates being coerced to work and sacrifice towards achieving the godfather's ultimate interest.
iv. Many of our jobless youths are into godfatherism's activities, and commits acts of political violence and thuggery through promises of employment or other forms of illegal government patronage that never come to reality at last.
v. Godfatherism in all standards over the years has resulted in the subjugation of qualified voters through brutes. It has always contributed to the final resolution of most of our public policies, thereby stimulating the idea of "one citizen having a single vote."
vi. Godfatherism has nearly thrived in repudiating Nigerian citizens the chance to shape the decisions that concern them. It has splintered our blossoming democratic ideas and philosophies, and the ordinary electorates with their votes to give rather than money reducing them to incapability.
vii. Godfatherism in Nigerian politics and management regulates all elections and who contest, wins, and get nominated to positions of authority or appointed to diplomatic offices.

Godfatherism has also resulted in our national importance turning to favour their interest, making the National Assembly less archetypal and less receptive to the citizens' groanings.

Nigeria today has the worst unemployment problem, deplorable roads, transportation problems, miserable infrastructures, medical services, educational system and standards, epileptic power outage, and the average Nigerian living standard does not reflect the oil wealth of the nation. All these results from godfathers' activities collaborating with their godsons to siphoned resources met the country's overall infrastructural development.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

a) *Conclusions*

A preponderance of political literature views asserts a correlation between godfatherism and the survival of democracy (Aurrel, 2005). Aurel (2005), for example, observed that godfather is the greatest threat to democracy in developing countries. The high-profile assassinations, arsons, and clashes between and within a political party, kidnappings, violence in rallies, campaign grounds, thuggery, and rigging of elections are signs of the pitiable and friable condition of Nigeria's democracy. These activities often perpetrated by thugs of godfathers to create a sense of insecurity among the electorates and limit the political space. The apparent outcome is the low turn-out of voters (political 'apathy) and

© 2021 Global Journals

the withdrawal of honest, sincere, and credible individuals from the political scene. Perhaps, this explains why we now have mediocre political leaders.

This paper has revealed that the politics of godfatherism impedes Nigeria's nascent democracy. It has gained prominence and assumed a dominant feature of electoral politics and governance in the country. Consequently, it encourages corruption, breeds acute unemployment, electoral malpractices, abject poverty, and political instability. The patron-client relationship modelled a prodigious threat to good governance and the socio-economic and political development and stabilityof democratic domination.

One of the most disturbing and damaging influences of godfatherism in Nigeria was in the sphere of creating none sincerely free, fair, and credible electoral process in which the electorates has the right to electing representative candidates of their choice into public offices.

At present, both the godfather and the godson see politics from this perspective, which informed why the godfather is willing to invest his capital and influence. It was necessary to adopt uncivilised methods to get his godson to control state resources that enable him to accumulate wealth even to the detriment of society. In this same vein, the godson also accepts his stooge status as he sees his position as a means for self-aggrandisement239. This perception of politics is detrimental to the growth and development of democracy and society at large.

Closely linked to the above is the power of the state. The state in the third world wields too much economic and political power, which explains the intense struggle by members of the political class with the sole purpose of controlling the state for personal benefits.

b) Recommendations

From this point of consensus, there is a need for steps to address the problem. Given this, the paper recommends as follows:

i. There should be rules governing Nigerian politics, and politicians should obey them. Nigerians have the right to enjoy the dividends of democracy, and the federal government has a positive role to play in the realisation of set goals.
ii. Laws banning godfatherism in Nigeria's politics be enacted.
iii. This study posits that there is a need for the redefinition of our value system. There is the need for everyone to change one's perception of politics as a shortcut to personal wealth.
iv. Nigeria needs a purposeful leadership that has a vision of how to place its citizens at the centre of the political project without recourse to the patron- client relationship and sees the attainment of political power not just for acquiring sake but as a means to serve the interest of its people irrespective of their ethnic origin.
v. The politics of godfatherism should be discouraged, and our democratic institution should evade the politics of godfatherism of central government policies and programmes.
vi. There should be rules governing Nigerian politics, and politicians should obey them. Nigerians have the right to enjoy the dividends of democracy, and the federal government has constructive roles to play in safeguarding the realisation of this goal.
vii. The Federal Government should create sustainable jobs. Thus, the only panacea for democracy in Nigeria is massive economic and infrastructure development, justice, equity, and fair play in line with federalism's tenets.

