

NIGERIAN POLITICAL PARTIES AND PATRON - CLIENTELE SYNDROME

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ABSTRACT

The twin issues of democracy and political parties which are the pivot of sustainable development have been of concern to many observers and Political thinkers even before the time of recorded philosophical writings. A political party could be said to be the tool that socializes the citizenry into a Political system; which is the system that transforms the various unwieldy societal thoughts, needs and inclinations into a meaningful whole. This process is supposed to emerge through discussions, disagreements and agreements that are not necessarily reached by force or dictatorial pressure. This paper examines the effects of Patron-client political syndrome on Nigeria's attempt to achieve a democratic political system that would guarantee the sustainability of development efforts and the stability of the polity.

Keywords: Democracy, Political Parties, Patron-Clientele, Corruption, Environment, Elites, Sustainable Development.

INTRODUCTION

Democracies all over the world operate political parties. The political parties enable the political system to function through the representatives of the people. Although the number of parties varies from one nation to another, there seems to be a phenomenon of dominant parties in both developed and developing countries of the world. In the United States of America (USA), the Republicans and the Democrats are always in the lime light in sharing dominance. In Britain, it was the Labour Party (LP) and the Conservatives Party (CP) until the marriage between the Conservatives and the Liberals. In Nigeria, despite the high number of political parties, the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria has to deregister some of the parties in 2012 for lack of performance.

Many still hold different assumptions of what a political party is and what it is meant to do in a political system. The most critical role of a political party is to form government and allocate scarce resources in order to provide development in a sustainable manner. But whether or not this goal is achieved in Nigeria by the political parties is yet another very critical and pivotal matter to interrogate by scholars and public opinion commentators. After the fall of the Berlin wall and the emergence of democratic transition in Eastern and Central Europe, political parties or systems become more prominent as one of the viable options through which the earlier balkanized Europe could be transformed from military dictatorships to civilian governments and for Africa, from the Apartheid regimes to embracing democracies.

The constitutional provision of ruler-ship in Nigeria is the Party system and the constitution has made the formation of political parties wholly a private investment. All candidates must depend upon political parties for canvassing for, votes from the electorate. This is in contrast to political systems with provision for independent candidature.

The formation of political parties in democracies is capital intensive in nature, hence it involves the rich and wealthy individuals who can fund and maintain them. In the third world, these individuals make up the clique known as the "Godfathers" whose patronage and interests are required for the smooth running of the party system. Apart from this introduction, the rest of the paper is divided into five sections. Section one deals with theoretical framework, section two is on the party system, section three on its part is devoted to the godfather phenomenon and its manifestations, while four deals with the impact of god-fathers on political parties and democratic governance, section six which is the last concludes the paper.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework in Social Sciences serves as a means through which meaningful explanation and understanding of any particular phenomenon can be achieved. Political parties and the phenomenon of Patron-Client relationship can, therefore, be better appreciated within the Ecological framework, "Social facts" as Emile Durkhen called them.

The Ecology theory was first used in the natural science to refer to the study of mutual relationships between living organisms and their environments. Fred W. Riggs, later borrowed the concept to explain the functioning of comparative public administration, mostly in developing countries of the world. This is to account for the relationship between administration and environment in which they operate. He focused his attention on five aspects of life

1. Economic (e.g. fiscal systems)
2. Social (e.g. family and sects)
3. Symbolic (e.g. consensus and equality)
4. Communicative (e.g. literacy and newspaper circulation and)
5. Political (e.g. changes in political regime, party composition of government and personality of political leaders).

The five environmental factors that we have mentioned, have enormous direct and deep effect in transitional societies like Nigeria, and could help us to understand the relationships that exist in the formation of political parties and that of Patron-Clientelism. We wish to examine the formative stage of political parties in Nigeria by exploiting these criteria.

THE PARTY SYSTEM

Globally speaking, democracies, especially, the Western variants, perceive parties as more or less permanent institutions with the aim of aggregating interests and presenting candidates for elections with the aim of controlling governments at all times. They help to flourish and nourish democracy and the art of governance.

