### GODFATHERISM AND POLITICAL CONFLICT IN NIGERIA: AN OPINION SURVEY OF VOTERS

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ABSTRACT

*Godfatherism has become an attribute in modern day Nigerian politics which could either foster democratic stability or retard democratic progress.This study hopes to bring to a clearer understanding, the nature and prevailing characteristics of godfather/godson relationship, the dimension it has assumed in recent times and how it has shaped and influenced the adult citizenry in the country. In order to achieve this objective, secondary data was applied to get a concrete information on the damaging dimension that godfatherism has taken. The problems were observed and it shows that there is high degree of political apathyism among the Nigerian people who fell that their vote does not count. Even those with political interest, now conclude that it is who the godfather wants that actually gets into office. This has gradually affected political participation.From the study, it is recommended that the evil of godfatherism need to be greatly tackled by all and sundry, particularly, the government, and civil society in order to ensure adequate political participation by Nigerians.*

CHAPTER ONE

1.1    INTRODUCTION

          The human race will never see the end of troubles until political power is entrusted to the lover of wisdom “Plato Republic”. My first approach to the challenge of this topic, is that we have no choice but to seed to return to the basic context in which Nigerians see the godfather or the conflicts as a segment of the political process as well as the figure, standing against the intellectual extrapolations originating in, and also sustained by, the media.

        Politics as a concept when considered against its definition by David Easton, could be said to have been in existence as early as any grouping or organization of people which is formal or sometimes when informal. The Eastonian definition posits that politics is the “authoritative allocation of scare values”. This definition could also be viewed from the point of struggle for the political power will to authoritatively allocates these values through the point of influencing the decisions of who gets what, when and how and finally climaxing at the contestation for the voice of veto on the implementation of the decisions taken.

        However, from the above brief overview of the concept of politics would reveal some key factors, the values of resources available to be shared amongst members of the scarce and cannot sufficiently satisfy the needs of every member of the group. This is why there is need for an authority which will decide on the allocation of these scarce resources supposedly in accordance with priority of importance. Another factor to be printed out is that since the decision of ‘what’ anyone would get from the system resides at the points of who makes up the authority of allocation, there is therefore clashes and disagreements at these decisions points.

        If the two above factors are aggregated, it would become clear that the political process is one that can be figuratively termed, WAR. And if all these conflicts cannot be amicably resolved by way of resolutions, then the system is at a point of crisis.

        The trend of ‘political godfatherism’ which in turn is derived from the maker or sustainers of an aspect of reality, a people to whom great importance is attached. We can then see that there is a relationship between godfather and god-child; godchild being a child for whom one takes responsibility by making promises to help grow in a sphere of life, and god-fatherism has become one of the greatest problem facing the Nigerian political system. It leads to corruption because you have to make returns (he that soweth bountifully, reapeth bountifully). The holder of the political position becomes a stooge to his godfather because he that pays the piper dictates the tune. By the time the godson refuse to meet their (godfathers) demand, it is eventually impeachment from political offices (what a man soweth, that he reap).

        In the Nigeria fourth republic dispensation (1999 till date) in question, Anenih – Igbinedion, the Sariki – Lawal face-off, Nwobodo –Nnamani quagmire, Adebibu – Ladoja crisis, Uba – Ngige sage and all other godfather – protégé crisis in Nigeria do not only portend great danger to our democratic experiment, but also on the very essence and validity of our existence as a nation. The billions of naira expended by Nigerian godfathers for bankrolling the elections of their godsons, have totally monetized elections in Nigeria, which automatically disqualifies men of honour, character and integrity from holding elected public positions. Without doubt, the phenomenon has assumed this bizarre from since the enthronement of Nigeria civil rule on May 29, 1999. it started with the acrimony that existed between chief Anthony Anenih (godfather) and Lucky Igbinedion (protégé), the governor of Edo State between May 1999, to May 2003. Chief A. Anenih was purported to have endorsed the candidate of Lucky Igbinedion against other contenders as the governor of the state and also bankrolled his campaign expenses. But Lucky Igbinedion failed to reciprocate the gesture of Anenih by not giving  him adequate government patronage and by acting in ways as loyal ‘godson’. The episode unfolded itself between Dr. Jim Nwobodo (godfather) and Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani (protégé), of Enugu State. Though the godson eventually subdued the godfather after a fierce struggle for the soul of the state. (Essence Library, Godfatherism in Nigeria Politics, 2004, p. 64).

        However, during the second term of President Olusegun Obasanjo, the phenomenon of godfatherism becomes  more alarming and dangerous to the survival of Nigeria’s fledging democracy. In Oyo State, South-West Nigeria, Adebidu (godfather) and Ladoja (protégé) battle for the soul of Oyo, has affected governance in the State and has reenacted political violence which it was famous for. At the long run, Ladoja won the State gubernatorial election, defeating the incumbent governor, Alhaji Lam Adeshina of the Alliance for Democracy (AD). He was eventually sworn in on 29th May, 2003. When Adedibu decided to nominate 80 percent of the new commissioners and special advisers, Ladoja decided to act fast. He tricked Adedibu to go on a much – needed rest abroad and he made sure the speaker Moroof Olawale Atilola – led House of Assembly immediately approved his list of commissioners that was the end of the pact between Adedibu and Ladoja. The animosity between Adedibu and Ladoja was put into display during the electioneering campaign for the March 27, 2004 Local Government Elections. Ladoja was left to his devices until he was consumed through “impeachment” by the tiger he mounted in 2003 (Celetine Okafor, The Ladoja Impeachment, January 14, 2006).

  Another important episode that unfold was that of Chris Uba (godfather) and Chris Ngige (protégé), of Anambra State. After the Oath –taking at the Okija shrine by the godson, he refused to play ball as arranged, looting, blood letting, gubernatorial abduction and judicial ambushes has become common place activities in Anambra State. Until the 16th March, 2006. The godson (Ngige) was finally removed from office. (Essence Library Godfatherism in Nigeria politics, 2004, p.65). This crisis was very much reflective of how it has always been in the Nigerian polity as it concerns the political elites in the society. They are high and mighty and have the ability to have their way given any situation and almost every crisis that is observed is an after-effect of the musceflexing amongst them and amongst themselves.

