

Monetization of Politics and Democracy in Nigeria



*Proceedings of the 2021 General Assembly of the Social
Science Academy of Nigeria*

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Compiled by

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Editorial Introduction

In living up to its responsibility, the Social Science Assembly of Nigeria recently organized two conferences, - the first in December 2020 was on the theme of exclusion in all ramifications in Nigeria; and the second was as part of its biannual General Assembly on the theme of *Monetization of Politics and Democracy in Nigeria*.

Papers were presented and discussed and the authors received comments for further revisions.

These proceedings are published with some editorial changes. However, substantive issues such conceptual, methodological, and analytical aspects in the papers therein may not have been adequately addressed by the authors in the course of revisions. The authors will undeniably assume full responsibility for opinions and lapses in them.

The proceedings are a testimony that papers were presented at the General Assembly held May 31 to June 4, 2021. The key note was singled out and published in the *Annals of the Social Academy of Nigeria, 2020 issue* (see the Academy's web site)

We acknowledge the comments of the various participants at the General Assembly who are too numerous to mention individually. We also acknowledge the support of Ford Foundation support for the conference.

As you read the proceedings, we remind you that our Journal, the *Annals of the Social Science Academy of Nigeria*, accepts and publishes scholarly works.

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Democracy and Money Politics in Nigeria: Dilemmas of Private Gains and Public Losses¹

Ogoh Alubo

Introduction

I deeply appreciate the privilege to deliver the keynote address of the General Assembly of the Social Science Academy of Nigeria. This is a unique honour which I will always treasure. It gives me the opportunity to speak to an audience of which many are revered names in the Social Sciences and Development Studies. I understand that the audience also includes policy makers and executors as well as fellow travellers in the academia. There is little else I could ask for!

The theme for the Assembly, *Democracy and Money Politics*, couldn't be timelier. Nigeria's democracy is still young, barely 22 years, but some characteristics are beginning to emerge; among them money politics which does not contribute positively to the growth of our adolescent democracy. It is therefore anticipated that the deliberations of this Assembly will contribute to the discourse of growth and sustenance of democracy. As used here democracy is a form of government in which the people elect their leaders to carry their voices and aspirations to the various levels—local council, State and federal. Ours is a situation that democracy cannot be divorced from development; it is above all else, a process of enhancing Nigeria's development. The form of democracy, including its processes, elections and its nature are part of the

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issues which facilitate or constitute cogs on the wheel of development.

I take liberty of this opportunity to examine the theme and some subthemes for the Assembly. I begin with the nature of money politics in Nigeria; thereafter I focus on its impact on democracy and what is commonly referred to as dividends of democracy or simply the extent to which democracy brings development and good governance. I will conclude by exploring alternatives to current funding by money bags and likely challenges to be encountered.

Democracy is perhaps the most preferred form of government the world over. This preference is primarily because it gives the people a voice in how policies are made and implemented and how the country, and the various levels of State and local councils are run. The appeal of democracy is understandable, the challenge is about the processes, the minimum tally of which includes party formation and membership recruitment, electioneering campaigns and mobilization, election itself and post-election communications (Bande, 2014; Onah and Nwali, 2017). Each of these processes is a line item in the budget such as party workers/mobilizers, campaign workers, publicity materials such as T shirts, advertisement, all of which require money. In the Nigerian context where there is little crowd/community funding, money is provided mostly by financiers; derisively called money bags. Ultimately, these financiers become the *de facto* owners of the party with all the powers which come with ownership such as key decisions of which candidates should become flagbearers for the various positions (Ayeni, 2019; Adetula, 2008; Walecki 2008; Onah and Nwali, 2017). Fanciers also wield undue influence over appointments to the executive and even the legislature and judiciary. As Adetula put it:

¹ Keynote address delivered to the Social Science Academy of Nigeria General Assembly, May 31-June 4, 2021, Newton Park Hotel, Abuja.

..in many political parties, the decision making, resources allocation, and the nomination of candidates for political appointments are dominated by a few rich and influential members referred to as 'god fathers' (Adetula, 2008: xxiii).

The implications for internal democracy of the political parties are profound, decision making which ought to be a collective process yields to the dominance of money (Egwu, 2014). Democracy, especially its major vehicle, political party, is conceived as bottom-up structure rather than a contrivance "owned" by the powerful financiers.

I contend that while the process of democracy involves money, how money is obtained may circumscribe the process. This situation derives in large part from the practice, rather than the conception of democracy, which in Nigeria's case has become a form of financial investment. Many people running for office borrow money, similar to procuring facilities from banks to engage in business. There is an emergent form of plutocracy where the rich invest money and hope to reap profits when they sponsored candidates win.

Absence of Ideology and Emergence of Politics as Financial Investment

The nature of politics, it goes without saying, varies from one national context to the other. In the developed countries such as the UK, US and Western Europe, there are fewer political parties. What the parties stand for and their ideological foundations are well understood by the electorate. Recruitment process becomes a matter of the philosophical bases which best appeals to the people. There are parties which stand for the workers and the weak such as Labour in the UK, just as there are also parties which protect the propertied class and aristocracy, the Conservatives (Tory) in the UK. In a similar manner the Democratic Party in the US now

protects the racial minorities, workers and women. There is the Republican Party which places more emphasis on investments, profits and lower business taxes than on welfare. Also called the Grand Old Party, the Republican Party was formed in 1854 and supported free labour as distinct from slave labour which was dominant in the southern half of the US. The party supports free market capitalism, lower taxes and high profits for investors. By 2020, it has produced 19 of the 45 Presidents and supports traditional power over social pluralism. There are also smaller parties most of which operate at the State, even county, levels. The choice between the two large parties is an ideological one and hence rarely would anyone defect.

The difference between Democrats and Republicans has not always been the case as there has been some change in leanings of both Democrats and Republicans. As [Natalie Wolchover](#) (2020) has argued, there is a *de facto* switching of platform between the two parties. What is more, the Republican Party has adjusted its ideology to accommodate wider numbers since the last quarter century. In the words of Stiglitz,

The Republican Party has understood that it could represent the interests of business elites only by embracing anti-democratic measures (including voter suppression and gerrymandering) and allies, including the religious fundamentalists, white supremacists and nationalist populists (Stiglitz 2021).

Political parties in Nigeria rarely espouse any ideology (Ayoade, 2008). The standard staple comprises statements about peace, progress and "moving Nigeria forward" in a situation which often assembles strange bedfellows just for purposes of winning elections (Ayoade, 2008:86). These ideas have become general shibboleths to which all political parties subscribe; there would be none which espouses the contrary. The general ideas are therefore reminiscent

of what the Americans compare to motherhood and apple pie—to which all subscribe.

Ideology in the Beginning

The first parties in Nigeria were the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) founded in 1923 by Herbert Macaulay, followed by the Nigerian Youth movement which was initially a pressure group which metamorphosed into a party in 1936. These parties were confined to Lagos and the southern half of Nigeria (Abba and Babalola, 2017, Momoh 2014). The parties of the First Republic (1960-1966) were National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), which was formed in 1944 as a broader organization from the Igbo State Union. The Action Group which was formed in 1948 had roots in *egbe omo Oduduwa*, the pan Yoruba cultural association. Its activities were confined to Western Nigeria. In a similar manner the Northern People's Congress (NPC) formed in 1951 evolved from the *Jammiyyaar Mutanen Arewa* (Northern People's Congress). The three parties were all regional and exercised the ethnic agenda of the majority ethnic groups. Their ideology was not different from general worldview of the ethnic region and the dominant ethnic groups (Momo, 2014:85; Liebowitz, and Ibrahim, 2013).

Some of the parties have a clear ideological position, the Peoples Redemption Party, PRP, was radically pro labour and propoor, the *talakawa*. The Unity Party of Nigeria, UPN, was also ideologically to the left. According to Abba and Babalola,

Ideologically, the NPN, like the old NPC, was a conservative party in the sense that it made no pretext about changing the class nature of Nigerian society....., and is also committed to the preservation of traditional institutions. Both the NPP and the GNPP articulated liberalist ideas and programmes to function within a mixed economy. The UPN, like the defunct AG was a

party with socialist/welfarist agenda like free education, free healthcare and so on. The PRP offered members of the left a platform for the struggle for power in the country. All the parties except the NPN were built around one man (UPN-Awolowo; NPP-Azikiwe; PRP-Aminu Kano; and GNPP-Ibrahim Waziri). These parties were personalised around their leaders who were in turn seen as patrons (2017:121-2).

In the botched Third Republic, all attempts to form parties were jettisoned by the military. In the end, the military President decreed two political parties, the Social Democratic Party and the National Republican Convention. As President Babangida expressed it, the first was a 'little to the left', and the second was a 'little to the right' in terms of ideological disposition (Alubo, 1989; Momoh, 2014; Liebowitz, and Ibrahim, 2013:4).

There is an absence of ideology simultaneously with it, the new conception of politics as a form of business investment. This new conception derives from the vast opportunities that come with many elected positions such as award of contracts, influencing location of many projects such as siting of universities, airports, agricultural projects, etc. The *raison d'être* of business is to make profits which has become the prime motive in politics. Mohammed Sa'id, former Minister of Environment in the Obasanjo regime expressed it eloquently:

These days, politics is not what it used to be. To be in politics now, you need to have money. It is like business; you invest so that when you go into office you get your money back and make profit... (2021:33)

What is more, politics has become brazenly about what's in it for the contestants; they are ready to 'chop' by all means:

We have no political ideologies, unless you count what is cynically called the politic of stomach infrastructure as our own

preferred ideology. We join political parties not because of what they stand for in terms of their commitment to public good but by what we can personally gain either the main dish on the table of the crumbs below the table (Agbese, 2021:16).

In keeping with the new conception, the financiers protect their investment through close supervision to ensure returns on investment. As Abubakar Momoh, put it, “There is symbiotic relationship between the godfather and the godson: the godfather invests his resources in the godson and the godson must, or at least should, on getting into office reciprocate by reimbursing his godfather in kind and keeping absolute loyalty to the godfather in all respects” (Momoh, 2014:91). In other situations, the influence of the godfather is overbearing to the point of reversing decisions of the executive (Ayoade, 2008: 90) to the embarrassment of the executive, as long as the godfather achieves his dominance. In a celebrated case, what I here call private gains, in Anambra State; the financier had almost total control over the state finances; salaries were unpaid for months, strikes were interminable, frustrations abound. After some disagreement, the godfather, Chris Uba ensured the governor, Chris Ngige, did not return in the next election. The same scenario was played out between Governor Mbadinuju and Emeka Offor, the financier (Ayoade, 2008: 91-2).

There is also the proliferation of parties similar to economic diversification in business. The logic here seems to improve the chances for the desired position, which if it fails in one party, the candidate tries another—usually a weaker party which may be little rooted in the State or local councils. In the 2017 elections a candidate did not obtain the opportunity to contest House of Representatives in one of the constituencies, she simply changed parties from the People’s Democratic Party PDP, to All Progressive Grand Alliance, APGA, and obtained not only the party ticket but also won the election (Ochayi, 2019). Other examples abound, including top politicians like Abubakar Atiku former presidential candidate, Ayo

Fayose former Governor, and Orji Uzor Kalu, also former Governor (Momoh, 2014:94). A celebrated case was the Edo Governorship election in September 2020 where the incumbent, Governor Godwin Obaseki, changed parties because he was denied the ticket in APC; he turned to the opposition, PDP. He easily obtained the ticket for Governorship and proceeded to win in the polls (Sunday, 2019).

Party switching could occur at any stage of the political process. Many change parties to obtain a desired position, while others change to consolidate such as becoming a member of the leading party. In December 2020, Governor David Umahi of Ebonyi State defected from PDP to APC. Abubakar Momoh (2014) has aptly called this process a form of political nomadism.