Herbert Simon for instance, sees the political party as "a social group" a system of independent activities characterized by a high degree of rational direction of behaviour towards ends that are objects of common acknowledgement and expectation.

To Edmund Burke, political party is "a body of men united for promoting their joint endeavours the national interest upon some political principles in which they are agreed.

Joseph Schesinger defined political party "as an organization which actively and effectively engages in a competitive elective office.

A political party by nature is different from other social groups and civil organizations such as labour unions etc. because of its unique functions of organizing public opinion, communicating demands to the centre of governmental decision-making and its entire input and output functions.

From the foregoing, every democratic state has a political system that helps the political parties to function. It is a pattern formed by all the political parties in a state. Durverger Miadrice, a French political scientist has made an elaborate classification of political parties into one party, two party and multi party systems. These systems are found in different states at different time. Africa had its share of one party model in the past, just as former communists' States of Eastern Europe, had theirs. Nigeria and some other African States still maintain the multi-party system with most of the parties existing only on the pages of News papers.

Political parties clearly have two very crucial and distinctive features viz:

- i) A political party has a leadership structure and a clear succession pattern to avoid internal crisis.
- ii) A political party should normally also have a clear-cut visions or ideology for the state (It is the ideology of a party that clearly distinguishes the ideals and foundational principles and objectives which stands it out from among others).

The functions of political parties include:

- a) Political parties promote political participation, thus mobilizes the citizenry to strengthen support and to participate in their favour.
- b) Political parties perform leadership recruitment, selecting candidate, formulating programmes, socializing and educating the citizenry, etc.
- c) Through the instrumentalities of political parties, the political attitudes and behaviours of the members could be mobilized more effectively towards the ends and goals of government.

One pivotal point to note here is that, apart from serving as a link between the rulers and the ruled, political parties performs the function of harmonizing, integrating and unifying the various interests of the people especially in a pluralistic state like Nigeria. Against this background, it is imperative to note that, any party which fails to perform these key fundamentals has no claim to call itself a political party.

Party systems are diverse and sometimes difficult to classify because of the dynamisms of political developments in many states. A party system can however be determined by the questions of number, strength and of course the configuration of party in control of governments, as a result there are one party, two party and multi-party systems.

The Party System in Nigeria: The emergence of political parties in Nigeria can be traced within the context of the evolution of nation states or the process of nation-building. This was specifically so with the emergence of specific movements or nationalist organizations to challenge existing arrangements, specifically the existence of colonial rule. Here, an amalgamation of local forces was mobilized against colonial rule, in turn, resulting in the formation of political parties to translate the dream of socio-political development into reality. Therefore, political parties began to mobilize the divergent interest towards the goals of nation integration and national development (Nnah, 2004: 298).

In Nigeria, party system began in 1922 due to the introduction of the elective principle by the Clifford's constitution. Thus, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) was formed in 1923 by a nationalist movement spearheaded by Herbert Macaulay. Its members occupied three (3) seats in the legislative council and its activities were centred around Lagos. However, the objectives of the party (NNDP) comprised of the Africanization of the civil services, attainment of local government for Lagos and provision of quality education in Nigeria to mention but a few.

As the nationalist movement became intense other political parties began to emerge, as such the Lagos Youth Movement (LYM) evolved in 1934 which later metamorphosed to the Nigeria Youth Movement (NYM) in 1936. This party contested and won all three (3) seats in the legislative council, leading to an end of the NNDP's fifteen years dominance. It's objective was to create political awareness in Nigeria and obtain complete autonomy within the British Empire.

In spite of its good intension, however, the NYM could not escape the inevitable consequence of the inexorable power of ethnic clannishness generated by the activities of the ethnic unions and their fundamental underlying basis, they objectively determined factional competition among the emerging petty bourgeoisie and comprador bourgeoisie (godfathers).