1.2    STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

          In the proceeding piece of introduction to this work, sufficient and hear exhaustive description and highlights of the various points and forms of manifestation political conflicts in Nigeria fourth republic, was attempted. This was done alongside with the brief overview of the concept “godfatherism” and “political conflicts” in any system, society or political grouping while also considering the frequency of these crisis situations in Nigeria as a nation. Haven looked at the forms of manifestation of the concept. It is proper that we attempt to state the problem(s) that created a sustaining environment for these crisis to blew and thrive.

        The first problem could be spotted from the analysis of the above listed political conflicts saga, is that of widespread corruption which has a partner in unpatriotism. Quite consistently, Nigeria has been considered to be among the first five most corruption, fueled by greed for the concept of patriotism, that has resulted in the average Nigeria seeing governance and government as a vehicle for exploitation and self-aggrandizement. So while the people crave for  a leadership of lift maintain mercantilism as their watchword and do everything in the hope of monetary gains and kickback. Anambra, Oyo, Enugu, Edo, etc. are still a classic example of this situation.

  The second problem easily identifiable in the entire case scenario of the Oyo, Anambra, Kwara, Edo, Borno, etc political conflicts is “Elitism”. While the consideration of elitism as a problem would not be universally accepted.

        Another problem is one that could be said to be an offshoot of the proceeding problem concept, political godfatherism. Political godfatherism is a concept that although is widely in practice in all parts of the world, have assumed disturbing and worrying dimensions and proportions in the nation today. It has become pertinent to have strong political godfathers before considering running for any elective office and even political appointments. Unfortunately, as it was in Anambra, Oyo, Edo, etc. most of these godfathers offer the services of their support only in anticipation of financial kickbacks that are alarmingly huge and extravagant and opposed to the expected norm of service to the people.

**1.3    HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY**

   The following hypothesis will be tested during the course of the work.

1.     The more monetized the political system is the more the strength of the god-fathers.

2.     The more prominent the activities of the god-fathers, the higher the possibility of political instability.

3.     The more elected officers depend on god-fathers, the more impoverished the masses would be.

**1.4    OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

(1)    To attempt a disclosure of the Godfatherism and effects of political conflicts by examining the various identifiable causes and effects of Edo State conflict in Nigeria fourth republic.

(2)    To firmly establish the fact that political conflicts had become Nigeria’s consistent bedfellow, with a vivid examination of Edo State Government crisis.

(3)    And finally, to profer a panacea to the identified causes of these political conflicts in order to prevent a continuance of its sporadic frequency in Nigeria.

**1.5    SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

 The essence of this study is self-explaining in the presentation of the various facts that constitute the crisis of Edo State in question. This study seeks to provide us with detailed account of these state crisis and indepth and exhaustive (as much as possible) analysis of the various factors that comes into play in the saga. This is in the view to finding a lasting solution and thus preventing a reoccurrence of the anomaly in the Nigerian polity.

 It is also not in doubt that other scholars could further explore this area of research, just like a few others have done before me, using this work/study as a launch pad. This could be by lending strength and support to some of the ideas or hypothesis that this work seeks to propagate. If could also be by improving in some or all of the errors that I may have unavoidably made in the course of this research. All of these would aid in navigating observers and future researcher of this topic of study, towards the best stock of intellectually analytic compilation on the topic. The end of all these would in no doubt be useful in preventing a future repetition of the errors that are presently a bane on our development in present day.

 Finally, it is also noted that this work could be considered as an addition to the bulk of academic and intellectual endeavours and submissions available on this topic and on related topics, particularly in Nigeria. In the final analysis, this work would be seen as another beam of light thrown in the direction of various political upheavals that has bedevilled the country especially in recent times.

**1.6    SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

Although the problem of political conflicts is one that is universally acknowledged and pondered upon, the scope of this particular research work would be limited to Edo State in Nigeria and the time frame of study would be the fourth republic (1999 – till date).

 The reason for this is because the happenings in the state reflect the trend that being perpetuated nationally. Moreover, any attempt at proffering a long lasting solution to the problem, it is hoped, would also have a bearing on the entire nation.

**1.7    METHODOLOGY**

The nature of this research makes it expedient that a secondary source of data is undertaken in order to provide relevant data, effort will be made to collect secondary sources in literature such as book, magazines, newspapers, journals, internet and other similar materials. The principal method used will be questionnaires which will be given to voters in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria – primary source

**CHAPTER TWO**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

Our focus in this chapter is to critically examine relevant literature that would assist in explaining the research problem and furthermore recognize the efforts of scholars who had previously contributed immensely to similar research. The chapter intends to deepen the understanding of the study and close the perceived gaps.

**2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

**GODFATHER**

A Godfather could refer to a person who sponsors or provides care of support for a person or project. In the same token, it could be used to describe a person directing an illegal and criminal organization. Danoye (2004:44), see godfather as a human being who plays god to his people. He provides their basic needs fends for them, protects them and assists them to secure and achieve their objectives. He further states “his support could be seen as investment, which he believes must yield some profits in the future”. This is also peculiar to the godfathers of organized crimes profits in the future”. This is also peculiar to the godfathers powerful blocs that have tremendous influence in the society such as the Kaduna mafia (Bala and Sonni, 1987). It comprises coalition of strong socio-economic and political elites that share similar value system and under an organized structure. In most cases, there are always godfathers who control the affairs of the mafia.

In the words of Akinola (2009: 269) ‘a godfather is a kingmaker, boss, mentor, and principal, while a godson is the beneficiary and recipient of the legacy of a godfather. He further states that “a godfather is someone who has built unimaginable respec that secures victory for candidates of his choice”.