The role of money in politics is not unique to Nigeria neither is the substantial influence of money bags on the political system. Individual and corporate organizations use money to ingratiate themselves with the government of the day. In the year 2000, the Germany construction company, Julius Berger Nigeria donated 200 million Naira to the ruling PDP at a fundraising dinner (Ayeni, 2019); in a similar logic the French oil company ELF had a slush funding to support elections in Africa, in return for exclusive access to oil reserves. It also made illegal payment to the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s Christian Democratic Union to facilitate the purchase of Leuna Refinery in East Germany (Walecki, 2008:3). There are other examples such as the January 2021 elections in Niger Republic. In neighbouring Niger, Dahiru Mangal poured 100 vehicles into election in support of Mohammed Banzoun of Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism (PNDS-Tarayya) (Anonymous 2020). The election went into a re-run but Banzoun won with over 55% of the votes in February 2021. As in other cases, the purpose of the seeming largesse is the same—part of politics as investment.

Even in the US, political financing not only occurs but has similar consequences—money supports interests. As Sarah Repucci

recently showed: there is influence of money in politics and policymaking. Because election campaigns have become so costly, she continued:

politicians are dependent on major donors, whose priorities in turn receive privileged treatment. The problem is bipartisan: in the 2020 election, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden reportedly received some \$645 million from just 227 billionaire donors; Republican candidate Donald Trump received more than \$336 million from 132 billionaire donors (Repucci, 2021:9).

There is a gender dimension in it all; political investment is based on feasibility studies which seem to inform reasons why financiers avoid investing in women. Overall, women are poorer than men and therefore unable to mobilize the resources to run for office (Best, 2008). It is now common knowledge that items for political investment include bags of rice, washing detergent, and bath soaps. There are also known distributions of money especially at the polling booths; different rates are on offer depending on the generosity or desperation of the sponsors. This free distribution of money is not different from the disguised form such as *tradermoni* and *marketmoni* which the ruling party rolled out during the campaigns for 2019 elections.

Furthermore, because of ongoing dominance of patriarchy which excludes women from opportunities to make money, the financiers are reluctant to invest in female candidates who are regarded as “bad investment”, or “bad market”. The process of exclusion of women boils down to labelling of which there are several. Some are labelled as culturally deviant because they are acting “in ways that contradict their culture” (Liebowitz and Ibrahim 2013:13)

What is more

Most women are also marginalized within their party hierarchies particularly in the most established parties. In recounting their

various experiences, some of the women who contested in the 1999 and 2003 primaries reported pressures from the party chieftains to step aside for or handover their victory to their preferred candidates, whom the women could not oppose and hope to win. The belief that women contestants would not succeed in securing the much needed victory for their parties was shown in the replacement with male candidates who mostly were said to have been in the party much [longer] earlier than the women (Best 2008, 59-60).

A study of women’s political participation in parts of Nasarawa and Southern Kaduna at the grassroots (Alubo, 2008) found that the odds were heavily stacked against them, and these include:

- Rigid gender roles which partition activities into male and female spheres and politics is regarded as excluded from women’s roles;
- Women are overburdened by household chores which leave little time to attend political meetings;
- Women who engage in politics are called unflattering names, and urged to desist;
- High levels of violence and thuggery discourage them;
- Little support from family, community and even the political parties;
- Lower levels of education in general and political education (Alubo, 2008:44-45), they are less politically educated and may not know what offices are up; have narrower networks; have less community support and above all, have less money to invest (Alubo, 2008: 44-45)

Experiences in Nigeria show the central role of money in the political process. For virtually all offices, the contestants all relatively rich; richer than other residents. Thus, hardly would any poor person be found among governorship candidates, national assembly and even LGA councillor elections. This reality reinforces what is

sometimes called the Matthew effect—to him who has will more be given. As Onah and Nwali (2017:234) expressed it, money dominates all aspects of the political process from nominations to election, including the 1999 elections and others in 2003, 2027:

money was the main yardstick in admission into party cadres....it is ultimately the candidate who has the best prospects of mobilizing the most funds that eventually receives the nomination..... All election processes]were a game of those with money, from party nominations to election.

The Challenges and Pitfalls of Money Politics

Money is needed to run political parties and indeed all political processes; the question therefore becomes how to provide it. All political parties have enrolment figures and also attempt to raise funds through launchings and dinners. Proceeds from such activities amount only to a fraction of the resource requirements; the situation paves the way for funders. Also called money bags, godfathers and owners of the party (Momoh, 2014:84), they are the ones who virtually dictate how the party is run. All of Nigeria's parties have godfathers such as All People's Grand Alliance, APGA, which harvests the followership of Odumegwu Ojukwu; Action Congress, and its successor Action Congress of Nigeria, ACN which relies on Bola Tinubu; Orji Uzor Kalu supports of Progressive People's Party, PPA and Muhammadu Buhari support for the Congress for Progressive change, CPC Momoh, 2014:84)

Godfatherism is investment for which the logic is to yield profits and the godfather stops at nothing to protect his investment,

There is a symbiotic relationship between the godfather and the godson, the godfather "invests" his resources in the godson and the godson must, at least should, on getting into office reciprocate by reimbursing his god father in kind and keeping

absolute loyalty to the godfather in all respects, including decision making whilst in public office. The key role of all godfathers is [to] rule by proxy (Momoh, 2014:91)

The influence of money on politics is not just about needed resources; there are other effects such as overbearing influence on the parties. Typically, notions of collective decision making are ignored in favour of what the owners of the parties want; ownership is asserted. Also, there are issues of internal democracy which ultimately becomes a contest between "owners" of the party and the other members (See Egwu, 2014). The ideal internal democracy is bottom -up approach where power resides at all levels (Egwu, 2014:192). Dominance continues when a political party wins state elections; it is through such dominance and manipulation that investors can quickly recoup and reap profits.

There are three main areas in which godfathers seem to control, namely: 1. Choice of candidates, 2. formation of cabinets, and 3. Party structures, including discipline. Irrespective of what the party constitution contains, godfathers have imposed candidates who either did not participate in the primaries at all or did not win. According to Egwu in the 2007 elections the governorship candidates in Adamawa, Taraba, Niger, Kebbi, Rivers, Imo, and Sokoto candidates who contested and won the Governorship did not take part in the primaries which, is notionally, a requirement for emerging as a candidate. They also rig elections by the use of thugs and/or writing results which have little bearing with what happened at the polls and inducing the electoral officers to inflate returns. In March 2021 Prof Obang, a returning officer was jailed in Akwa Ibom for rigging on behalf of a candidate. Furthermore, when elections for Presidency and Governorship are won, the dominance continues as "the ultimate aim of a political godfather is to take over the machinery of governance by determining who takes the juicy cabinet positions" (Egwu, 2014:193). It is also known that party structures such as chairman and members of the National

Working Committee are controlled by them. This means that the godfathers also control the parties and protect their anointed sons/daughters. The problem is complicated in a context like Nigeria where funding is provided mainly by “owners of the party”; crowd or community funding is almost unknown. All this means that the party is outside the control of members and therefore a step towards dictatorship of the rich or some form of plutocracy.

Other implications of the status quo include the dominance of political leadership by older people, including some who assumed leadership since the First Republic. Nigerians accept that “the young shall grow” but where politics is dominated by older people who recycle themselves, there is the challenge to breeding fresh leadership.

The influence of money extends to poor delivery of what Nigerians call democracy dividends, what I here call the public losses. I will cite a few examples which indicate how the current APC government’s spectacular failure, especially in security of lives and property. In addition to poor economic performance which saw Nigeria plunged into recession twice within six years, there are regular kidnappings, robbery and violence, and famers-herders conflicts.

Catalogue of Public Losses

A minimum tally of these untoward situations includes the following:

1. The management of the corona pandemic in the country is less than transparent; after one year, less than 1.5 million Nigerians have been tested. Figures about infection are regularly announced without explanations about what age groups, and where in town most transmissions occur. On May 10, it announced lockdown and within 24 hours reversed itself, apparently because it must avoid disrupting the Eid payers which are due in three days.

2. Appointments to federal para-statal show gross nepotism in spite of commitments to federal character. Bishop Hassan Kukah has said up to 85% of these have gone to Muslim Hausa /Fulani. There is little provision for women and youths in these appointments.
3. After the massacre of some 48 farmers in Borno in the last quarter of 2020, Presidential spokesman, Garba Shehu, as if to add insult to injury, said they did not obtain security clearance to be on their farms.
4. Before that provocative utterance, Femi Adesina, another President’s spokesman said those defending ancestral land from Fulani invasion need to be alive to do so, effectively surrender the land or risk death.
5. Bala Mohammed, Governor of Bauchi said herdsmen have rights to carry AK 47; earlier he said the Fulani are global citizens and can appropriate land anywhere.
6. Minister of Defence Bashir Magashi said that Nigerians should not be cowards; people should be bold to confront invaders/assailants who after all have only about three rounds of ammunition. <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2021-02-18/defence-minister-tells-nigerians-not-to-be-cowards-when-facing-gunme>
7. Kawu Bura, a former chieftain of PDP but now in APC, alleged that Fulani mercenaries were imported to Nigeria to “assist” with the 2015 elections but have failed to return to their countries are responsible for the wave of criminality, including robbery and kidnapping. <https://www.thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2021/02/04/insecurity-apc-imported-fulani-herdsmen-for-2015-election-baraje-alleges/>

8. Nigeria, has in the past three years witnessed persistent robberies, brigandage and kidnappings such that at any point in time there are kidnapped victims being held. It is a tale of robberies, banditry and kidnapping especially in the North West, North east and North central regions. Further, schools have become frequent targets such as Chibok in April 9, 2014; Dapachi February 19, 2018; Kankara, December 11 2020; Kagara February 17, 2021 and Jangebe (Zamfara State), February 26, 2021. The victims from Kagara were still being held when the Zamfara attack took place. On March 11, some 39 students in a hospital in Mando, next door to a major military formation, the Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna; they were released after 55 days. This happened in spite of the pledge by the President that the Zamfara would be the last school kidnap. There was further kidnapping in Greenfield University, five were killed, others still held since April 21 (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/23/nigerian-kidnappers-kill-3-abducted-students-in-rising-violence>). Minister of Information said kidnapping is not a federal offence, meaning FGN does not have to deal with it. On May 5, it was the turn of Abia State University where an unspecified number were kidnapped <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/05/breaking-gunmen-abduct-unspecified-number-of-abia-varsity-students/>

Kidnappings are unrelenting and no places are spared: On April 25, Baptist church was attacked, some worshippers were killed and others kidnapped (Masadomi, 2021); in the week of May 10 there was robbery in two official residences in Aso Rock.

Information Minister Lai Mohammed said “the federal government has the capacity to crush Boko Haram/ISWAP terrorists in the north-east and bandits in the north-western parts of the country.” “the terrorists most often than not operate among the populace, either in our villages or towns, hence the military in tackling them, is usually careful to avoid

collateral damage.” So what’s the problem? The week before two nurses on night duty were kidnapped in a hospital

When these kidnappings are viewed in the broader context of community attacks, the indications point to government’s incapacity to protect citizens and hence the ascendancy of kidnappers and marauders. Some say the bandits and kidnappers occupy *ungoverned spaces* where they could literally do as they please. Wole Soyinka has described the situation as a war, Daily Trust (April 30, 2021) called it Madness

9. The President, Muhammadu Buhari, only reads prepared speeches rather than talk to the people, granting interviews are out of the question. Garba Shehu—and other spoke persons—have become his alter ego. There are a few other democracies where this happens.
10. As a further illustration of poor governance, routine matters such as payment of public of service salaries has no fixed date, stretching on many occasions into the first or even second week of the next month. The aged old payday no longer holds. Yet, workers can obtain facilities from Banks for investments and other purposes, for which repayment dates need to be agreed.
11. Suddenly, Nigerian National Identity, NIN, is imposed on as a requirement for using mobile phone. This demand has compelled anxious Nigerians to mass in large numbers in National Identity Management Commission, NIMC, offices to obtain this-all at a time of social distancing consequent on COVID-19. We are yet to be provided any cogent rationale for this.
12. There are questions about delivery of democracy dividends: railways, running key institutions such as schools and health care and economy. The frustrations are in every direction:

security, education, transportation, employment; despondency and hopelessness confront Nigerians.