Now, how did ethnicity and regionalism come to be politicized in such a manner that it has become a fearful liability for political parties in Nigeria? The answer to this question begins with the character of the political class, especially as it was constituted in the era of the nationalist movement. The leadership of the independence movement was a petit-bourgeoisie bent on inheriting the colonial system.

The (elites or godfathers) were an incoherent group struggling to oust the colonizing power but at the same time, struggling among themselves the only tool each faction had for giving itself a separate identity and for ideological mobilization of mass support was primordial loyalties such as ethnicity and religion, (Alapiki, 2004: 88).

The political parties which evolved during this period was established along ethno-regional and religious lines, as such they include the Action Group (AG), National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) and Northern People's Congress (NPC) etc.

The AG was formed in March 1951 to explore the new constitutional development. Although in 1947, Obafemi Awolowo, its leader, had advocated ethnic constitutional regions, it was not until 1951 he formed the political party to implement this idea. The new party (AG) was founded on the assumption that, under the prevailing conditions in the country, the only certain avenue to political power was through a regional political party (Nonli, 1972: 154).

This ethnic and regional origin of the AG forced the NCNC to assume an ethno-regional character, by this act the NCNC capitulated to the vastly growing forces of ethnic chauvinism and regionalism generated in the political arena by the AG. Thus, the NCNC had always relied on the Igbo federal union as the bulwark of its support. During the period 1944 – 1947, the union was one of the most active member organizations of the party, (NCNC).

In the north by October 1951 a reactionary regional political party was formed, called the Northern People Congress (NPC). This party was formulated by some northern elites which include Dr. A.B Dikko, Mallam Amino Kanu, Abubakar Rafawa Balewa, Mallam Yahaya Gusau. It developed from a cultural organization in the north known as Jamiya Mutanem Arewa. Its objective were to encourage the north, the eradication of bribery and corruption, to obtain regional autonomy and to ensure on north, one people.

Its main problem was that the party was a conservative party and failed to accommodate some other elites or godfathers from other ethnic groups into the party, thus, the party was for northerners, by northerners and for the pursuit of objective limited to the north and northerners, (Nnoli, 1978: 157).

During this period other smaller parties were also established and they include: Northern Progressive Union (NEPU), United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), Democratic Party of Nigeria and Cameroon (DPNC), United National Independent Party (UNIP) and Niger Delta Congress, (NDC), etc

The Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU) was formed by some northern progressive elite in 1950's thus, it was a mass party. Its objective was to improve the welfare of the common people Amino Kano led it.

The United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) was formed in 1955; its leader was Joseph Tarka. It opted for the creation of a middle belt region out of the northern region.

The Democratic Party of Nigeria and Cameroon (DPNC) was a splinter group from the National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC), thus it was led by Kingsley Mbadiwe.

United National Independent Party (UNIP) broke out from the NCNC, and was led by Eyohita, the party opted for the creation of Calabar, Ogoja and Rivers State.

The Niger Delta Congress (NDC) was established in 1964 during the federal elections, it was led by Harold Dappa-Biriye and Melford Okilo. The party demanded for the creation of Rivers State.

In this regard, it is pertinent to note that, a common feature of the aforementioned political parties is intra-party conflict, distrust dirty parties, party fictionalization. However, these are even present in contemporary political parties. Thus, it is important to ask the question; to what extent can such parties contribute to national development?

However, it is important to note that politics of the first republic was characterized by strife, intense political crises, regional and ethnic polarization, violence, repression, abuses of office, corruption, intolerance etc.

The main thesis is the large stakes of state power, because the state was the main vehicle of accumulative and modernization for individuals, communities, for state power assumed desperate, cut throat warfare for survival and integrity. Thus, the premium on state power set the pace for other factors, and these scenarios persist even today.

Also the nature of competition led to a breakdown of democratic norms and behaviours or stunted any development beyond the subject political cultures. Political leaders used and did anything irrespective of constitutional rules. Thus, they failed to play by or be committed to the rules of the game. Undemocratic behaviours became the norm, as such; ethnicity, religion, and region became instruments in the warfare over state power.