 He continued by saying that the politics of godfatherism involves the anointing of a godson who is expected to win an election by using the influence, wealth, political structure and political experience of godfather. Godfathers are powerful individuals who determine who, what, when and how things operate and are usually in the corridors of power. Many godfathers in the present day Nigeria operate like the mafia by displaying similar violent scheming and aggressive ‘politicking’ coupled with manipulating devices of having their way by any means. They rely on Machiavelli’s slogan, “the ends justify the means”. Following from the above, it is glaring that godfathers’ role is sponsoring and bankrolling of bills. This is what gives them the power over their godsons and the penchant to wrench their powers at all cost if their will is not obeyed. Chimaroke Nnamani, the former governor of Enugu State stated that, the position of godfather in any system is like a virus, often out to create ill-will, but especially to subjugate the godson whom he planted and would want to do his will at all cost. The godson is placed in subservient position through his godfather. According to him, “…the godfather is a merchant set out to acquire the godson as a client”. The godfather is simply a self seeking individual out there to use the government for his own purposes (Chimaroke, 2004:17). Osuntokun (2003:42), the political relationship under successive governments in Nigeria is a reflection of the international economic order, which facilitates the pursuit or regime change by avaricious godfather whose major pre-occupation is to perpetuate their hegemonic political influence for personal interest and aggrandizement. If the aforementioned statement is properly x-rayed, one would agree with the statement that the reward of godfatherism seems to be more personalized. The godfathers take politics as an occupation they rely solely on it for survival. They subject their godchildren to their hegemonic political influence. They rig elections massively to install their clients into offices. Virtually, they do this because of their interest in the state resources and assurance of kick-backs.

**GODFATHERISM**

The concept of godfatherism is synonymous to intermediary, mentoring, benevolence, and support and sponsoring. In a political setting, the concept is an ideology that is championed on the belief that certain individuals possess considerable means to unilaterally determine who get a party‟s ticket to run for an election and who wins in the electoral contest. To Adeoye (2009), it is a term used to describe the relationship between a godfather and godson.

In the views of Bassey and Enetak (2008), godfatherism connote the power and influence of people who are politically relevant in deciding who gets nominated to contest elections and who eventually wins the election. Godfathers are highly politically mobile and can sway political support to the political party and/or candidate behind which they throw their political weight. Those that play godfatherism are known as godfathers while those who benefit from their benevolence are known as godson. Kolawole (2004), sees godfatherism as an institution of political kingmaking through which certain political office holders of tenuous political clout come into power. Hence, it is a relationship based on political surrogacy involving financial and moral assistance where the godfather is the major donor and the godson the primary receiver. However, as the relationship progresses, the godfather stands to reap his investment. It can therefore be described as a relationship based on "give and take." Be that as it may, it is important to note that this relationship is not fixed or determinate. As a matter of fact, it breaks over time as a result of the contradictions inherent in godfatherism.

Godfatherism in its simplest form can be generally seen as a practice which entails the sustenance of a kind of social and political relationships in which the subordinate looks onto the superior for the propagation and fulfillment of certain roles, desires and interactions which binds both together or in which both have equal stake but with the superior determining what the subordinate gets in the process (Williams, 2004). According to him, this view presents godfatherism as a relationship between a superior and a subordinate in which the superior has some level of influence over the subordinate as a result of his superior status. In other words, godfatherism connotes a mutual relationship between individuals in which one is superior and the other a subordinate who relies on his superior partner for favours to help him attain his life goals. The conventional civic sense of godfatherism, which is inclined to posturing a credible candidate and granting him a mentoral support to enhance resulted oriented governance, is however opposed by entrepreneurial sense of politics. It is a term now reserved for God forsaken criminals who will go to any length to achieve their set goals of wielding political power including arson, intimidation, warning flogging and sometimes assassination. This derivative meaning of godfatherism and its negative application in Nigeria is loathsome. Godfatherism is one of the pandemic that is endangering our polity. It compels elected official to siphon funds made for public infrastructural development to privateaccounts, of their godfathers, thereby jeopardizing and mortgaging the future of the citizens. Political godfatherism describes a situation in which very powerful and influential members of the elite class use their power, money and influence to determine who should rule or occupy a given political office and who impose these leaders on the people. The leaders are generally forced upon the masses through intimidation, harassment and an excessive use of money. Political godfathers act as the financial backbone for politicians who want to occupy political offices at all cost. Such political office holders usually become tied to the apron string of their godfathers (Otite and Umukoro, 2010).

**THE EMERGENCE OF GODFATHERISM IN NIGERIA**

Godfatherism as a phenomenon in society dates back to time immemorial. Before its adoption in political circle, godfatherism used to be a Christian religious term. It presupposes placing a young Christian under the tutelage of an older and a more proven one. However, the term has assumed a political coloration as attention is no longer focused on Christian godfathers but political godfathers. Their antics manifesting in willingness to dictate tune to their godsons, self centeredness, holding their areas of influence to ransom among others are discernible and such impact negatively on democratization and governance as evident in some parts of the country especially in the present dispensation (Familusi, 2012). While the origin of godfatherism in politics can be traced to the city of Chicago in the United States of America in the pre-world war II era, „when the heads of criminal gangs sponsored politicians in elections, manipulated the results to get them elected and, in turn, received protection and contracts from their political godsons” (Udo, 2011; Robin, 2010). Godfatherism has become an institutionalised phenomenon in contemporary politics in Nigeria and its impact cannot be ignored. The activities of godfathers and experiences of godsons/goddaughters are evident and they have always been an issue of concern to scholars in academic discourse. The advent of godfatherism in the Nigerian partisan politics dates back to the First Republic when leaders of the three major political parties, Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), Action Group (AG) and National Congress of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) carefully and meticulously cultivated godsons that they were convinced would advance the well being of the citizens. According to Uzoamaka (2010), Ahmadu Bello of NPC, Nnamdi Azikiwe of the NCNC and Obafemi Awolowo of the AG were motivated to do so not to use godsons as surrogates to promote parochial interests, but to promote the developmental aspirations of the people. Unlike the present crop of political godfathers, the first generation godfathers were essentially benevolent and progressive because they did not abuse their status as godfathers by imposing frivolous demands on their godsons as it is the case today. Political godfatherism started with nationalist activities of the 1950s. The educated elite which constituted just six percent of the total Nigerian population championed this struggle for Nigerian independence. Godfatherism became popular in Nigerian political space in the 1960‟s, and early post-independence leaders became godfathers (Mamah, 2007). The godfather phenomenon as a structure in the present Nigeria‟s democracy is rather described as unfortunate. The game plan of the godfathers, which has been on display since the return of democracy in 1999 is somewhat retrogressive to the long awaited democracy in Nigeria. The modus operandi of the Nigerian political godfather is clear even to the blind. The godson occupies an exalted position in government, rather than spending the available fund to establish a factory or set up a process that will employ our youths like school leavers and university graduates, the money is diverted to Swiss or other European or American banks. School leavers and university graduates are therefore made jobless and provide fertile ground for recruiting an infantry that will do the evil bidding of these godfathers. Contemporary godfatherism impacts on politics in various ways. In fact, one cannot think of its positive impact. It erodes elements of democracy and such may degenerate into anarchy and possible military take over.