The economic base has grown weaker with factory closures (some spurred by Covid-19), high unemployment and growing despondency. The exchange rate has collapsed from N150/\$1 in 2015 when Buhari became President to the current N490/\$1 all in an import dependent economy. Government's policies are producing more hardships: in 2020 between May and November the pump price of petrol was increased seven times. The announcement about lifting 100 million out of poverty which came after Nigeria became the poverty capital of the world has so far little substance.

There is little question about the nature of private gains which accrue to funders/ investors and their cronies. They control what happens in the States and federal government by prioritizing their returns to investment and gains over public good. The overall goal of democracy is to bring development but Nigeria's experience is that this goal is generally elusive. Ours is a colossal failure both in terms of example of democracy and also in relation to bringing development. There must be alternatives to the current despondency which the cohabitation of private gains at the expense of public losses has thrust on the country.

What is to be done?

We have seen the problems and how the quest for private gains has foisted losses on the Nigerian public. So, what is to be done? While there are no easy answers those who want real democracy must not throw up their arms in surrender. I propose more monitoring and engagement with the elected in various levels of government and alternative funding mechanisms. Currently, there is a wide gulf between the elected and the constituencies they represent; the former are seen more around the Executive and

hardly available to dialogue and engage with the people. This opportunity should be demanded and where there is no response options of recall and voting out should be explored.

The situation of the nature of democracy and its poor governance (public losses) will remain until some alternative funding mechanism is explored. I will mention these in the concluding section. Nigeria has many community development and ethnically based associations (Alubo, 2006), many of which were the nucleus for the first political parties. These associations raise funds and engage in community development efforts such as road and bridge construction, schools, clinics and provision of water. These associations can be mobilized to fund parties. Already, many comprise gender, age, religious categories which can be harvested to ensure such interests are protected. What is needed is a bottom-up funding mechanism.

There is also the alternative of efforts in lieu of the current "money for pocket back for ground". A mobilized community can provide many activities which ordinarily will require money. Communities can be mobilized to carry out campaign door-to-door and in places of works, markets and in their various associations. When such contacts are made, they can also be employed for voter mobilization and actual voting. This is the situation in the US where even school children have donated small amounts (such as \$5) to their preferred candidates.

A situation of community involvement will also create more control over the parties and thus lead to better internal democracy. When the party comprises groups and associations, such bodies can nominate representatives at the various levels, who will be required to keep the associations informed.

Realizing the above proposal will require a reorientation away from politics as business venture to a process through which people can govern themselves, ensure party democracy and bring development. The challenge would therefore include the extent of political

education, new conscientization and extent to which the moneybags will be kept at bay. It will not be easy especially where the godfathers are throwing money around. But without alternatives Nigeria's democracy is destined to be imperilled. The challenge is how to wrestle democracy from the modern kidnappers of collective aspirations.

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2

Emergent Plutarchy, Neopatrimonialism and the Crisis of Political Corruption in Nigeria

Chike F. Okolocha

Introduction

We prepare for elections as if we are going to war...parties and candidates together spent during the (2003) election more than would have been needed to fight a successful war...elective offices become mere commodities to be purchased by the highest bidder and those who literarily invest merely to see it as an avenue to recoup and make profits... Politics becomes business and the business of politics becomes merely to divert public funds from the crying needs of our people for real development in their lives – Olusegun Obasanjo (Adetula, 2008).

The (political) parties have tried to hide the role of money in politics...what they have made obvious is (that) money is the defining character (of) election: no money, no contest, no money, no office. This has made democracy the preserve of the rich – Ideyat Hassan (Ewokor, 2018)

To a great but varying extent and across the world, irrespective of political philosophies and ideologies, the state has domineering power over society and every sphere of life. In the old democracies of the global *north*, such powers are circumscribed by national

constitutions, laws and conventions that protect the basic rights, freedoms and welfare of citizens. In the newer democracies of Asia and the countries formerly behind the *Iron Curtain* as well others in the global geopolitical *south*, citizen's rights, freedoms and privileges are circumscribed by looming state power.

According to Kyari, the intensity of the struggle to control the apparatus of government in Nigeria is a function of its potent power of guaranteeing wealth, power and authority (Kyari, 2019). Therefore, capturing state power amounts to capturing all other things (Yusuf, 2019). The concept of state capture has been used to describe the process whereby nonstate actors capture the state by influencing public officials or where powerful state officials use nonstate actors to direct state resources to private benefits. It could also amount to the capture of the state by itself whereby public officials divert public resources to their personal benefits (Abah, 2018). Originally, the concept of state capture was first used by the World Bank and the Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI) while the notion of self-capture ('selfie state') was introduced in 2018. To capture is an active verb connoting an underlying struggle. Without effort in form of some struggle, there may be no capture. Therefore, political contests in Nigeria amount to a struggle in which the winners reap bountiful benefits and the losers are vanquished, finished and rendered irrelevant.

Because of the *goodies* accruable, the political elite conceptualises politics as the most (if not only) viable "industry" in the country. To the few successful contestants and appointees in power and the teeming aspirants and hangers-on, politics is the surest and quickest route out of poverty, though not necessarily the easiest in view of the oft-titanic struggles involved. But it requires neither capital nor training to launch a political career. A strong jaw, capable legs, strong instincts, a cynical disposition and a godfather may be all that is required. With the stakes so high, politicians are prepared to put in anything, everything to gain advantage and occupy power.

Obasanjo's anecdote above epitomizes the extent party barons, godfathers, factions, electoral aspirants, candidates and their cronies and supporters are entangled in the battle to capture the Nigerian state. In fact, the former president notoriously described the 2007 presidential election as a *do-or-die* battle, an apt portrayal of the state of the art in electoral politics in the country (Oloyode, 2019; Omilusi, 2018). The Nation (newspaper) of 21 February 2021 quoted the Minister of Labour and Employment, Dr Chris Ngige, as having vowed that the APC will mobilise "seen and unseen forces" to win the imminent Anambra State gubernatorial election. The elections were held in the last quarter of 2021 and the APC lost.

The struggle for state capture is intermediated by political parties. Probably because of bitter political lessons learned from experience in the First Republic, only political parties can now field candidates for elections. Notionally, this provision subordinates all politicians to political parties, yet, in practice, political leaders in Nigeria have become lords over their parties. These leaders are *big men*, unvaryingly rich men and godfathers who have cashed in on poor party organisation and finances to takeover leadership. Such lopsided structure in which individuals dictate to their parties contradicts the principle of party supremacy, and whenever political parties are subordinated to individuals, collective democratic precepts are subverted or sidelined. Party manifestoes and programmes are soon replaced by the eccentricities of individuals.

This paper conceptualises the rise of big men over their political parties in Nigeria as the emergence of plutarchy, an event in concordance with the rise of pervasive poverty. In so doing, I address the nexus between mounting poverty and the emergence of this plutarchy. The rest of this essay is devoted to a detailed analysis of this theme. This introductory section is immediately followed by a survey of literature on the subject-matter, and brief statements on research questions, method of study and theoretical orientation. Thereafter, I provide evidence of the historical

emergence of plutocracy, a trajectory of rising poverty, the nature of the dominant class and its patrimonial *modus operandi* in Nigeria. In the process, I answer the questions pertaining to class consciousness as well as inter- and intra-class animosities in political practice in the country. In the concluding section, some futuristic proposals are recommended to redirect Nigeria's political practice and power struggle.

Literature review

Political parties and money

Democracy is inherently expensive largely because political parties are arguably very expensive to operate. Among other things, funds are needed to print ballot papers for internal elections, mobilise for registration of party members or voters as well as for voter education. More money is required for hiring of party agents in polling stations and ballot counting or collation centres, printing and publication of party manifestoes and programmes, building party offices or renting them, payment of administrative staff and election campaigns as well as transportation of officials, party members, supporters and materials. In a large study, Bryan and Baer found that in Africa, political funds are spent more on travel and logistics, followed by expenditure on rallies and events, personnel and administrative costs and direct benefits in descending order of magnitude (Bryan and Baer, 2005).

There are two sources of funds for the sustenance of political parties and their activities, private contributions and public subventions. As one of the few private organisations statutorily entitled to public funds, governments provide grants and subsidies to political parties on a regular basis. Such provisions are justified on the ground that political parties play a critical role in the public domain as guardians of democracy (Maglowondo et al, 2012). On the other hand, political parties receive private funding through

membership dues, investments and donations from individuals or corporate bodies. Payment of party membership dues, donation to campaign funds or sponsorship of lobbying activities are forms of enablement that facilitate direct participation in the political process. Further, as Speck has pointed out, altruistic donations to political parties and candidates may oblige them to stay focused on the issue that necessitated the donation (Speck, 2013). Therefore, money promotes political inclusiveness.

Political money, corruption and its control

However, if money is indispensable in political party management, political processes and political participation in general, it is agreed that political party finances have opened a wide vista of corruption which has attracted some concern worldwide. Indeed, political money and those who donate it are widely considered as problematic, at times even threats to democracy (Johnson, 2005). Some of the avenues of corruption and manipulation in political financing include:

- Abuse of public resources for campaigning;
- False invoicing to cover corporate donations;
- Creation of slush funds in public enterprises and institutions;
- Favouritism and malpractice in public procurement;
- Forced contribution from public servants;
- Contribution for favours, contracts, policy change;
- Forcing private sector operatives to pay "protection money";
- Limiting access to funding for opposition parties;
- Inflation of contracts for development projects;
- Funds from disreputable, infamous or clandestine sources;
- Funds from banned sources;
- Distortion of the privatisation processes;
- Selective licensing (Walecki, 2015; Lawal, 2015; Evertsson, 2013; Sousa, 2005).

Considering that corrupt political funding can undermine the democratic system, countries have responded by adopting different approaches and instruments to control or regulate political finance and stem corruption arising therefrom. The most popular control mechanism is the restriction of the use of private finance by either setting contribution limits or banning them altogether. It is felt that such restrictions or outright bans prevent parties and candidates from obliging themselves to private interests. Another important control measure is the provision of state financial subsidies or subsidies-in-kind. This approach is designed to curb corruption by off-putting disagreeable or lopsided influence over parties and their candidates. The different measures to control, limit or prevent corruption in political finance may be summarised as follows:

- Ban on certain types of donations;
- Setting contribution limits;
- Setting spending limits for parties and candidates;
- Effective oversight by electoral management bodies (EMB);
- Transparent financial subsidies or subsidies-in-kind by the state;
- Involvement of civil society groups, nongovernmental and community-based organisations in anti-corruption campaigns;
- Requiring comprehensive disclosure and reporting of such disclosures;
- Ensuring that the public has effective access to information;
- Respecting and protecting freedom to seek, receive and disseminate information about corruption;
- Protecting whistle blowers and witnesses in political corruption cases from intimidation and retaliation;
- Firm and proportional penalties for default of regulations (Check et al, 2019; Petak and Matakovic, 2015; Aron, 2009; Souza, 2005; Walecki, 2003).

Perception and Resilience of corruption

In spite of the multiplicity of measures taken to stem corruption in political finance, and the varying degrees of success in different countries, it has to be admitted that the legacy is not as edifying as desired. This may be attributable to a miscellany of intractable socio-structural factors embedded in the struggles to gain political power.

First, laws may be inadequate and public prosecution may be weak. (Priyambudi et al, 2020). If laws are inadequate, the best enforcement measures by the most committed and efficient agencies may yield only marginal results. Unwilling and halfhearted prosecution will be similarly ineffective.

Second, for various reasons including the weakness of institutions, corruption is more rampant in poor than in rich countries (Eigen et al, 2008). The annual ranking of the most corrupt countries in the world by Transparency International always bears out the loathsome leadership of poor countries of the global *south*. It is therefore not unexpected that corruption in political finance is higher in poor countries where law enforcement is also weak.

Third, to protect selfish or private interests, state actors may meddle in political corruption cases or may be complicit and therefore unwilling to act. Whenever high state officials have private interests, they may frustrate anti-corruption agencies by denying them the requisite financial resources and institutional autonomy (Ibrahim and Abdallah, 2017). In addition, fighting corruption is not cheap. If it is not to be reduced to mere window dressing, anti-corruption agencies should be financially and institutionally well-resourced. Even so, we should consider that unrestrained or unlimited commitment of resources to fighting corruption could easily exceed the cost of corruption (Bjornson, 2014). Therefore, a balancing act is imperative, an indication that corruption is here to stay and may, at best, only be minimised.