These nature and instruments of competition were reinforced and heightened by the large coincidence of the cleavages of ethnicity, region and to some extent religion, in relation to political party bases and power distribution. Each regional ruling party bases her base. The Northern Progressive Congress (NPC) was determined to control federal power at all cost was just as the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) and AG wanted federal power.

Several contradiction were inherent in this coincidences these among others were the contradictions between centralism and regionalism, between the exercise of the South's economic power and the North's political power, and between parties holding on to their regional base and extending their frontiers beyond the region.

These contractions produced several conflicts such as the NCNC eastern regional crises and the AG crises respectively. Finally, these crises and several factors led to the failure and end of the first republic's democracy (Ikelegbe, 2005: 235 – 236).

During the period the AG, NCNC, and UMBC formed an alliance called the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA), for the general elections in 1964. Its main objective was to capture the government machinery at the federal level, though it failed.

The Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) was formed by the NNDP, NDC, NPC, etc. during the 1964 general election, the NNA captured the state power by winning the majority of seats in the federal parliament, thus, it produced the prime

minister in the person of Tafawa Balewa.

The political parties in the second republic (1979 – 1983) include: National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP), Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and Nigeria Advanced Party (NAP), etc.

The NPN emerged after the ban on political parties was lifted for the second republic. It was officially formed in 1978, its members include, MKO Abiola, Olusola Saraki, K. O. Mbadiwe. C. C. Onoh etc. its presidential candidate was Shehu Shagari.

Its objectives were to maintain and protect the unity and sovereignty of Nigeria, to uphold federalism as a form of government for Nigeria, to eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria etc. however, its problem was its unclear zoning system for producing its flag bearer. It won the most seats in the senate and house of representative, the success of the party in 1983 elections was marked by electoral rigging and malpractice.

The UPN was the first to emerge after the ban on political parties were lifted. It was formed on 22 September, 1978. Majority of its members were members of the defunct AG, as such, Obafemi Awolowo who was its presidential candidate for the 1979 and 1983 elections was also its leader. Its objectives were to promote free education at all levels, promote rural development and to provide free health facilities for all and provide full employment. Thus, their problems were that, it was a strong ethnic party for the Yoruba's and also over centralized its powers.

The NPP was formed in 1978 as a product of an alliance between National Council of Understanding and Solidarity (NCUS), club 19 and the Progressive Front of the Eastern States, its objectives were to promote and sustain the unity of Nigeria, achieve full employment, mobilize the rural population for meaningful development and to promote equal opportunity and education in Nigeria. Its problem was based on leadership, between Ibrahim Waziri and Azikiwe, a disagreement arose on who ought to be the party's presidential candidate. This led to the division of the party into two dimensions; Azikiwe was controlling the remaining NPP while Waziri led the other division called the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP).

This party is a faction of the NPP formed by Ibrahim Waziri, he was the party's presidential candidate for the 1979 and 1983 elections. Its objectives were to promote national unity build a vibrant economy and encourage active participation of Nigeria in international politics. Its main problem was that Waziri was authoritarian.

The PRP emerged during the 1970's its members include, Lekan Balogun, Abubakar Rimi, Samuel Ikoku and Aminu Kano, etc. Aminu Kano was its presidential candidate during the 1979 and 1983 elections. Its objectives were to Agricultural programmes, promote mass education, create new economic, social and political order, thus, its problem was that there were many factions of the party.

The NAP was formed by Tunji Braithwaite in 1978, but was not registered by the federal electoral commission (FEDECO) as a political party in order to contest in 1979 election, although it was later registered on 25th May, 1982 by FEDECO. Its objectives were to free the people from exploitation, eradicate unemployment, and promote Agriculture and malaria. Thus, its problem was based on its ideology of socialism that was not popular among Nigerians (Elegbelagha, 2004: 77).