**POLITICAL CONFLICT**

Although conflict is a universal phenomenon and not a preserve of one region, group, religion or race, peace researchers are not in agreement on the meaning of the concept of conflict. But the causes of conflict are numerous; its conception contains some identifiable variables that distinguish it from other concepts such as instability, violence and crisis. Oyeshola (2005) proposes that there is conflict, 'When there is a sharp disagreement or clash, for instance, between divergent ideas, interests of people and nations'. He asserted further that 'conflicts are universal yet distinct in every culture. It is common to all persons yet experienced uniquely by every individual. It is a visible sign of human energy and often the result of competition for resources. For Chaplin (1979), 'conflict can be defined come antagonistic, particularly when they are faced with irreconcilable or opposing views'. Conflict is a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. Defined in broadest terms, conflict denotes the incompatibility of subject positions (Diez et al, 2006). This definition emphasizes the opposition or incompatibility at the heart of the conflict, and initially leaves open the exact nature of these incompatibilities, i.e. whether they are between individuals, groups or societal positions; whether they rest in different interests or beliefs; or whether they have a material existence or come into being only through discourse.

Political conflict on the other hand can be explain as the conflict where the reason behind is political. It can also be seen as a battle that occurs between two or more sides with different belief. This battle can be either through words or actual war.
Political conflict indicates a scenario where behavior of an actor(s) manifests itself in a confrontational way to promote their interests and try to stop other actors from obtaining their objectives.

**AN OVERVIEW OF GODFATHERISM AND CONFLICT IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC**

 Tracing the history of Nigerians since political independence, it shows that aspirants to political offices who are less financial empowered rely greatly on the financial muscle of the moneybags in the society who invariably become their mentors and political godfathers. The money-bags on the other hand may look for a popular and very outstanding character to invest their money on by encouraging him to contest for an elective office, which will be manipulated in his favour (Edigin, 2010). Godfatherism constitutes an impediment and a scourge to genuine democracy in Nigeria. It is antithetical to the liberty and welfare of the citizens. The issue of godfatherism should therefore not be treated as a party affair, but should be offered political, social and legal treatment by the government and stakeholders in Nigeria. In the bid to win and have control of this vital structure in society, godfathers often adopt varying methods to outsmart their rivalries. That is why in Nigeria methods such as thuggery, rigging, violence and manipulations of results often accompany elections. In advance democracies of the world, elections are very important instruments for the determination of the popularity and acceptance of a leader(s). And often times, election results are a true reflection of the votes of the electorates. However, the same cannot be said of Nigeria's democratic experience since 1999 (Wenibowei, 2011). Since the Nigerian State returned to democratic governance in 1999, during the era of what Samuel Huntington (1991) called the third wave of democratization, the nature of the democratic project has been the subject of an intense debate in various circles.Admittedly, the rising concern about the Nigerian democratic project cannot be explained outside the numerous conflicts that have been the bane of the nation since it returned to democratic governance on May 29, 1999. Without doubt godfatherism related crisis has assumed a bizarre position from the enthronement of civil rule in Nigeria in 1999. Godfatherism is evil to society as it brings about political instability.

 Godfatherism also suffers from the “inability thesis” in Nigerian politics where godsons see themselves as unable to win elections and for this reason subjugate themselves to godfathers to help them win elections. The conflict arising from godfatherism has become one of the greatest problems facing the Nigerian political system. The holder of the political position becomes a stooge to his godfather because he that pays the piper dictates the tune. By the time the godson refuses to meet their (godfather‟s) demand, he is eventually impeached from political office (Edigin, 2010). The struggle between and among members of the political class for the purpose of controlling state power accounts for some of the worst violence experienced in Nigeria. Nnamani (2003), for instance, explains that the Nigerian godfather perceives power as a zero-sum game "where losses of the rival account for his gains". The godfather who has expended money in the election would not accommodate failure as such will adopt every means and avenues to ensure success. He may therefore, employ thugs to rig and or cause chaos before, during and after elections to ensure the success of his favoured candidate(s). It is this understanding of politics by the political class that has made the electoral process in Nigeria prone to manipulations and susceptible to violence. Violence characterizes party primaries, congresses, conventions, rallies and campaign grounds. There are also inter and intra party clashes, assassination and kidnapping of children, women and high profile politicians.

 The role of the political godfather in Nigeria politics has also worsened the socio-economic conditions of Nigerians. The phenomenon has breed political corruptions, widens the gap between the rich and poor and has also increase unemployment in Nigeria. Nnamani (2004), states further that the position of godfather in any system is like a virus, often out to create ill-will, but especially to subjugate the godson whom he planted and would want to do his will at all cost. The godson is placed in subservient position through his godfather. According to him, “…the godfather is a merchant set out to acquire the godson as a client”. The godfather is simply a self seeking individual out there to use the government for his own purposes. The Fourth Republic in Nigeria has witnessed these ugly trends from inception soon after the Governors were swear-in in 1999.