Fourth, it is not certain, contrary to common belief, that political finance regulations or public subsidies for political parties can eliminate corruption in political finance. Several reasons may be adduced for this incredulity. For instance, regulations are usually prospective, being enacted to correct past, existing or expected malfeasances. And because of the resilience of corrupt political finance, there may be no end to new regulations to contain them. That being the case, there can be no perfect or final regulation that will upend all corruption in political finance. Moreover, political finance regulations may be difficult to enforce largely because it is usually difficult to police such finance (Fazekas and Cingolani, 2017; DFID, 2001). With respect to public subsidies, the norm is to prorate benefits to parties on the basis of their performance in elections. This post-facto approach does not ensure a level-playing field for all parties and their candidates in the run-up to elections. Therefore, public subsidies may reward victorious political parties for their chicanery. Further, state subsidies-in-kind are open to abuse as, for example, access to state media usually favours the ruling party. Consider also those private media owners are more likely to favour the party in power or that of their proprietors.

Fifth, many countries have had to grapple with the bogey of judicial corruption. This may manifest in different forms, the most critical of which is the ability of politically connected corrupt persons to evade justice (Nsia-Pera, 2017). Perhaps, selective justice is the most vicious violation of the of rule of law on which democracy stands (Dubagari, 2017). Because of the importance of the rule of law, judges enjoy unfettered independence and immunity, on account of which it is usually very difficult to remove corrupt judges from office. A corrupt judiciary has the potential of undermining public confidence in government and democracy at large.

Judicial corruption may be eliminated by the zero-sum convention in democratic practice. Therefore, our sixth point is that since winners take all and losers left empty handed, politicians go to all

extents including the purchase of court verdicts to secure victory. In this “battle,” there is never a shortage of party godfathers and sundry moneybags to provide the necessary funds. The battle is never a one-way affair as, for example, even those who are least sure of victory always join the fray especially during campaigns, at polling stations and the courtroom (Adams, 2020; Ijon, 2019; Cheeseman et al. 2019; Svallfos, 2015).

Seventh, the success or failure of anti-corruption measures depend on the societal perception and tolerance of corruption. Perception relates to how people feel about the widespread nature of corruption. In a major survey by The Asia Foundation, it was found that majority of respondents felt that “corruption is a common practice” in Mongolia; a total of 64.9 per cent of the sample was of such view in 2008, rising to 81.3 per cent in 2014 and 90.1 per cent in 2018. Equally significant is that female Mongolians estimated the breath of corruption as slightly less than men, more likely than men to refuse paying bribes but more likely to offer bribe for a service (The Asia Survey, 2018). Many other variables mediate in the perception of corruption. For example, a study found that individuals who are more work-engaged and those previously exposed to corruption report corruption as a bigger obstacle (Friesenbicher et al, 2017).

Further, a multinational study by Elgar, et al. found that being a female, educational level, marital status, religiousness, being self-employed and opinions towards the political system tend to modify the probability of perceiving corruption (Melgar, et al, 2010). The same study also noted that private sector workers are more likely to perceive corruption than civil servants. With these variables, some organisations have constructed indexes of corruption for different countries, the most popular being the annual Corruption Perception Index (CPI) published by Transparency International, a multinational non-governmental organisation against corruption. With a score of 12, South Sudan and Somalia were ranked as the

most corrupt of 180 countries and territories in the world in 2020 while Nigeria scored 25 and ranked 149, even though recent Afrobarometer survey indicates that public perception of government's fight against corruption has improved significantly (Transparency International, 2021; Ojewole and Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018).

Caution should be however exercised about perceptions as they may not represent the entire reality. The *folklore of corruption* by which everyone is deemed corrupt may rationalise a tradition of demanding gratification and gift giving as well as generate a culture of distrust. Resistance to corruption will be weakened and morale of workers, especially those not corrupt, may be negatively affected and this may result in declining productivity (Okolocha, 1992). Under such circumstances, citizens may lose faith in institutions, the government and the country at large. Indeed, public perception of the pervasiveness of corruption may have the same disastrous effects as corruption itself.

Tolerance of corruption

Tolerance of corruption is equally enervating. For various reasons, corrupt practices are condoned and even convicted felons often escape public opprobrium. When government has control of corruption and is able to enforce the rule of law, citizens are less tolerant of corruption (Zakaria, 2018). However, there are many parochial reasons for tolerating corruption. For instance, voters may view corruption through the lens of ethnic or political party identity as is the case in Nigeria. Thus, partisan and ethnic insiders tend to turn a blind eye to corruption. Therefore, support of incumbents by ethnic and partisan insiders is largely not affected by consequences of corruption (Chang and Karr, 2009). Pursuant to these ethnic and partisan particularisms, *big men* convicted of corruption in Nigeria are occasionally granted state pardon (usually by the same government that prosecuted them) and, if they are

deemed to have extended patronage to notable cronies and their home communities, such criminals are given honorary titles even as they continue to enjoy their leadership status.

Nevertheless, Camargo et al. have argued that social and cultural traits do not make people unaware of corruption and its negative connotations. According to them, corruption is not motivated by culture but by adverse conditions involving scarcity, inadequacy of available services and ineffective safety nets (Camargo et al, 2017), a view corroborated by Alvarez who noted that people pay bribes because they are dissatisfied with municipal services or democracy (Alvarez, 2015). Such circumstances arise because rules and social institutions do not provide minimum living standards for a majority of the people, thus necessitating recourse to informality based on norms of solidarity and reciprocity. Access to services is thus mediated by personal relationships and ability to provide bribes. Alvarez listed other factors which relate to the individual but operate within the context of scarcities to increase the threshold of tolerance of corruption; these include being young, having higher incomes, lack of trust of peers and gender which make people more vulnerable to extortion, to which Guo and Wenyan added macroeconomic instability and other individual factors like being male with longer working experience or with low monthly income, having scanty understanding of corruption, being a woman, being divorced, being unemployed, working in the private sector and being self-employed (Guo and Wenyan, 2017). Moreover, Chang and Huang used empirical evidence to conclude that citizens who are more tolerant of malfeasance retain a higher level of trust in political institutions after experiencing corrupt practices compared to people who are intolerant of corruption (Chang and Huang, 2016).

The principal-agent conundrum and collective action theory

From the foregoing, there is a multiplicity of thoughts on the public perception of corruption as well as differing conceptions of the causes and effects of the tolerance of corruption in society. If a variety of factors contribute to corruption in political finance, it should be added that it is a realm controlled, dominated and rationalised by the rich. Operating within the principal-agent theorem, corruption thrives because the presumably altruistic principal requires the services of the self-seeking agent but lacks the information resources to monitor him (DFID and AKAID, 2015). For instance, elected officials (agents) may misappropriate public funds and the public (principals) is unable to hold him accountable. Similarly, elected officials (as principals) may not have the wherewithal to oversight betraying civil servants (agents).

Because of the inherent fallacy of limiting corruption to agents or the assumption that principals are always principled, this study adopts the collective action theory as a theoretical framework. Here, all actors including bureaucrats, public officials and the citizenry at large (either as actors and principals) are conceptualised as potential self-seekers whose actions may be determined by the cost of opting out of corruption (Zapata, 2018). According to the theory, if corrupt practices are rampant or assumed to be so, it is accepted as “normal” behaviour, leading to the weakening of resistance to corruption.

Method

As a major obstacle to development, corruption has been an important subject matter of academic theory and research. There are numerous publications on corruption and its impact on Nigeria and other nations of the world and these are readily accessible. The present study relied on these secondary sources for qualitative

and quantitative data. Participant observation was an additional research technique. I have participated in all elections organised by INEC in the Fourth Republic in Delta State as a voter, electoral official and official observer. I have also officiated in party primary elections as well as some elections organised by the Delta State Electoral Commission. I therefore have direct first-hand knowledge and information on some of the issues raised in this paper. Having not contested any election, I can reasonably be confident of unbiased analysis.

An emergent plutarchy

Because political activity is impossible without money, rich people have inevitably dominated politics. In popular parlance, who pays *the piper* and therefore *dictates the tune*. The influence of rich people upsets Pareto efficiency as the majority of people do not benefit from their financial contributions to the political process, being almost exclusively for material benefits, ego and ideological inclination.

To stem political domination by the rich, every democratic system has some regulations to check the free flow of money into politics as without such regulations, political parties and their candidates cannot compete on equal terms. Yet there are loopholes including the artificially low or unrealistic legal limits on permitted campaign spending and ineffectual regulatory frameworks. Such circumstances facilitate the capture and external control of political parties and their candidates by the rich. Whenever rich people take control of political processes, democratic ideals are compromised and political participation decreases, leading to mistrust of government and emergence of plutarchy with a strain toward authoritarianism.

In principle, Nigerian political parties are statutorily entitled to *fair* and *equitable* annual grants, but this regulation obeyed mainly in

breach. In 2003, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) disbursed ₦6 million to each of the seven registered political parties, representing a most scandalous underfunding. Without official funding, the political parties fell prey to tycoons and godfathers, the new plutocrats in town.

Gross underfunding of political parties does not imply any ignorance of the high costs of elections. For example, the Electoral Act of 2006 extraordinarily and audaciously pegged the amount spendable by presidential and gubernatorial candidates at ₦500 million and ₦100 million respectively. The same law prescribed a limit of ₦20 million for senators, ₦10 million for members of the House of representatives, ₦5million for members of Hoses of Assembly and LGA Chairman and ₦500,000 for Councilors. According to this law, candidates for the office of vice-president, deputy-governor and vice-chairperson of council are not supposed to spend any money in their election. Apart from the arbitrariness of these figures, they effectively restrict electoral contest to only very rich persons. In other words, we are left with the irony of the official spending limits being too high and too low. They are too high because of the poverty levels in the country and too low because of the actual expenditures of electoral candidates and their parties far exceed the prescribed limits.

Perhaps inadvertently, this law overlooked any expenditure incurred before notification of the date for election, an indication that parties and their candidates easily spend more money. Apart from this loophole, there is no evidence that anyone has paid attention to the financial aspects of the law while no one seems to be tracking party or individual electoral expenditures, making nonsense of the provision that no individual or entity shall donate more than one million naira to any candidate. The absence of monitoring also defeats the ban placed by the law on anonymous contributions or gifts to political parties as well as the mandate to keep assets, accounts book and names and addresses of contributors.

Accordingly, no political party has made any disclosure on its finances, or submitted audited returns six months after elections as required by the electoral law.

Although it may seem cynical, electoral regulation seems to have been designed to entrench the poverty of political parties in Nigeria. For example, the electoral law stipulates that 10 per cent of government subventions are to be shared on the basis of equality, and 90 per cent on the proportion of National Assembly (NASS) seats. The share to be disbursed equally is obviously too little and small or marginal parties without representation in NASS are doomed to extinction (or “acquisition” by local moneybags). Giving more money to parties with more seats in NASS is tantamount to giving more to the already rich (Walecki, 2008; Adetula, 2008; Adeyi, 2008, Smah, 2008).

With little or no official funding of effective regulation, money-induced electoral depravity quickly took root in Nigeria. For instance, it is reported that in the 2003 election, 28 per cent of all voters was offered gifts in the course of campaigns. Of these, 68 per cent constituted cash gifts (modal sum: ₦500), 26 per cent was in form of commodity, food or clothing and 6 per cent was job offers. It is calculated that the median cost of a Nigerian vote rose from ₦1750 in 2003 to ₦2250 in 2007. However, one in ten voters or 12 per cent of voters was offered a bribe by a candidate or agent in 2007, down from 16 per cent in 2003, yet vote-buying in 2007 matched the 2003 infamy (Smah, 2008; Walecki, 2008).

Trends from the nationalist era to the Fourth Republic)

We should resist the impression that Nigeria’s plutarchy suddenly emerged in the Fourth Republic because the seeds were actually sown in the colonial/nationalist era. These seeds germinated in the First and Second Republics. It is therefore appropriate to briefly examine the roots of plutarchy in the country.