To this extent it is observable that the political parties in the second republic experienced constant fragmentation of division. However, it will not be absurd to state that, it was a result of the political elites searching for greener pastures in order to realize their selfish interest. This is also observable in contemporary times where political elites move from party to party in an attempt to achieve their objectives.

During the third republic, thirteen political associations applied for registration but none were registered by the national electoral commission (NEC) because they failed to meet certain basic requirements. Also, they were characterized by primordial loyalties, poor organization, dirty politics, factional and separatist tendencies etc. thus, after proper scrutiny, only two political parties were registered, these include the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC), respectively.

The SDP tended towards socialism while the national republican convention was more a capitalist party. Both had a similar objective which was to develop a sustainable and self-reliant economy for Nigeria.

At the emergence of Sani Abacha's Administration, the two political parties were banned, leading to the formation of five (5) political parties, thus bringing the country back to multi-party system; these political parties include: the National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN), Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM), Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN), Congress for National Consensus (CNC) and United Nigerian Congress Party (UNCP).

Following the death of the military dictator and defacto ruler of Nigeria, General Sani Abacha in 1998, his successor General Abdusalami Abubakar initiated the transition which heralded Nigerian's return to democratic rule in 1999. The ban on political parties was lifted and political prisoners were released from detention facilities, (Wikipedia, 3/2/2011).

However, during this period three out of nine political parties were registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) the parties are: Alliance for Democracy (AD), People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All People's Party (APP). The PDP became the dominant party since it won majority seats in the local and national assembly 21 governorship elections and also the presidential election. As such in May, 1999 the former military ruler General Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn in as president and commander in chief of the federal republic of Nigeria.

The fourth republic is the current republican government of Nigeria; since 1999 it has governed the country along the fourth republican constitution. It was to some extent a revival of the second Republic (1979 – 1983) and still suffers many of its problems such as party fictionalization, distrust and dirty politics etc.

Following the multi-party system practiced in the fourth republic several political parties emerged, as such some include, Action Congress (AC), Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), All People Party (APP), All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), Democratic People's Alliances (DPA), National Democratic Party (NDP), New Democrats (ND), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Salvation Party (SP), United Nigeria Peoples Party (UNPP), etc. to mention but a few.

However, in the controversial general election on 21 April 2007, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua of the PDP was elected as the president following his death on 5th May, 2010 Goodluck Jonathan became the third president and commander in chief on the federal republic of Nigeria of the fourth republic. He was subsequently elected and sworn into office on 29th May, 2011 to serve his first term of four years which shall end in 29th May, 2015.

In this regards, it is pertinent to state that political parties in Nigeria due to their fluid and unstable nature have created more problems than providing necessary solutions to the lingering political problems in the Nigerian polity.

Lately, there is the emergence of a new party code named Alliance for Progressive Change (APC) which appears to be the leading opposition party in Nigeria, but the question many are asking is whether this new party really has a clearly defined ideology? It seems to us that, the APC like its forerunner – Action Congress (AC), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and the rest, lacks clear-cut ideology and as such are only interested in the capture of power at the centre without showing or demonstrating a well thought out alternative policy options that would bring about sustainable development in the country.

Section 222 of the 1991 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, clearly stipulates the conditions for forming a political party. According to this section, no association by whatever name it is called shall function as a political party unless:

- (a) The membership of the association is open to every citizen of Nigeria irrespective of his place of origin, circumstances of birth, sex, religion or ethnic grouping.
- (b) The name and address of its national officers are registered with the independent national commission.
- (c) A copy of its constitution is registered in the principal office of the independent Electoral Commission in such a form as may be prescribed by the independent electoral commission.
- (d) Any alteration in its registered constitution is also registered in the principal office of the independent National Electoral Commission within 30 days of making such alteration.
- (e) The symbol, name and logo does not contain any ethnic or religious constitution or reflect any geographical area of Nigeria.
- (f) The headquarters is situated in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. (g) They are also expected to have offices in all the geo-political zones. Meeting all these conditions means subsequently registered by an Commission.