The political actors and their estrange political godfather were in the verge of contending who is who in their state. Prominent among the warlords in the states are Senator Modu Ali Sheriff vs Governor Mala Kachalla of Borno; Dr. Olusola Saraki vs Governor Mohammed Lawal (Kwara State); Senator Jim Nwobodo vs Governor Chimaroke Nnamani (Enugu State); Chief Emeka Offor vs Governor Chinwoke Mbadinuju (Anambra State); and Alhaji Abubakar Rimi vs Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso of Kano State. These are various political godfatherism syndrome in most states in Nigeria, while other states are reconvening, settling their differences and reshaping their polity in a democratic direction, Anambra State actors and boss are bent on saddling the people with a truncating government. Indeed the people of Anambra state have not reap from democracy.

Between 1999 and 2003, the battle line in Kwara politics was well defined. Olusola Saraki, former Senate leader and political kingpin, was in contest for relevance with his former protégé, Mohamed Lawal, a retired Navy Commodore, who was the Governor of the State then. Saraki, who has installed not less than four governors in the State, including Lawal, himself, fell out with Lawal on the sharing of political booties. But Lawal did not compromise and these led to a cold war which culminated in the expulsion of Saraki from the then All People‟s Party (APP), now All Nigerian People‟s Party (ANPP) and Saraki teamed up with People‟s Democratic Party (PDP) in the State. Then, the 2003 elections to both men was the ultimate battle to determine the political grandmaster of the State. They deployed their vast resources to prosecute the „war‟.

 In Oyo state, Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu (godfather) and Ladoja (protégé) battled for the soul of Oyo state. This affected governance in the state and it re-enacted political violence for which the state was famous for. At the instance of Lamidi, Ladoja won the gubernatorial state election defeating the incumbent governor Alhaji Lam Adesina. The decision of Adedibu to nominate 80 percent of the new commissioners and special advisers signalled the beginning of the end of the pact between Adedibu and Ladoja. The animosity between them was put into display during the electioneering campaign for the March 2004 local government elections. Ladoja was left to his devices until he was consumed through impeachment by the tiger he mounted in 2003 (Okafor, 2003: 14).

Anambra State, which happens to be an industrial state, has been perturbed with godfatherism syndrome, a canker warm that has eaten deep into the polity and economic situation of the state. I enjoined the “Anambarian” to watchout carefully ahead 2007 to rid the polity of the state from claws of godfatherism. Godfatherism is one of the pandemic that is endangering our polity. It compels elected official to siphone funds made for public infrastructural development to private accounts, thereby jeopardizing and mortgaging the future of the citizens; Nigerians should resist this ugly trend.

In Edo state, the situation of godfather in its political affairs seem a little different with three notable godfathers namely Chief Tony Anenih, Chairman Board of Trustee of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Dr. S.O Ogbemudia father of the chairman of Uhunmwonde Local Government Area as Edo South Leader of the party and Chief Sir. Gabriel Iginedion, father of the Edo State Governor Lucky Nosakhare and also is the father of Ovia North- East Local Government Area. The ugly head of godfatherism was first raised during the process of the party‟s primary where the gubernatorial candidate selection saw a popular Alhaji Azeez Garuba losing to Lucky Igbinedion prior to the 1999 election in an undemocratic manner. In 2003, on behalf of the trios, Chief Igbinedion‟s Glory 2003 campaign at Sam Ogbemudia Stadium. That government house was not vacant, succinctly put that the performance of Lucky Igbinedion‟s administration was nothing to write home about. The governor was still loyal to his godfather (Mr Fix it) until 2006, but when the issue of who becomes the PDP flag bearer for 2007 gubernatorial elections came up. The matter was serious to the extent that the party now has two secretariats, both at the state and local government levels with Chief Tony Anenih and Dr S.O Ogbemudia on one side and governor Lucky Igbinedion and Chief Gabriel Igbinedion on the other side. With the older Igbinedionon his side and in bid to prove his political might, the governor relieved appointees loyal to Chief Anenih‟s and his group from their positions. To reward for their loyalty, they were often compensated with federal appointment where chief Anenih is very powerful. rather than the state House of Assembly making laws they have had their own share of the tussle when Friday Itulah and Anenih loyalist was removed from office as speaker and replaced with David Iyoha an Igbinedion supporter. Friday Itulah has since replaced David Iyoha.

 The case between the former governor of Lagos State Senator Bola Tinubu and the incumbent Mr Babatunde Fashola was a cold war as it was widely reported that Tinubu did not want the latter to go for a second term. Though the matter was diplomatically resolved and Tinubu endorsed Fashola and supported him during the last electioneering process, his deputy was dropped for another party member. It cannot be said whether the supposed war is over (Familusi, 2012).

Conflict and political godfatherism have increased the occurrence of electoral fraud in Nigeria. The 'political godfathers' in Nigeria build an array of loyalists around them and use their influence, which is often tied to monetary considerations, to manipulate the rest of the society.

**IMPACT OF POLITICAL GODFATHERISM ON ELECTORATE**

Political godfathers use their influence to block the participation of others in Nigerian politics. They are political gatekeepers: they dictate who participates in politics and under what conditions. The role of such people is highly injurious to the advancement of popular, participatory democracy in Nigeria.

Political godfathers are responsible for most of the pre and post-election violence that we have seen in Nigeria (Albert, 2005). It is thus necessary to have a better understanding of their activities as a way of generating new ideas on how to make the political process in Nigeria less violent and more democratic. Godfathers operate like mafia hiding under politics to perpetrate criminal acts with their private army of thugs, disrupting electoral processes, killing, and prompting political instability. They should not be allowed to enjoy their freedom. The godfathers have successfully taken over the Nigerian political institutions, while the roles of electorates were fast diminishing. The lack of participatory democracy, „economic‟ gap between the people and godfathers, and enthusiasm towards the electoral process hinders the institutionalization of party politics in Nigeria.