While the defeat of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1938 by the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) may not have been influenced by money, it is to be noted that all the elections under the Clifford Constitution (1922) were won by the NNDP whose leadership was exclusively constituted by the new indigenous educated (nationalist and business) elite. Membership qualifications included 12 months residency (in Lagos and Calabar) and a hefty gross income of £100. Only members of the elite nationalist bourgeoisie, the richest and most visible Nigerians at the time were qualified. NNDP set the standard for other parties. Indeed, the founding of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC, arguably the successor to NNDP) in 1944 epitomised the emergent strain towards plutarchy. Among the first members were Herbert Macaulay, JO Lucas, Nnamdi Azikiwe, AW Howells, LP Ojukwu, CA Onajobi, Alex Taylor, EA Akerele, DA Alakija and JIC Taylor. Obafemi Awolowo and Bode Thomas were among the urban-rich who formed the Action Group (AG) in 1941. In addition to being the richest and most visible Nigerians at the time, they were also the best educated and most articulate. The elitism of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) is also very illuminating. Founded in 1951 by the dominant traditional-religious elite in northern Nigeria, the party introduced an exclusionary leadership cadre which still holds sway 55 years after its demise (Adeyi, 2008).

Perhaps the most important distinction between the political parties of the Fourth Republic and those in the colonial/nationalist, First and Second Republic eras lay in the strength of the parties. With supreme powers in the latter period, political parties raised funds through donations, levies, dues and other clandestine means such that, by the 1959 independence elections, money had become a dominant force in politics. Significantly, there was no limit on

election expenses at this time and the Action Group (AG) based the trail in electoral spending. Doubling as businesspersons or their fronts, politicians cornered government contracts from which they paid percentages to political parties. In Eastern Nigeria, the African Continental Bank, a government-owned institution, was plundered for which the leader of NCNC, Nnamdi Azikiwe was convicted by Justice Strafford Forster. The bank later collapsed. In the West, the Justice Coker Commission set up by the central government, found the leader of AG, Obafemi Awolowo guilty of financial impropriety. During this period, political parties did not see anything wrong in diverting public funds to finance their personal activities. Ironically, money failed the AG and NCNC in Northern Nigeria where a religious aristocracy maintained a firm grip on power, aided by a strong anti-south ideology.

Although candidates became more careful because of the conviction of Azikiwe and the leaders of AG, yet no records were kept and fiscal irresponsibility did not abate. Nothing changed during the Second Republic as there was no provision for party funding. The Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) was particularly adept at fund raising. Businesspersons donated buildings, money and vehicles and the party ambitiously funded candidates outside its domain. UPN raked in additional funds through fund-raising dinners and membership dues. The main party of the Second Republic, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) was more or less, an association of rich persons and, therefore, had a wider source of funds than any other party. It is widely believed that alleged one businessman single-handedly bankrolled the NPN in Ogun State. But money failed the party in that state. On account of their limited funds, the four other registered parties (the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP), Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and Nigeria Advance Party (NAP) were left behind. Indeed, the strength of any party was largely a function of support from the business community and party membership card became

a status symbol. At the fall of the Second Republic, most governors were tried and jailed for misappropriating public funds.

Direct or indirect control of political parties by business persons structured political participation, a process formalised with the ill-fated Third Republic when the federal government imposed two political parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC), complete with constitutions, manifestoes and secretariats throughout the country. SDP was alleged to be ideologically *a little to the left*, while the NRC was *a little to the right*. The government parties failed to elicit loyalty from the joiners and ambitious individuals opened personal campaign offices and sourced for funds, further dipping the attraction of the political parties. Reduced to mere clearing houses for securing nominations, the two political parties became subordinated to wealthy individuals who had the wherewithal. As was to be expected, two business moguls with identical political outlook and religious background emerged as the presidential flagbearers of the two parties.

The multitude of parties in the Fourth Republic has consolidated the emerging trend toward control and domination of parties by the rich. Founded and funded by rich persons, and in the absence of official funds, only people of substantial means could obtain party nomination forms or finance campaigns and sundry election expenses. To all intents and purposes, party supremacy has lost its meaning as individual campaign organisations have become more prominent than party secretariats where they exist. Perhaps the first president of the Fourth Republic set the pace by (openly) receiving ample donations from individual and corporate bodies for his election and reelection without reference to his political party. In view of the increasing irrelevance of their political parties, political office holders, candidates and aspirants with money change political parties at will as there appears to be no effective laws guiding party membership. Nonparty members and persons with

divided or no party loyalty are recruited into individual campaign offices, to the chagrin of political party and their officials. Political party irrelevance has heightened the impunity of political office holders, godfathers and aspirants, as officials of political parties now owe their tenure to the former group, most especially governors. Because of loyalty to individual political leaders, party leaders have no interest in running their parties such that, in spite of the electoral law, political parties do not appear to keep financial records, nor do they render accounts to INEC or anybody else.

Nigeria's emergent Plutarch has continued to consolidate their power in the Fourth Republic mostly through the control of the public till. Perhaps the most provocative example of this was during the campaign for the 2003 general elections when the ruling party publicly directed all its governors to pay millions of naira into the party's funds. In compliance with this directive, the Plateau State governor donated the state's share of ecological fund to his party as well as the President's campaign organisation. All other governors probably complied as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has arrested and charged to court numerous public officials including governors of Abia, Adamawa, Bayelsa, Delta, Enugu, Plateau, Kogi, Taraba, etc. for financial impropriety. In spite of difficulties associated with prosecuting rich men in Nigeria, EFCC has secured notable convictions.

Poverty and electoral process

The electoral process in Nigeria is either oblivious of the nightmare of poverty in the country or is designed to exclude the poor. In Table 1, some current data are presented to illuminate the poverty conundrum in Nigeria, a country wrongly described as being rich on account of its huge endowment with crude petroleum and natural gas. These resources have been exploited to create an economy with a comparatively huge GDP that means almost nothing to the generality of the people.

Table 1. A Profile of Nigeria’s Poor-Fare State

Index	Remark
GDP (2021): US\$466.88 billion	Largest in Africa. 28 th in the world (but outside the continent’s 10 most competitive economies)
GDP per capita (nominal 2021): US\$2,210	18 th out of 54 African countries
Economic growth (2021): 1.5%	34 th out of 56 African countries (2019)
Economic freedom score (2021): 58.7	13 th out 47 African countries (105 th in the world)
Unemployment rate (2021): 33%	4 th highest in Africa. 2 nd highest in the world
Working age population (15-64 years): 122,049,400	Population: 209,707,456 (2021); Annual population growth: 2.6%; Crude Birth Rate: 36.885/ thousand.
Labour force (those able and willing to work): 69,575,468	
Employed fulltime: 30,572,400	
Underemployed: 15,915,659	
Human Development Index: 0.539 (2019)	161 st out of 189 countries in the world
Population below poverty line: 70%	Less than US\$1.90 per day
Number of people in extreme poverty: 89,822,903 or 43% of total population (2021)	Poverty capital of the world (overtook India in 2018)
Number of unemployed youths: 13.9 million	Up from 13.1 million in 2018
Eligible youths for work: 40 million	

Employed youths: 14 million	
National road network: 197,000 km	18% paved (with many sections in disrepair) – AfDB
Railway: 4,332 km narrow track	75% of locomotives not operational
Housing deficit: 22 million houses	7 of 10 Nigerians live in informal housing in towns and cities
Homeless Nigerians: 108 million.	3.2 million displaced, 2.9 million internally displaced (UNHCR)
Access to electricity grid: 56.5% (World Bank)	Access in rural areas: 31.0%; Urban areas: 81.0% (Access does not guarantee availability).
Homes without handwashing facility: 167 million (2020) – UNICEF	Handwashing is a basic Covid19 preventive measure
Access to basic drinking water: 70%; Available quantity of water: 9 liters/day (minimum required (12 liters/day); Open defecation: 46 million – UNICEF	Over 30% of Nigerians still drink contaminated water.
Literacy rate: 62.02% (2018)	African average: 70% (AU) World average: 90%
Happiness index ranking in the world: 116	18 th happiest in Africa
Misery index ranking: 6 th out of 95 countries (2019)	

Sources: *Index of Economic Freedom (2021); UNHCR, 2021; Bloomberg News (2021); World Data Lab (2021); Panchal (2020); NBS (2020); Varrella (2020); Jones, 2019; Tasamba, 2019; howmuch.net (2018); Bramlett (2018); The Nation, 2018; The Guardian, 2017; ADB (2014).*

With a total of 89,822.903 Nigerians (or 43 per cent of the population) living in extreme poverty, that is, subsisting on US\$1.09

a day, the country now has more poor people than any other in the world irrespective of population size living in extreme poverty. The picture becomes gloomier if we consider that, with the national poverty line set at ₦137,430.00 per annum (i.e., US\$381.75 per annum), as many as 124,620,000 Nigerians (or 67 per cent of the population) do not have sufficient income and cannot support themselves or family members. In addition, 108 million persons are homeless while over 30 per cent of the total population drinks water contaminated with faecal matter and e-coli. However, a GDP of US\$466.88 billion ranks Nigeria as Africa’s largest economy but that is less than 0.5 per cent of the global economy. And, although the economy is officially known to be economically growing, this has been accompanied by rising poverty and joblessness and the country is offtrack to meet SDG1.

Nigeria’s poverty is largely self-inflicted and underscored by extreme inequality. According to Oxfam, the country’s poverty is attributable to miss-use, misallocation and misappropriation of public funds (Oxfam, 2017). For example, according to the global institution, US\$20 trillion was stolen from the treasury by public office holders between 1960 and 2005, an amount almost equivalent of the GDP of the USA in 2018 (US\$20.6 trillion). In the period from 2004 to 2010, the population of extreme poor people grew from 69 million to 112 million while the population of millionaires grew more dramatically by 44 per cent. Obviously, the poor become s poorer while the rich get richer.

Moreover, Oxfam informs us that the wealth of five of Nigeria’s richest men can wipe out poverty in the country, yet five million Nigerians go to bed hungry every day. Even more distressing if the fact that women who make up 70 per cent of rural labour are five times less likely to own land while over 10 million children are out of school (Oxfam, 2017).

Against the backdrop of pervasive poverty and extreme inequality, the cost of electoral participation is obviously unaffordable by all except the richest Nigerians. Table 2 shows the costs of expression of interest (EOI) and nomination forms for centrally conducted elections in the three most prominent parties in 2015.

Table 2. Costs of EOI and Nominations forms (₦) (2015)

Party	Presidency		Total
	EOI	Nomination	
APC			
Presidency	2.5m	25.0m	27.5m
Governorship	0.5m	5.0m	5.5m
Senate	0.3m	3.0m	3.3m
House of Representatives	0.2m	2.0m	2.2m
PDP			
Presidency	2.0m	20.0m	22.0m
Governorship	1.0m	10.0m	11.0m
Senate	0.5m	4.0m	4.5m
House of Representatives	0.4m	2.0m	2.4m
APGA			
Presidency	-	-	-
Governorship	2.0m	10.0m	12.0m
Senate	0.5m	3.0m	3.5m
House of Representatives	0.5m	2.0m	2.5m

Source: Olorunmola (2017:8).

Although it is expected that political parties should seize the opportunities of elections to raise funds for their operations, the stipulated sums belie the poverty levels in the country. Note that the Electoral Act of 2010 had set the campaign expenditure limits for the parties at one billion naira (for presidency; up from a limit

of ₦500 million set in the 2006 Electoral Act), ₦200 million (for governorship; up from ₦100 million in 2006), ₦40 million (for senate; up from ₦20 million in 2006) and ₦20 million (for House of Representatives; up from ₦10 million in 2006). In the 2021 Electoral (Amendment) Act, election expenses were further jacked up to ₦5 billion for presidential candidates, ₦1 billion for governorship, ₦100 million for Senate, ₦70 million for House of Representatives, ₦30 million for House of Assembly and LGA Chairmanship, and ₦5 million for Councillors' (Ikhitae and Onogu, 2021).