THE PHENOMENON OF GODFATHERISM

Godfatherism is a symbiotic relationship between two persons namely; the godfather and the godson. The godfather uses his political power and wealth to secure political position for the godson who upon ascension into power, pays gratification to his mentor in kind or cash. In most cases, this is synonymous with Patron-Clientelism. A variant of it could be found in the writings of the elite theorists.

The first Republic of Nigeria produced dominant political figures in the likes of Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Saduana of Sokoto and some other prominent leaders. These notable political figures started their patrimonial political domination through the instrument and aid of nationalist activities of the 1950s. The educated elites, most of whom, who had only primary school education were respected for their knowledge and bravery in confronting the colonialists. They became charismatic and idolized by their people who accepted their personal opinions as the formal interests of the ethnic groups they claimed to represent. People who wanted to carve a career in politics, went to them and deferred to

their 'good judgment' in almost all things. These charismatic father figures became the divine chosen leaders of regional political groups that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s.

Group Manifestation: In the North we had the Northern people's congress that was organized around the Hausa-Fulani that dominated northern Nigeria; the Action group for the Yoruba-dominated south -west, and the NCNC for the Igbo-dominated eastern Nigeria. The role of godfathers at this time was to politically guide Nigerians to free themselves from what was seen as an oppressive colonial system. As widely noted during this era, attempts were guided towards teaching the followers how to disrespect the white man who was inclined to rule the indigenous natives forever. The political godfathers included the late Saduana of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello, who led the National People Congress (NPC); Chief Obafemi Awolowo who led the Action Group (AG), and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe who led the National Council of Nigerian and the Cameroon (NCNC). Some of the other elder statesmen that fell into this category in Nigerian politics include Mallam Aminu Kano and Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim. They dictated who could occupy political offices in the geo-political regions they led and where they served as clearing houses for political opportunities.

The godsons of Sir Ahmadu Bello later became a mythical political cabal, known as the Kaduna mafia in Nigerian politics. The godsons of the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo in South-Western Nigeria, collectively known as Afenifere (those who wish others well) included the late Bola Ige, Alhaji Lateef Jakande, and Bisi Onabanjo, all of whom were state governors during the second republic in Nigerian history (1979-1983). Dr. Azikiwe's godsons in eastern Nigeria included Chief Jim and Chief Sam Mbakwe, both of whom were also governors in Anambra and Imo States respectively from 1979 to 1983. Abubakar Remi and Alhaji Balarabe Musa, who were governors of Kano and Kaduna states during the second republic, both recognized Alhaji Aminu Kano as their political godfathers throughout his lifetime. The only difference between these early godfathers in Nigerian history and their contemporary peers is that they supported and nurtured their godsons to grow in their image and ideology. They emphasized on developmental issues and not personal wealth.

Some of the godsons nurtured by the earlier elites later synthesized into godfathers themselves. Many of them, however, failed to imbibe the commitment to democracy needed for reproducing the type of godfathers that produced them. In south-west, many claimed and still claim to be followers of Chief Obafemi Awolowo. They dress like Awolowo and profess his political ideals but something else.

Levels of Manifestation of Godfatherism: Five types of political godfathers are discernible under the Nigerian political dispensation. The first is geo-political or ethnic based where the godfathers claim the right to decide who represents the group interests in government. Such organizations include (Afenifere) the Yoruba socio- cultural organization. The Arewa consultative front (ACF), was and is still projected as the authentic voice of the north and the (Ohaneze) the Pan- Igbo cultural group that propagates the claim that is the only organization with the power to determine Igbo interests. The powers of all these organizations seem to be receding recently to an extent where their candidates for political offices are often defeated by those sponsored by other godfathers. The second category consists of prominent but individual ethnic father figures who are popularly respected by some members of the public where they belong to, as a result of some past nationalist engagements or activities. - They might have occupied public positions in the past, and accepted to have served their people to the best of their ability. Their political opinions are thus much respected. The best known example of this class of godfathers include late Nigerian minister for Justice, Chief Bola Ige, who was the deputy leader of Afenifere, but later maintained an influence in Yoruba politics that towered above that of