Godfathers who take charge of the affairs of political parties eventually constitute the monopolists that determine the outcome of governance. Thus they accomplish that goal by taking (financial) control of the state through their godsons. In all this corruptive tendencies accentuated by patronage politics (Godfatherism) has weakened political institutions and have served as impediments to social and economic growth in Nigeria. So the eradication of this practice from Nigeria’s political system is imperative for the survival of its democracy.

The politics of godfatherism and regionalism has a negative impact on the political structure of Nigeria and Nigerians. Indeed, the right to elect individuals of their choice to rule them was deprived given the circumstances in which godfathers-imposed contenders of their favorite on the generality of the people. This is, to say the least very hostile to the creeds of democratic law (Chukwuma 2008, 87). The politics of godfathers in the state are not simple sponsors of political campaigns, rather they are people whose influence stems not just from wealth but from their capacity to organize violence and corruption to manipulate central, state or local political schemes in support of the candidates they champion.

Godfatherism has endangers the existence of Nigeria nascent democratic practice. For instance, the illegal removal of Oyo State Governor Ladoja in 2006 lead to political uncertainty in the state.

**2.2 EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

A study by Oluloyo (2014, 3), observed that godfather request a considerable grade of control over the government not in order to support or form government policy, but to extract direct financial return in the form of government resources stolen by their politicians or gave to them as further opportunities for the implant. The over-concentration of influence, wealth and power of politicians describes the ascent for the regulating of the political structures and institutions by the ruling class in society. However, the struggle and the resulting standards have impacted significantly on society in a various way. In the present emerging democratic practice, the power struggles among the members of the ruling class have given rise to violence in different forms and digress.

In a related opinion study by Ohiole and Ojo (2016, 10-11), revealed that Nigeria politics has been characterized by godfatherism, religious and tribal politics, money-bag politics, regionalism, and party politics. Ohiole and Ojo (2016, 11) added that political godfatherism is based on political substitution relating to financial and moral aid where the godfather is the main donor and the godson the primary receiver, as a result, the common people are being destabilized with no dividend of democracy.

 In an interrelated version a study by Oviasuyi (2009, 74), exposed that there has been a lot of catastrophes in Nigerian politics and administrative crisis of self-assurance in the voted representatives, a loss of trust in the democratic rule and a growing hindrance at government, also, a growing frustration at the insignificance individual's vote in the political development. All these disasters are disasters instigated by the unconsecrated association of godfatherism that believes in the power of incumbency and influence.

2.3 **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In explaining this research there are several theories that can support the politics of godfather-ism, but for the purpose of this research, the researcher adopted elite theory to explain and supports this study.

**ELITE THEORY**

This theory was propounded by Vilfredo Pareto in 1935 the assumption of the theory is that elites could only be substituted by another set of elites, meaning that the masses are necessarily ruled by the few elites. This idea was stated by Pareto 1935 the law of elite circulation, to support the argument elite theory defines ‘elites’ as actors controlling resources, occupying key positions and relating through power networks (Yamokoski and Dubrow 2008). Therefore, the concept of elites is more closely related to the Weberian idea of power, understood as the capability of implementing one’s will, even against the will of others (Weber 1922, 696). The power can be achieved through material and/or symbolic resources. Consequently, elites can be defined as those in possession of those resources (Reis 2005). This theory dwelled on how power is been shared in the society. The theory believes that power can only be shared among the elites at the expense of the masses either they like it or not.

**2.4 SUMMARY OF REVIEW**

The introduction of money-politics into Nigeria political system preferred the political godfathers, who are ready to support any candidates of their interest. This is in line with the assertion of the Elite theory which believes in power domination within a certain group of people. In relation to this, those contestants that are frantic for power had to pledge alliance to the godfather for a guaranteed charming ticket or else they would not have the ticket to contest for any post.The review covers the the conceptual frame work such as: God-father, Godfather-ism, political conflict, emergence of godfather-ism in Nigeria, an overview of Godfather-ism from 1999 till date and the implication of Godfather-ism on the electorate. Other empirical studies related to this concept were reviewed which reveals that Godfather-ism is a canker worm which has eaten deep the Nigeria political system steering political conflict and bizarre on every region of the country.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**3.1 AREA OF STUDY**

Edo State is one of the 36 [states](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/States_of_Nigeria%22%20%5Co%20%22States%20of%20Nigeria) of [Nigeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria%22%20%5Co%20%22Nigeria), located in the southern region of the country. The state's capital and largest city, [Benin City](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benin_City%22%20%5Co%20%22Benin%20City), is the [fourth-largest city](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Nigerian_cities_by_population%22%20%5Co%20%22List%20of%20Nigerian%20cities%20by%20population) in Nigeria, and the centre of the country's [rubber](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubber%22%20%5Co%20%22Rubber) industry. Created in 1991 from the former [Bendel State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bendel_State%22%20%5Co%20%22Bendel%20State), Edo State borders [Kogi State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kogi_State%22%20%5Co%20%22Kogi%20State) to the northeast, [Anambra State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anambra_State%22%20%5Co%20%22Anambra%20State) to the east, [Delta State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delta_State%22%20%5Co%20%22Delta%20State) to the southeast, and [Ondo State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ondo_State%22%20%5Co%20%22Ondo%20State) to the west.

Oredo is a Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. Its headquarter is in Benin City. Its capital city is Benin city, which also is the capital city of Edo State.The Oba of Benin Omo N'Oba Ewuare II's palace is also located here and many historic palaces and buildings are located in this city. Oredo is home to many, including the Oba of Benin,

It has an area of 249 km2 and a population of 374,671 at the 2006 census.