These mandatory “open” expenditures are only a tip of the iceberg, a fraction of the financial obstacles which restrict electoral participation to only very rich Nigerians. More substantial expenditure is incurred during party primary elections for the nomination of candidates. At this stage, aspirants who have already scaled the hurdles of EOI and nomination fees are made to pay for the votes of delegates as well as their transportation and accommodation. Logically, higher offices attract higher expenditures. Moreover, godfathers who are very active at this stage, force aspirants to enter into all manners of sponsorship agreements backed by oaths of allegiance to them. Though their control of the electoral processes, godfathers can potentially derail the democratic process by obstructing candidate nomination or appointment of officials. Agreements with them tie candidates to various terms of repayment, failing which successful candidates suffer various reprisals including impeachment. One godfather in the southwest secured the impeachment of his reneging godson (the governor) with a gift of 18 Peugeot cars to members of parliament while another godfather in the southeast simply kidnapped the governor with hired thugs for going back on their agreement on profit sharing.

Electoral expenses come to a head when candidates are required to provide *kayanaiki* (work tools) for all party officials including electoral agents. These tools include direct payment for votes and

gifts including foodstuffs (notably rice and salt) as well as T-shirts and other apparels, face-caps, and sundry souvenirs. There is no ceiling for the *free money* expended by politicians as the “seriousness” of an aspirant is measured by the amount of money spent. Money replaces ideology and party manifestoes. Rather than demonstrate the popularity of parties and their candidates, rented crowds at rallies merely underscore the financial strength of candidates. And since there are no volunteers in Nigerian political practice, all campaign mobilisers and operatives from the electoral unit up to the national level are paid by the candidates (who usually prefer to have their independent assistants).

In addition, open corruption and impunity, mediatisation of campaigns, weak legal institutions and even weaker capacities for the enforcement of electoral laws and regulations add up to escalate the costs of elections. The ensuing political culture has been institutionalised by the zero-sum winner-takes-all policy and scrawny opposition politics. Therefore, election is an open war, a do-or-die affair; if you lose, you die literarily and politically, if not also physically; it is best to *do* (win) it (by all means).

The two main political parties in the 2015 general elections reportedly spent ₦8.8 billion (for PDP; up by 74.5 per cent from ₦5.0 billion in 2011) and ₦2.9 billion (for APC; up by 42.9 per cent from ₦2.0 billion for all opposition parties in 2011) respectively in media expenses alone. As shown in Figure 1, the candidate is at the centre of all expenditures during election. Successful aspirants who become candidates bear most of the campaign expenditures although such persons are more likely to receive contributions from other party members, businesspersons or well-wishers. These expenditures amount to a very heavy outlay even for wealthy aspirants or candidates who survive the nomination dogfight.

In view of these expenditure profiles, public offices are determined and occupied by the ability to pay rather than the number of votes.

Having been financially drained (and committed to future recompenses) by the electoral process, the successful candidate has no obligation to public causes and his interest in oversight functions is inevitably tied to financial gratifications to secure his tenure. Considering that the successful politician has bought his way through the electoral process and captured the state through (largely contrived) electoral victory, he is practically on his own. And arising from the privatisation and monetisation of politics, party legislative whips are ineffectual as members under their watch are not under their control. Politics becomes personalised as the party fades into the background awaiting the next nomination process.

On the other hand, the electorate is powerless having already received gratification. This is the remote cause of official impunity and the unresponsiveness of government to the development aspirations of the people. However, in spite of the inherently procured autonomy of electoral office holders, they are obliged to retain a semblance of public loyalty to enhance the prospects of reelection, for which purpose they dispense patronages in various forms. Not to be left out in the profit sharing, erstwhile opponents join the party in government typically with hired supporters (whom they describe as “thousands of party members” of their erstwhile parties).

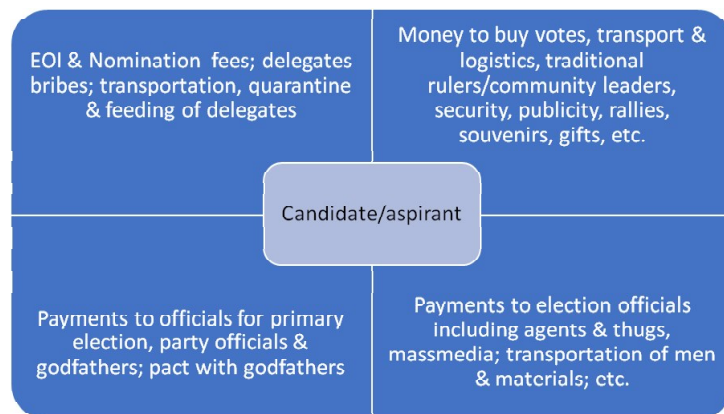


Figure 1. Candidate at the centre of all election expenditure.

Neo-patrimony, networking and Political exclusion

The resort to a bank loan to pay a presidential election nomination fee in 2015 is symptomatic of a systemic malaise of the struggle for state capture among members of an exclusionary ruling political class. Famously branded as a poor man with integrity, it is not certain when and if the candidate, who successfully prosecuted the election, ultimately repaid his loan. In the leadup to his reelection in 2019, it was publicly announced that some youths, who had been recently vocal about being left out of government, paid the nomination fees (Ezea, 2018). Bank loans are usually repayable with interest, and investing such loan in an election signified the desperation of the borrower to capture the state and join the exclusionary group that had earlier denied him electoral victory in three previous presidential elections; and hence a reenactment of the old adage if you cannot beat them, join them.

The two democratic dividends

When politicians invest their time and personal monies in politics, they do so with a view to receiving dividends. In countries with strong political/ideological parties, investment in politics is a function of their determination to avail them the opportunities of electoral victory to implement their manifestoes and add value to society. Such values are usually subjective, arising from the parties’ conception of the good life. To make a simple global summary, we can say that liberal/socialist parties seek to reduce socioeconomic inequality especially by increasing taxes while conservative parties focus on doing the opposite. Thus, in these climes, the democratic dividend lies in the implementation of the party manifesto and the propagation of party ideology to the negation of the opposition. Whenever the torchbearer of a successful political party is charismatic, there is usually a political revival of the party and its

ideology; for example, in Reaganite America and Thatcherite Britain. In Africa, the short presidential tenure of the charismatic Nelson Mandela in South Africa greatly ameliorated the backlash arising from black majority rule and promoted the prospects of the ruling (African National Congress) party.

The other democratic dividend subsists in countries like Nigeria where political parties are merely vessels for nomination of candidates who regard their political investment as a business venture with accruable profit. With eyes are fixed on profits (as democratic dividends), politicians and aspirants make considerable investments, some obtaining loans and others selling properties and entering into bondage treaties with godfathers and donors. Therefore, the dividend of democracy is the sharing of “profit” accruing from their political investment. In these terms, a campaigner for political office is an investor and public funds are conceptualised as profit, which is disbursed at their whims. Profits from political investment are spread to appointees who are exclusively political agents, nominees of godfathers (or godfathers themselves), donors and other particularistic nominees, with merit rarely in consideration. In addition to their control of violence, some godfathers are suspected to have supernatural powers on account of which they command allegiance. Godfathers are thus merchants of fear, making compliance by successful electoral candidates a foregone conclusion. With continued loyalty, unsuccessful candidates may be rewarded with appointments, government contracts or future electoral support.

Profit and Network of patronage: dynamics of a ruling class “for itself”

The dividends of democracy in Nigeria accrue almost exclusively to political investors and a trickle to the society (Ichima, 2014). These investors are made up of a group, miniscule by number but significant in their power, worth, influence, visibility and conspicuous

consumption. In summary, they constitute the Nigerian plutarchy with the following membership: the president (and vice-president), governors (and their deputies) along with their army of appointees, members of the national and state assemblies including their appointees and, to a lesser extent, the chairpersons of local governments and councilors (who may pass as protégés of governors). To these, we should add the godfathers and donors, the latter being business leaders many of whom usually pretend to be apolitical whereas their robust partisanship is well-known (Ibietan and Ajayi, 2015; Amundsen, 2012; Kifordu, 2011). In view of their obvious interests, business leaders are wont to donate toward the reelection of incumbents but more circumspect about first-timers. In popular parlance, they belong to any government in power.

A formal census of the members of the Plutarchic ruling group may not have been taken, yet they are readily visible and identifiable on account of their holding of public office, connection to public office holders and their conspicuous consumption. Usually decked in flowing and bogus attires and jewelry, they drive the best luxury vehicles (frequently with hidden registration numbers) escorted by armed security personnel (typically in siren-blaring pickup vans) and backup vehicles. The President and Governors go about in labyrinthine motorcades which may lead to exasperating traffic bottlenecks in major cities. The upstarts among them quickly build new mansions in government reservation areas (GRAs) or other select sectors in the city. Councilors swiftly take up residence in LGA headquarters and Chairpersons move to state capitals. As a rule, Nigerian plutarchs take new chieftaincy titles and new wives to announce their “arrival.”

The ruling elite is a fairly close-knit network of political office holders, party leaders, godfathers and acolytes as well as their business partners and supporters bound by a strong loyalty. A well-oiled group, high rank in government automatically confers leadership. Next to the president and governors are godfathers

who remotely call the shots. Although the fourth president of the Fourth Republic appears not to have a godfather, he is known to have a very powerful kitchen cabinet made up of persons without formal political office. Next in order of hierarchy are members of the National Assembly who jostle with federal appointees. At the rear are state legislators, appointees and local government officials. Membership and network of the plutarchy have been unduly enlarged by the appointment of a retinue of advisers and assistants as well as arbitrary increases in the number of government agencies and committees. With their high salaries and allowances, oversized retirement and severance packages, the cost of governance is assuredly too high. For example, Nigerian legislators are said to be highest paid in the world (consuming as much as 25 per cent of the national budget) while many agencies are veritable drainpipes for siphoning “profit.”

Party affiliation appears to be the only weak link in the bond of unity as members of the ruling elite are ready to trade-off party loyalty at the drop of a hat (Omotola, 2009; Adejumo and Kehinde, 2007). Parties lack clear ideology and often adopt anti-democratic methods to resolve issues. Nigerian plutarchs do not like to be in the opposition, and are therefore in power at the federal or state levels. Although they belong to different political parties, they share the same worldviews and adopt identical methods of governance, brooking no opposition and demanding total loyalty. Indeed, they belong to the same class, a unity which makes the Nigerian ruling class a class *for itself*.

To consolidate power, elected executives are always wont to appoint only loyal persons with some electoral value, bereft of merit. It is therefore difficult to find any independent, tested and trusted technocrat in any level of government. We are thus enamored of an ingroup which has captured the state, with well-established membership and clear boundaries against outgroups. Having already captured the state and occupied government, the

ruling elite embarks on rent-seeking and attendant primitive accumulation to recoup investments, pay off debts, secure their wellbeing and provide for future elections. Business supporters are rewarded through “juicy” contracts, and questionable tax waivers or holidays. To increase the size of profit, governments at the state level embark on erratic drives that push informal small-scale operators to the brink (Okechukwu and Emeti, 2014; Osamwonyi and Tafamel, 2010).

Quite noticeably, the Nigerian ruling class is a cosmopolitan, educated and heterogeneous group. Yet ethnic and religious sentiments have been strongly deployed in the mobilisation and struggle for advantage. At all governmental levels, the ethnic and religious affiliation of the political head are the prime determinants of who gets what and when. This stokes the fallacy of ethnic and religious bigotry in Nigerian politics, as state capture confers advantage to individuals, not ethnic or religious group. For example, it does not appear that the orchestrated Hausa-Fulani-Muslim capture of federal power has improved desperate poverty in northern Nigeria. Similarly, Southern-Christian presidential tenures did not positively impact on southern Nigeria as a region. The same argument is valid in multiethnic states where the ethnic affiliation of Governors may have empowered some individuals, not their ethnic groups.

Another interesting feature is the strong intragroup solidarity in the Nigerian plutarchy. This solidarity is not negated by superficial interparty rivalries, as Nigerian plutarchs do not have allegiance to any political party. Whenever interparty rivalries degenerate into open conflicts, only hirelings and rank-and-file members join the fray. Parliamentary fisticuffs are also ephemeral intraclass encounters over profit sharing, not ideological or even ethnic or religious differences.