the pan-ethnic group. He was a godfather to many south-western Nigerian governors between 1999 and 2003 and was considered to be mentored by the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo. During his tenure as the executive governor of the defunct Oyo State (1979-1983), his performance was idolized by his people who acknowledged him as an exponent of 'free education and free health' policies of the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo. He was believed to have played a prominent role in the choice of the governors of Oyo and Osun states during the 1999 elections. His name consistently came up during the Bisi Akande's regime. (One thing with this set of godfathers is that they are well-known and have the support of grassroots people. The respect people have for them is also tied to concrete) developmental Issues.

The third category of political godfathers consists of some rich Nigerians who perceive the sponsorship of political candidates as a source of upward social and economic mobility. Such politicians are around, like a typical business man looking for materials (not necessarily marketable) to invest their money. Their clients are usually people who do not have sufficient grassroots support or funds to run for political office. The candidates are assured of easy and available assistance in exchange for some personal benefits after election. The assistance could take any form but is hardly through any honest political activity.

The fourth type of godfathers consists of those who only deal with rich clients. Such people, for want of appropriate terminology, can be said to be political entrepreneurs. They live on politics. The only asset they have is that they are well schooled in the tricks of winning elections among the grassroots people. They are familiar with all constituencies and engages what it takes to win the grass root over. The contractual relationship between the two is simple: the clients provide the money and the godfather delivers the votes. In other words, this category of godfathers does not invest their own money but that of their clients in politics. In exchange, they are accorded important status in government formed by their clients after election and are entitled to juicy contracts as well as slots in ministerial appointments.

The fifth type of godfathers consists of rich patrons who are willing to provide what it takes for either rich or poor clients to win elections. They are willing to provide poor candidates with money and logistic support to win elections and also ready to contribute to the campaign funds of rich candidates as well as provide them with necessary support. The interest here is to secure the recognition as the prime godfather that calls the tune over all other godfathers. In other words, nobody wins an election without this category of godfathers.

Godfatherism normally thrives in an enabling environments that houses and encourages profit-motivated political patrons, a pliable political process that serves the interest of a few in the society, a weak civil society, an inept electoral system and a greedy mass media that is willing to serve the interest of the highest bidder.

The founders of many political parties often have agenda, positions, interests, and needs that are in most cases kept secret, but embedded in their political manifestos. Those who want to do well in the parties have to attend secret meetings in the house of the various godfathers. This provides them with access to privileged information about party 'processes and programmes and how to navigate them. To enhance their own positions in the party, the godfathers ensure that party officials are over-regulated. The regulations in this system are themselves devices that render the political process easier for the manipulation of both state and national party officials. To be able to survive under this type of system, politicians must be ready to supplant the general will of the people under the selfish interests of the politicians and their parties. This goal becomes easier to achieve in any society that contains an army of unemployed youths, willing to be used to attain illegal objectives. Things work better where the political environment in which all

these are taking place consists of a docile 'anything-goes' civil society. Another important factor that enables godfatherism to flourish in Nigeria is the existence of a malleable criminal and social justice system. Godfathers are powerbrokers in Nigerian politics. People throng into and out of their houses on a daily basis, running errands or seeking one favour or the other. The relationship between political godfather and their political sons is usually transactional in nature: it is cases of "rub my back and I rub your back" as Nigerians say. Like every businessman, godfathers invest in their grandsons with expectation of returns after elections. This is often through juicy ministerial appointments, contracts, land allocation and sharing of political influence and power with Political office incumbents. This may include the unjustified demand for allocation of state financial resources which leads to dislocations in the ability of Government to run the society efficiently.