**3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research designs are perceived to be an overall strategy adopted by the researcher whereby different components of the study are integrated in a logical manner to effectively address a research problem. In this study, the researcher employed the survey research design. This is due to the nature of the study whereby the opinion and views of people are sampled.

**3.3 POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

According to Udoyen (2019), a study population is a group of elements or individuals as the case may be, who share similar characteristics. These similar features can include location, gender, age, sex or specific interest.

The emphasis on study population is that it constitute of individuals or elements that are homogeneous in description.

This study was carried out to examine god fatherism and political conflict in Nigeria using Oredo Local government in Edo state as a case study. Voters in Oredo LGA form the population of the study.

**3.4 SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION**

A study sample is simply a systematic selected part of a population that infers its result on the population. In essence, it is that part of a whole that represents the whole and its members share characteristics in like similitude (Udoyen, 2019). In this study, the researcher adopted the simple random sampling (srs.) method to determine the sample size.

**3.5 SAMPLE SIZE SELECTION TECHNIQUE AND PROCEDURE**

To determine the sample size of this study, the researcher adopted the convenience sampling technique. The researcher therefore purposively selected One Hundred and Thirty-Seven(137) voters in Oredo LGA, thus 137 forms the sample size.

**3.6 SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION**

The research instrument used in this study is the questionnaire. A 10 minutes survey containing 3 questions were administered to the enrolled participants. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, the first section inquired about the responses demographic or personal data while the second sections were in line with the study objectives, aimed at providing answers to the research questions.

**3.7 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

The responses were analyzed using the frequency tables, which provided answers to the research questions.

**3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE STUDY**

The reliability and validity of the research instrument was determined. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. A co-efficient value of 0.68 indicated that the research instrument was relatively reliable. According to (Taber, 2017) the range of a reasonable reliability is between 0.67 and 0.87.

**3.9 Ethical consideration**

The study was approved by the Project Committee of the Department. Informed consent was obtained from all study participants before they were enrolled in the study. Permission was sought from the relevant authorities to carry out the study. Date to visit the place of study for questionnaire distribution was put in place in advance.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

1. **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the analysis of data derived through the questionnaire and key informant interview administered on the respondents in the study area. The analysis and interpretation were derived from the findings of the study. The data analysis depicts the simple frequency and percentage of the respondents as well as interpretation of the information gathered. A total of One hundred and Thirty-Seven (137) questionnaires were administered to respondents, 137 was returned and validated. For this study a total of 137 was validated for the analysis.

**4.2 DATA PRESENTATION**

The table below shows the summary of the survey. A sample of 60 was calculated for this study. A total of 50 responses were received and validated. For this study a total of 50 was used for the analysis.

**Table 4.1: Distribution of Questionnaire**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Questionnaire**  | **Frequency** | **Percentage**  |
| Sample size | 137 | 100 |
| Received  | 137 | 100 |
| Validated | 137 | 100 |

**Source: Field Survey, 2021**

**Table 4.2:**4.2 **General Information of respondents**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Demographic information** | **Frequency** | **percent** |
| GenderMale |  |  |
| 87 | 37% |
| Female | 70 | 63% |
| Religion |  |  |
| Christian | 100 | 73% |
| Muslim | 37 | 27% |
| Age |  |  |
| 18-26 | 85 | 62% |
| 27-38 | 35 | 25% |
| 39-47 | 10 | 8% |
| 48+ | 7 | 5% |

**Source: Field Survey, 2021**

From the above table, 37% of the respondent are male, 63% of the respondents are female. 73% of the respondent are Christian. 27% of the respondent are Muslim. 62% of the respondents are aged 18-26 years, 25% of the respondents are aged 27-38 years. 8% of the respondent are aged 39-47 years. 5% of the respondent are aged 48years and above.

**4.3 TESTING HYPOTHESIS**

**H11:**The more monetized the political system is the more the strength of the god-fathers.

**H12 :**The more prominent the activities of the god-fathers, the higher the possibility of political instability.

**H13:**The more elected officers depend on god-fathers, the more impoverished the masses would be.

**Hypothesis One:**

H1: The more monetized the political system is the more the strength of the god-fathers

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Response**  | **Observed frequencies** | **Expected frequencies (E)**  | **O-E** | **(O-E)2** | **(O-E)** **E** |
| Strongly AgreeAgreeStrongly DisagreeDisagree  | 5045357 | 34.2534.2534.2534.25 | 15.7510.750.75-27.25 | 248.06115.560.5625742.56 | 7.23.40.0221.732.3 |

**Source: field survey 2021**

Degree of freedom = (row-1) (column-1)

= (4-1) (3-1)

= 3\*1

=3

At 0.05 level of significance, given the above degree of freedom, table value of X2 (ie X2t) = 5.991.

To test our hypothesis, the decision rule is

Accept Ho if X2t>X2cal, and

Reject Ho if X2t<X2cal

Thus, since the X2t (5.991) < X2cal (32.3), we reject H0 and accordingly accept H1.We conclude by accepting the alternate hypothesis which states The more monetized the political system is the more the strength of the god-fathers

**Hypothesis Two:**

H1: The more prominent the activities of the god-fathers, the higher the possibility of political instability.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Response**  | **Observed frequencies** | **Expected frequencies (E)**  | **O-E** | **(O-E)2** | **(O-E)** **E** |
| YesNo Uncertain | 80507 | 45.645.645.6 | 34.44.4-38.6 | 1183.3619.361489.96 | 25.950.42-32.6759.05 |

**Source: field survey 2021**

Degree of freedom = (row-1) (column-1)

= (3-1) (2-1)

= 3\*1

=2

At 0.05 level of significance, given the above degree of freedom, table value of X2 (ie X2t) = 5.991.

To test our hypothesis, the decision rule is

Accept Ho if X2t>X2cal, and

Reject Ho if X2t<X2cal

Thus, since the X2t (5.991) < X2cal (59.05), we reject H0 and accordingly accept H1.We conclude by accepting the alternate hypothesis which states the more prominent the activities of the god-fathers, the higher the possibility of political instability.