Thus, we can begin to hypothesise about group consciousness in the Nigerian plutarchy, a consciousness nurtured by state capture and the selective mobilisation of ethnic and religious sentiments. In terms of organisational structure, the plutarchy appears amorphous as members belong to different political parties and diverse business, ethnic and religious backgrounds or groups. To this extent, the plutarchy may be conceptualised as a class *in itself*. On the other hand, in view of their aforementioned group consciousness and solidarity, it could be a class *for itself*. In the final analysis, the latter appears to be a more potent characterisation because of the tenacity of plutarchs and the distinct ingroup-outgroup boundaries.

Nigerian plutarchy and political corruption

The *folklore* of corruption is a fallout of the magnitude of corruption attributed to Nigerian public officials who are estimated to have stolen more than a score trillion dollars since independence which, according to a Hoffman and Patel, represent a colossal investment gap in building and equipping modern hospitals to reduce the country's notorious maternal mortality rate, expanding and upgrading an educational system that is currently failing millions of children and procuring vaccines to prevent regular outbreaks of preventable diseases (Hoffmann and Patel, 2017). As a deviant behaviour, political corruption in Nigeria is underscored by a neo-patrimonial political structure represented, in the view of Martini, by a presidential system which concentrates power in an individual, rationalises the use of state resources for political legitimation, entrenches rent seeking and systematic clientelism where power is maintained by awarding personal favours (Martini, 2014). After the Civil War, control of petroleum resources which became the mainstay of the economy fell to the central government, precipitating a new struggle for control of the Nigerian state. Thenceforth, the country acquired the additional attribute of being a rentier state.

Through rent-seeking, favouritism, bribery, embezzlement, tribalism, nepotism, cronyism, patronage and other ingenious stratagems, state captors have used their monopoly and large discretionary powers to negate popular development aspirations in their transformation into a plutarchy. In the context of the Nigerian political economy where “sharing of the national cake” is the seeming *raison d’etre* of government, Nigerian plutarchs are free riders since they benefit from but do not contribute to their production of public goods. They are more particularly inclined toward free riding because they know that their level of contribution, or lack of it, does not impact their beneficiary status. On the other hand, outgroup members feel less inclined to contribute toward collective benefits when they know or anticipate that others will free ride on their efforts (Marquette and Peiffer, 2015).

Bribes appear to be the principal agency of corruption among the Nigerian ruling elite. According to a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), although payment of bribes appears to have marginally reduced from 2016 to 2019, it increased among parliamentarians; and more than one in five voters were offered bribes in the 2019 general elections (UNODC, 2019). This is not to say that political office holders are alone in the aberration because the report indicates that of 63.0 per cent of Nigerians who had contact with at least one public official, 30.2 per cent paid a bribe. Bribery is facilitated by the cash economy as it is reported that ₦675 billion worth of bribes were paid to public officials (representing 0.52 of the GDP) in 2019. More specifically, Adeyemo and Amade have asserted that bribery in winning a contract is more prevalent in the construction industry than anywhere else (Adeyemo and Amade, 2016).

At the apex of the Nigerian plutarchy is the President who has doubled as the Minister of Petroleum Resources since the advent of the Fourth Republic in 1999. Whereas it may be argued that, being the country's most important resource and source of revenue,

petroleum affairs should rightly be supervised by the President. Yet, direct presidential supervision has not brought about a respite in chicanery in the petroleum sector. For example, as noted by Smah, a president awarded a turn-around-maintenance (TAM) contract worth US\$400 million for refineries and then revoked it when the contractor failed to do the job even when money had been paid. Yet, there was no penalty, nor was anyone charged to court ostensibly because it was awarded to cronies (Smah, 2008). Even more damning, under the watch of the President as Minister of Petroleum Resources, Nigeria has attained the notoriety of doubling as the sixth largest exporter of crude oil as well as the biggest importer of refined petroleum products simply because its four refineries would not be put to work. Moreover, subsidisation of imported petroleum products has resulted in the greatest corruption scandal in Nigeria's history. Note also that in its 43 years of existence, Nigeria's cash cow, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) published its first ever audited financial account in 2020 (Kakanda, 2021). Indeed, it may be argued that the President is the Minister of Petroleum resources because of the quantum of "profit" accruable to political investors.

When a report revealed that that the presidency and government agencies stole ₦23 billion between 1999 and August 2001 (through over-invoicing and double debiting payments for jobs not done and sheer embezzlement, inflation of contracts, and release of monies without the consent of approving authorities), the author of the report was retired. This was a clear signal that war against corruption was selective. Top-dogs and their cronies were exempted. Thus, when the Anti-Corruption Committee Chairperson tendered the sum of ₦4 million, being a bribe offered by the President, the Vice-President and governor of a South-South state, an open fight ensued in the House of Representatives and that was the end of the matter. Further, when a southeastern godfather confessed to having kidnapped a Governor who was his reneging

godson, nothing happened. The godfather was soon elected as a senator.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to trace the trajectory of a discernible plutarchy in Nigeria. Rooted in the inevitability of money in politics and the rising costs of democracy in the country, I have provided evidence that the seed of the class was sown during the nationalist era and the First Republic. It germinated during the Second Republic when political parties dominated political practice. A new trajectory emerged in the abortive Third Republic when political parties waned in importance and individual politicians, godfathers and businesspersons dominated politics. The strain towards plutarchy matured in the Fourth Republic during which political parties appear to have lost all relevance besides the nomination of candidates for elections. Individual campaign offices have all but replaced party secretariats across the country.

Nigeria's plutarchy is well-oiled and educated ruling class with exclusive membership and class boundaries. It is heterogenous in compositions in terms of ethnic, religious and geopolitical affiliations. Yet it is homogenous in terms of class interests, consciousness, solidarity, loyalty and ideology. Therefore, the Nigerian plutarchy is a class *for itself*. In pursuance of their class interests, members of this class mobilise neo-patrimonial networks anchored in rent-seeking, cronyism and corruption. Their mobilisation of religious and ethnic group affiliations epitomise a fallacy of cultural identity and distinctions because benefits accrue to members of the class as individuals, not the generality of ethnic or religious groups.

The success of the Nigerian plutarchy as an exclusionary class *for itself* is a function of corruption as collective action. In other words, members of both the ingroup and outgroup are implicated in corrupt practices and we cannot merely blame the principal for

failure to control the agent. For instance, having bribed his way through the electorate, both the elected and the electors become liable. In the context of elections, corruption serves the purpose of the elected but precludes the electorate from the dividends of democracy, having already received their share before the election. The high perception of corruption generated under collective corruption feeds social distrust and encourages the partial functioning of government institutions as well as an every-person-for-him/herself feeling in which people rely on personal connections to access public good. Under such circumstances, corruption is the expected behaviour and it will be practically impossible to develop social solidarity or generalised trust in society in place of the prevalent particularised trust in different social groups (Villoria et al, 2014).

It has been suggested that the collective action perspective of corruption is as inadequate as the principal-agent theory because corruption provides solution to some problems especially in poor countries (Marquette and Peiffer, 2018). However, such enervating prognosis has not hindered the fight against corruption in its various manifestations in different countries. The Nigerian government has responded by creating two specialised anticorruption agencies but achievements have been modest. It is unlikely much can be achieved under a neoliberal political economy in which economic growth has continued to reproduce poverty, unemployment and inequality.

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3

The Role of Faith-Based Organisations in Combating Money Politics and Sustenance of Democracy in Nigeria

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Introduction: Conceptualizing Faith-Based Organisations

Faith-based organisations refer to religious and/or religious based groups connected with a stable faith community and concerned with human development or societal development. According to Woldehenna (2005), FBOs are “religious and religious based organisations, places of religious worship or congregations, specialised religious institutions and registered [as] non-profit institutions that have religious character or missions. Similarly, Clarke and Jennings (2008) describe FBOs as organisations that derive inspirations and guidance for activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith. It thus, incorporates organisations that are shaped by faith or grounded in a faith tradition but do not involve activities that are explicitly religious. Faith-based organisations vary substantially in scale and geographical remit, ranging from international bodies to small groups of believers with a single place of worship and activities. Faith-based organisations are not only major providers of welfare services but also frequently become involved in political action, mobilization and /or contestation (Beaumont and Cloke, 2012).

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Theoretical Framework: Durkheim’s Functionalist Perspective on Religion

Religious beliefs in their varied forms are known in every society and this precise variation occupies a territory beyond a singular definition. Within Sociological theory, prominent approaches include functionalism. The functionalist school of thought evaluates religion keeping in mind the societal needs and is mostly concerned with the contribution that religion makes in fulfilling those needs. Viewed from this perspective, society needs an optimum amount of social cohesion and value consensus among its entities within which religion plays a relevant role. Functionalism for Durkheim was to identify the social origin and function of religion as he felt that it was a source of camaraderie and integration (Sukriti, 2021). Furthermore, Durkheim sought to understand the empirical, social aspect of religion that is common to all religions and goes beyond the concepts of spirituality and God. Durkheim presented what is probably the most influential interpretation of religion from a functionalist viewpoint and argued that in societies, a distinction is made between what is sacred and profane. Religion is based upon this differentiation and he defined it as a unified system of beliefs and practices which unites into one single moral community called a church. As can be observed in Durkheim’s theory, the communal characteristics of religion are highlighted; the function of religion, customs and rituals are to affirm the moral dominance of the society over its individual constituents. Durkheim advocated the idea that social life was not possible without shared values and moral beliefs that form the collective conscience. For him, where these crucial components are absent, it would be difficult to achieve social order, social regulation or cooperation.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that according to Durkheim, if religion did not exist, the society would not either. Religion strengthens or reaffirms the actual existence of the social world around us. Durkheim also focused on the importance of collective

worship-wherein the social group gathers together for participation in rituals characterized by excitements and admiration. These views of Durkheim on religious functions on individuals and society impacted positively on the lives of people. It is equally relevant in explaining the role of faith-based organisations in combating money politics in Nigeria. This can be done through preaching, public gathering and awareness campaigns especially by showing the negative consequences of money politics and our position that h this can help in addressing the problems associated with money politics among politicians in the country.

Historical Development of Faith-Based Organisations in Nigeria

The origin or evolution of FBOs in Nigeria remains unsettled among scholars. Historically, there are three major religions in Nigeria:- traditional, Christianity, and Islam. Apart from these two, one can also find other minor religions. This is the fact that, Nigerians travel all over the world in search of education and employment, and anytime they return, they bring new religious ideas and connections. The presentation here deals mostly with Islam and Christianity. Islam is the oldest religion in Nigeria. Most scholars claim that Islam came to Nigeria in the 11th and 12th centuries, and by 15th century, it was well established. Before the coming of colonialism, Islam had already taken root in most part of Nigeria with the exception of the Igboland and some ethnic groups in the middle belt. Islam came through Kanem empire and spread into Borno, Northeast of Nigeria and then to Hausa States in the 15th century. By the 16th century many converts were made in Yoruba Land (Mbachirin, 2006).

The Islamic FBOs in Nigeria predated the Christian FBOs. The objective of most of the Islam FBOs then was to convert non-Muslims. They also tried to forge a strong Islamic community through such activities as the sponsorship of Qur'anic schools

(Falola, 1998). Beginning with the Jihads, the desire of the Nigerian Muslim community has been to Islamize Nigeria and establish an Islamic state. The zeal for an Islamic state has been made to realize this dream. The emergence of many Islamic organisations to a large extent was a reaction to Christian missionary activities and their capacity to combine religion and education as well as health and social activities. Many Islamic FBOs later turned political because they felt politics was the best medium to address some of the issues and problems confronting the Muslim communities. Consequently, there were some Muslim organisations which from the very beginning had political backing. After independence, FBOs such as Jama'atu Nasril Islam were established; Jama'atul Izalatul Bid'ah Wa'ikamatissunna and Muslim Women Association of Nigeria were established. These organisations train and send missionaries all over Nigeria. They have various programmes aimed at preaching and dealing with hardship situations Muslims found themselves. There is also the Red Cross as a way of responding to social services, serving in mosques, festivals and on local hajji (Ibrahim, 2006). In the early part of colonial era, Muslims despised western education, which they consider to be an instrument of Christian missionaries to convert people to Christianity. They were later compelled by the socio-economic and political advantages attached to western education to embrace it. From 1980 to date, Nigeria witnessed the proliferation of Islamic FBOs as a result of the Muslim reaction to the general economic and governance crisis, which they perceived to be a direct failure of the western-style development paradigm and their attempts to search for an alternative development strategy.