The favours a godfather demands and gets from his godson are for strategic reasons. In most cases, he asks for the right to nominate about eighty percent of those to serve in the cabinet of his godson. Many godfathers also ensure that they control majority of the members of the state houses of assembly in Nigeria. They readily use these nominees to threaten the governors with impeachment anytime there is a disagreement. All these strategic antics provide a godfather with the effective control of the regime he helped to put in place. His nominees in the regime are also another source of money-making. This enables the godfather to eat with both hands. As the principal godsons bring monthly kola (ransom fees) to the godfather, those imposed on him as commissioners, permanent secretaries, board chairmen etcetera also make similar monthly payments. At the end of the day, the godfather makes more money from the political process than any other person. This enables him to become a more powerful godfather and engage in more un-stabilizing political activities.

THE IMPACT OF GODFATHERISM ON DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL PARTIES

Godfatherism in Nigerian politics is a contest between elitism and democracy. Elitism, as Welsh (1979:10) argued, is a system in which the exercise of political control by a small number of persons is institutionalized in the structure of government and political activity. The typical godfather in Nigeria politics basically seeks to manipulate state officials and institutions for his own interests. Conflicts occur only when clients refuse to be manipulated. This kind of situation does not augur well for the development and growth of a democratic Political System. Democracy has to do with the protection of the interests of all and should not only be focused on the narrow interest of the privileged in the society. The matter becomes more serious when the intention of these powerful elites is to exploit the state.

The other point that must be made is that true democracy comes from the grassroots and not from the top; it evolves from effective participation of the citizenry in the political process. In a democracy, the governed does not only come out to exercise their voting rights, they also have the right to be voted for. Political godfathers use their influence to block the participation of others in Nigerian politics and this affects the fabric of the Political System and democracy. The godfathers operate as political gatekeepers by dictating who participates in politics and under what conditions. This kind of situation promotes mediocrity and financial corruption as the incumbent godson is at pains to satisfy the whims and caprices of the godfather among other competing demands on the scarce resources of government. The interest of the larger number of the citizenry is savagely undermined. Any godson who fails to cooperate with the godfather is subjected to all forms of humiliations and possible political violence.

Godfatherism is one of the most important factors responsible for electoral malpractices in Nigeria. The seriousness of the problem here is better appreciated when we face the fact that there are many godfathers contesting for recognition at every election. The godfather assures his clients of electoral success. This explains why elections in Nigeria are usually a contest of power between godfathers. They come out with all the tricks that could assist their candidates to achieve victory. The tricks include multiple voting, exchanges of official ballot boxes, chasing voters away from constituencies where their candidates are likely to have few votes, killing and wounding political opponents, etcetera. Such activities help to instigate violence and counter violence during elections. This partly explains why most elections in Nigeria are not violent free, and/or characterized by endemic wide spread corruption/violence and the resultant effects is the lack of sustainability of democratic tenets and principles that guarantee sustainable development in the nations body polity. However, it is hoped that the current efforts by President Goodluck Jonathan and PDP would change the game for good.

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. Godsons who have problems with their god fathers should openly provide information on the type of problems they are consequently subjected to. This exposure could aid the democratic governance of the country by humiliating the .god father and revealing to the public how the Political elites manipulate elections in the country, that would ultimately culminate into the sustenance of the democratization process, which in-turn shall engender the sustainability of the development efforts of successive political parties and emergent governments in Nigeria in future. The National Orientation Agency should intensify the use of regular campaign within the grass root or local government areas as an instrument of public enlightenment to lessen the activities of the godfathers.

As pointed out by other commentators, observers and opinion holders, the generality of the people need to be intensely educated on the need for a clean democratic electoral process. It is the 'people' that are actually manipulated by monetary gifts, religion or ethnic considerations by the godfathers to abuse the electoral system and democracy. They should stand up and refuse these offers. This paper therefore urge the godfathers to be exemplary in their conduct and role, this they could do by playing according to the rules of the game (rule of law) by so doing they would become good statesmen that would become role models in society.

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