**Hypothesis Three:**

H1: The more monetized the political system is the more the strength of the god-fathers

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Response**  | **Observed frequencies** | **Expected frequencies (E)**  | **O-E** | **(O-E)2** | **(O-E)** **E** |
| YesNo Uncertain | 1002017 | 45.645.645.6 | 54.4-25.6-28.6 | 2959.36-655.36-817.96 | 64.9-14.4-17.932.6 |

**Source: field survey 2021**

Degree of freedom =(row-1) (column-1)

= (3-1) (2-1)

= 3\*1

=2

At 0.05 level of significance, given the above degree of freedom, table value of X2 (ie X2t) = 5.991.

To test our hypothesis, the decision rule is

Accept Ho if X2t>X2cal, and

Reject Ho if X2t<X2cal

Thus, since the X2t (5.991) < X2cal (32.6), we reject H0 and accordingly accept H1.We conclude by accepting the alternate hypothesis which states The more monetized the political system is the more the strength of the god-fathers.

**HAPTER FIVE**

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

5.0 **INTRODUCTION**

### This chapter summarizes the findings in investigation Godfatherism and political conflict in Nigeria: an opinion survey of voters using Oredo LGA in Edo State as a case study.

5.1 **SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

 The focus of this study attempt to disclose Godfatherism and its effects on political conflicts by examining the case of Oredo LGA in Edo State conflict in Nigeria fourth republic. It established the fact that political conflicts had become Nigeria’s consistent bedfellow, with a vivid examination of Edo State Government crisis. The survey research design was used for the study. Convenience sampling was used in the study as the researcher purposively selected one hundred and thirty-seven (137) voters in Oredo LGA in Edo state who questionnaire was issued to. Responses elicited from the voters was validated and analyzed for the study. Hypothesis was tested using Chi-Square Statiscal tool.

**5.2 CONCLUSION**

Godfatherism is a hydra-headed monster in Nigerian politics. It will continue to threaten the practice of popular political participation in the country if no concrete efforts are made to deal with the problem. No nation can progress when her laws are not applicable to all, where some persons see themselves as sacred cows and can get away with any crime they commit.

Godfatherism and political conflict has become the dominant feature characterizing contemporary Nigerian politics. Their role as a political phenomenon has impacted on the body politics of country negative virtues which are now potential threat to the relatively new democracy in the country. It is obvious that godfatherism is not a new concept in human activities and without it no meaningful impact would be made in most endeavours of humanity including politics. However, the effects of godfatherism are glaring and starring people on the face. It has metamorphosed into hydra-headed monster, which if nothing is done is capable of truncating our hard earned democracy.

Political godfatherism is a syndrome in our political process, which does not promote leadership on merit or based on popular demand. To satisfy their selfish desire they are even ready to as simile dons of mafia organization to manipulate elections for their political sons, if successfully the result is corruption, waste of public fund bad governance. As long as they exist, good governance will continually elude the people, they are selfish, lawless, unconstitutional and politically irresponsible as to their modus operandi, subjugating public office holders like governors and council chairmen to their dictates.

Godfatherism and political conflict played prominent role in the political affairs of Nigeria, especially in the electoral system, to a large extent, truncated the true democratic system of administration. This is because a democratic system of government that does not allow for true democratic practices will not make foster a strong government or strong development for society.

1. **3 Recommendation**

The following recommendation was made from the findings of the study

* There is a need for political awareness campaigns to put an end or to minimize political Godfatherism in the state. 
* All elective positions in Nigeria context should be made unappealing. The impression of paying huge allowances and salaries to elected leaders should be stopped, this is to discourage the godfathers and those politicians that are contesting for money sake. 
* All political parties should categorically specify time and venues for the primary election to avoid confusion and misleading of the electorates or the voters. 
* Political godfatherism should be cast off and reinforced democratic institution to evade from the politics of godfatherism of central government policies and programmes in order to sensitize the citizens on the importance of contributing in the election, and citizen awareness should arise on demanding a good response from the ruling class. 
* Godfatherism should not be treated as a party affair, but should be offered political, social and legal treatment by the government and the stakeholders in the state.  Power of incumbency should be restricted by employing provisional government in place of incumbent President, Governor and Local Government Chairmen shortly before the commencement of the next elections campaign. This will curb the practice whereby the public office holders supervise over the elections in which they are contesting and conspire with godfathers to rig the election results. 
* Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should adopt the use of electronic voting for all elections in the country to curtail electoral scam this will reduce the elections rigging and will as well encourages the interested aspirants to vie for any position of their choice.  All political parties should adopt the principles of direct primary elections at all level this would give room for every interested citizen to contest and participate in politics.  All political party should reduce the price of nomination or contesting forms to a reasonable and affordable amount, this would create an avenue for the masses to contest in their various constituencies, local government, state as well as the federal level. 
* There is the need for increased confidence in the duly elected officials and increase faith in the democratization process.

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**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**PLEASE TICK [√] YOUR MOST PREFERRED CHOICE AND AVOID TICKING TWICE ON A QUESTION**

**SECTION A**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

**Gender**

Male [ ] Female [ ]

**Religion**

**Christian [ ]**

**Muslim [ ]**

**Age**

18-26 [ ]

27-38[ ]

39-47 [ ]

48+[ ]

**SECTION B**

QUESTION 1: Do you agree that the more monetized the political system is the more the strength of the god-fathers.?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Options** | **PLEASE TICK** |
| Strongly Agree |  |
| Agree |  |
| Strongly Disagree |  |
| Disagree  |  |

QUESTION 2: Do you think that the more prominent the activities of the god-fathers, the higher the possibility of political instability?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Options** | **PLEASE TICK** |
| Yes  |  |
| No |  |
| Uncertain  |  |

.

QUESTION 3: Do you think that the more elected officers depend on god-fathers, the more impoverished the masses would be?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Options** | **PLEASE TICK** |
| Yes |  |
| No |  |
| uncertain |  |