References Références Referencias

1. Adeoye, O.A, (2009). "Godfatherism and the future of Nigerian Democracy" in *African Journal of Political Science and International Relation*, 3(6) http://www.academic journal.org/AJSIR, 268-272
2. Agba, M. S., Achimugu, H., Chukwurah, D. C. J and Agboni, U. J. (2012). Reward System in the Nigerian Political and Public Sector: The Call for a Paradigm Shift in the 21st Century. International Journal of Learning & Development, 2(5): 77-85
3. Albert, Isaac Olawale, (2005). "Explaining 'godfatherism in Nigerian Politics' in African Sociological Review, 9(2), Published by CODESRIA, 79-105
4. Albert, Isaac Olawale. (2007). "The 2003 Gubernatorial Campaign Advertorial" in Albert, I.O and Marco, D. Animus and Apologia: Campaign Advertorial and the Gamble for Power in the 2003 and 2007 Elections in Nigeria. Ibadan: Stirling Horden Ltd, 41-58
5. Aurel, C. (2006). Political Violence, Terrorism, and Transformation to Democracy and Market Economy: Findings of the Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2006. *Journal of Strategic Insight,* 4 (12), 142-150
6. Agbaje, A. (1999). *Political Parties and Pressure Group*. Ikeja: Malthouse Press Ltd.
7. Ajayi, F (2014). Nigerian Political Godfatherism in the World of Baale Molete. *Retrieved on 6th August 2018 from www.nigeriaworld.com downloaded on the 7th February*.
8. Chukwuma, O. (2008). Political Godfatherism in Nigeria: Benevolent or Malevolent Factors. *International Journal of Social and Policy Issues*, 5(2), 86-93.
9. Chibuzo, O., (2006). "Godfatherism" in Nigerian politics. "Ozodi Osuji weekly lectures of African countries #5 of 54: Burkina Faso".
10. Chukwuemeka, E. and Nzewi, H. N. (2011). An empirical study of World Bank Agricultural

© 2021 Global Journals

Development Programme in Nigeria. *American Journal of Social and Management Sciences* 2(1): 176-187

11. Edigin, L. U. (2010). Political conflicts and godfatherism in Nigeria: a focus on the fourth republic. *An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal*, Ethiopia, 4(17), 174-186. https://doi.org/10.1002/aic.11132.
12. Fawole, A. (2001). Godfatherism: Menace to Democracy. *Journal of Policy & Administration*. 10(6): 113–128
13. Goode, W. and Hatt. P. (1952). Methods in Social Research, Singapore, McGraw Hill Block Company Inc.
14. Joseph O. Ibeogu A. & Nwankwo O. (2014). Political Godfatherism and Governance in a Developing Democracy: Insight from Nigeria. *Academic Journal of interdisciplinary studies 3(4): 137-243.*
15. Ohiole, K., & Ojo, S. (2016). Political Godfatherism and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: Empirical Evidence from Oyo State and Kwara State. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review,* 5(8), 1-12.
16. Okolie, A. M. (2006). Prebendal Politics and Democratic Practices in Nigeria, 1999- 2004. ANSU. *Journal of Politics and Administration,* 1(1).
17. Olawale, A. I. (2005) Explaining Godfatherism in Nigeria Politics, Ibadan: African Sociological Review, 9(2) 79-105.
18. Ojo EO (2006). "Voting Buying in Nigeria" in *Money, Politics and Corruption in Nigeria* in IFES "Nigeria Election Support 2007" programme, Abuja, pp. 105- 123.
19. Onubi, A. (2002). Godfatherism in Nigerian Politics: Essence. *International Journal of Social and Policy* 2(2): 120-132
20. Pareto, V. (1935). The Mind and Society. London: Jonathan Cape Limited.
21. Scott, J.C., (1972). Patron-client politics and political change in Southeast Asia*. American Political Science Review*, 66, 92-102.
22. Ukhun, E.C. (2004). Godfatherism, The Scourge of Democracy in Nigeria. Essence *Interdisciplinary International Journal,* 1.
23. Williams, I. (2004). Citizenship Godfatherism and Democracy: *International Journal of Philosophy.* 1, 1.

© 2021 Global Journals