On the other hand, Christian religion takes root in Nigeria in the 18th and 19th centuries. Christianity was closely linked with European trades and colonialism; chaplains accompanied traders not just to minister to them but also convert Africans. These missionaries established mission stations at trading posts.

Christianity became established in Nigeria by the various efforts made in the 19th century. There were many factors in Europe at that time that created interest in missionary work. These factors include the industrial revolution, the great evangelization revival in Europe and America (Duzurgha, 1991) and the end of slave trade which in one way or the other contributed to the beginning of missionary work in Africa and Nigeria in particular. The coming of Christianity to Nigeria was not just the work of European missionaries. The pioneer missionaries who made wider impact were freed slaves. According Caleb Oladipo (1996) “Christianity arrived in Africa through groups of Christians of African birth or descent who had come to faith in Christ as plantation slaves or soldiers in the British Army during the American war of independence or as farmers or squatters in Nova Scotia”. This contradicts the perspective that only Islam had African missionaries. Without the role played by the Africans, Christianity would not have come at the time it did nor would it have come to the places it came. On the whole, there were three missionary groups that came to Nigeria, namely: Catholics, Protestants and Non-denominational or Fundamentalists/Pentecostal. There were more missions than have been mentioned in the literature, but the ones mentioned here are the pioneer missions. Many others came later and almost every denomination represented in Nigeria came because of missionary activities (Gofwen, 2004).

The evolution of the Christian FBOs began with the coming of missionaries. The aim of the missions was to provide social civilization for Africans. They sought to rescue Africans from what they perceived as dangerous paganism and Islam, and such they destroyed everything African which they considered antagonistic their version of civilization. They changed many aspects of life such as forms of marriage, marriage ceremonies and norms. They also influenced native medicine and medical care by native doctors, rituals and festivals, dances, dress and music. They replaced all

these with western civilization (Galloway, 1960). The primary interest of the missionaries was not economic but they unavoidably inculcate economic and technological skills to their adherents. Most of the social economic and political influence or benefits came as part of the natural process. The beginnings of modern social services in Nigeria were made by the missionaries (Galloway, 1960). They came together in associations to address religious, social, economic and political matters as they were affecting them and their converts. Religious issues centred on strategies for the work and how to deal with obstacles that hindered the dissemination of the gospel. Socially, they were looking for ways to provide education, healthcare and other services to the people.

Many Christian FBOs emerged as a result of religious, socio-economic and political conditions in the country. The main motivation of Christian FBOs was to work together with greater force and to present a unified voice on issues affecting their work and converts. Both the missionaries and indigenous Christians could see the injustices and discrimination in government policies and activities of the Muslim leaders so the formation of Christian associations and organisations were to address these social, economic, political and religious injustices and discrimination (Mbachirin, 2006). These were thus, directly or indirectly behind the emergence of many Christian organisations.

Monetization of Politics in Nigeria

Money is one of the essential ingredients of politics in general and democracy in particular because without it most political activities cannot be carried out effectively. However, money is antithetical to democracy and good governance when it is used to determine who participates or not in politics in real terms, because of undue influence on electoral outcomes. It is this dominant role of money in the political process that is here referred to as money politics

(Emmanuel and Uche, 2018). Thus, around the world, the uncontrolled political finances threaten democracy and robs it of unique strengths. In Nigeria, money politics usually starts from the party level during nomination and progresses into election campaign and voting. It also extends to post-election matters such as the pursuit of electoral victory at the courts. Therefore, over the years, Nigerian politics has been characterized by the use of too much money by the power elites to influence electoral outcomes. In Nigeria, origin of money politics can be traced to the post-independence events especially the emergence of military rule, the oil boom in the 1970s; the character of the second republic politics and politicians and the emergence of ex-military generals in politics (Davis, 2012). Historical evidence, however, shows that the monetisation of politics in Nigeria predates the country's independence.

The foundation of money politics in Nigeria dates back to the 1922 Clifford Constitution which introduced the elective principle and created four elective seats (three for Lagos and one for Calabar). Although, the elective principle introduced suffrage for the first time in Nigeria, it was an income-based franchise (Jinadu, 2010). The provision of the elective principle hinged the exercise of franchise on financial qualification. It only allowed those with annual income of 100 pounds or more to participate in election. The implication was that, many Nigerians could not participate, contest or even vote in elections because, most of them were earning less than the stipulated amount. That was the deliberate policy of the colonial government to disenfranchise the people from political participation because it feared mass participation would ultimately lead to the demise of colonial rule. The idea was to use money as the criterion that will determine those that will participate meaningfully in politics. Several movements successfully resisted money as a criterion and successfully it was been replaced with universal suffrage.

After the independence, the politics and elections of the first republic saw the influence of many politics was minimal, yet even at this time, party emblems, customized T-shirts, caps, food and drinks were shared to party supporters at campaign rallies. They were little attempts to buy votes as such, instead there were appeals to ethnic and religious sentiments as the most important weapon the political leaders deployed to win or rig elections (Davis, 2012). At the start of the second republic, it was clear that, many of the first republic politicians had been depleted and new actors were admitted into the ranks. Money was eventually the major yardstick that determined the entry into the political cadres of the second republic and hence, money politics became central to Nigerian politics. Those who were recruited turned out to be products of events that took place between 15th January, 1966 when the first military coup took place and 1979 when the second republic began following the exit of the military from politics. These events during the period include a civil war and enormous resources from mineral oil (oil boom) (Onuoha, 2014). Military rule created retired and wealthy military officers who became an emergent political power bloc. The phenomenon of money politics was consolidated in the third republic when the military regime of Ibrahim Babangida introduced the concept of “new breed” politics, which ultimately only served to hand over political leadership to the crop of new men and women whose only credential for power was money resources they accumulated under the military era. The presidential election which Babangida military regime conducted in 1993 ostensibly as the culmination of the transition programme of the regime was eventually annulled. Reasons for the annulment include malpractices against agents, officials of the electoral body, INEC and voters, manipulation, offers and acceptance of money and other forms of inducements (Ojo, 2000).

Since the inception of the fourth republic in 1999 till date (2021), the entire electoral system from party nomination to the election

proper and even post-election issues (e.g., election petitions) has been monetized, because there were no limits placed on campaign donations to political parties and candidates or their campaign expenditures. The implication was that, with money the elites hijacked the elections and installed themselves or their cronies in power. In one instance of the use of money in that election, General Theophilus Yakubu Danjuma (Rtd) admitted that, he spent 7 million dollars on Obasanjo's presidential campaign in 1999 (Adetula, 2009). A similar trend of excessive use of money to influence voters and electoral outcomes was observed in the 2003 general election. In fact, money was the major determinant of who won and who lost in that election. Convinced that, civilian rule had come to stay after four years of democracy in the country; those with money came out in their numbers to participate in the 2003 general elections. Money politics was so prevalent in the 2003 election that it attracted condemnation from within and outside the country. The 2007 general election proved to be even worse. Money politics degenerated into a more frightening dimension in the elections as it was made part of Nigeria's electoral tradition. President Obasanjo had attempted to elongate his tenure, but when that attempt failed, he made sure that he installed his successor-Umaru Musa Yar'adua, against all known good electoral practices. To achieve this, he used as his tool, the monetary inducement of party delegates, voters, electoral officers and security agents to rig the 2007 general election (Okolie, 2010). Each election in Nigeria since 1999 has followed the pattern of money politics set in the previous elections. All the elections were a game for those with money. From party nomination to election campaigning to voting and to who won at the election petition tribunals- it was all about money and who could offer more bribe (Emmanuel and Uche, 2018)?

Similar acts of money inducement also characterised the 2015 and 2019 general elections. For example, to support the re-election of President Jonathan, a fund-raising campaign was organized in

which over 21 billion Naira was raised by friends and some corporate organisations (Olorunmola, 2016). The donations from corporate organisations were against the provisions of company and allied matters act (CAMA), 1990. Beyond these donations, Jonathan of PDP was known to have diverted several billions of government funds to finance his campaign (Encomium, 2015). The All Progressive Congress also embarked on a fund-raising exercise to generate funds for the candidature and campaign of Muhammadu Buhari in 2015. With these kinds of campaign donations to candidates and political parties for the elections, it was not surprising that party and electioneering were reduced to show of money-in which candidates and their parties tried to outspend each other. Monetary inducement was equally extended to leaders of some ethnic affiliated socio-cultural groups and religious organisations. There were even cases of successful attempts made by some desperate politicians or those working for them to buy permanent voters cards from voters in both 2015 and 2019 general elections. In fact, the various aspects of electoral politics in Nigeria had been so monetized that it was no longer possible to talk about the economics of power in the country. The electoral contest in Nigeria usually starts with the party nomination. To secure a party nomination under the monetized system in Nigeria, aspirants are expected to first buy over the party delegates. The typical example was the APC presidential primaries in 2015 where each delegate was alleged to have received 2000 USD and 3000 USD from Atiku and Buhari respectively (Onyekpere, 2015). In the same vein, Atiku Abubakar was reported to have spent 15 million USD at the 2019 primary election, each delegate was paid 5000 USD (Premium Times, 2018). After securing the party nominations, candidates standing for election are also expected to run monetized election campaigns before the elections. In this aspect, vote buying was also among the monetary inducements which took place in most polling units across the country but with varying degrees of intensity. Candidates also offered some money

to electoral officers in each polling unit to secure their mandate to rig the election results. Finally, election tribunals, lawyers and judges handling election cases are given millions of dollars to give the candidate a favourable judgment. From foregoing discussion, it shows that money politics in Nigeria is a huge issue.

The Role of Faith-Based Organisations in combating Money Politics in Nigeria

Religious organisations can play vital role in combating money politics in Nigeria. This is because the positive influence of religion in combating money politics can enhance the sustenance of democracy and national development in Nigeria. This means that, religious organisations have duty to do in preaching to political leaders to abide by the ethical teachings of their religions and such, will provide leadership and obedient followership. In this sense, religious organisations can preach to the political leaders that the unlawful use of the public treasury for campaigns during elections is illegal and can only result in the retrogressive development of the country. Furthermore, this will contribute to the lack of good governance in the country.

Religion, - whether Islam, Christianity and or Traditional African Religion— provide mankind with moral values to guide life. Highlighting the function of religion as a provider of moral values, Mbiti (2004) says “it is religion which tells what is right and what is wrong, adherence to religious ethical values is imperative for all religious practitioners”. Interestingly, Nigerians are one of the most religious people in the world. Therefore, there is the need to live a moral life because it is commanded by God. Failure to do this will be counterproductive in the matter of national development. Furthermore, religion prepares the mind of man to be a good politician devoid the use of money in politics and other related political activities that are against religious teachings. The

teachings of religion are expected to guide politicians to be able to lead his people aright as politician with the fear of God in him. Without mincing words, a hitch free election will produce legitimate leaders who will govern with fear of God; and obedient followers. When religious leaders preach these precepts, it will help in solving problems such as political instability, violence and insecurity, maladministration, retarding of growth and development, and international stigmatization and apathy politics which apparently are by-products of money politics in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This paper examined the concepts of faith-based organisations, money politics in Nigeria and the roles of faith-based organisations in combating the activities of money politics. The paper concludes that, the sustainability of religious based organisations in preaching the implications and fighting the use of money in Nigerian politics can help enormously in putting the country in the right track of sustainable growth and development.

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4

Godfather Politics: Contextualising and Historicising Nigeria's Fourth Republic Experience

Isa Mohammed & Emeka Daniel Oruonye

Introduction

Godfather politics is a phenomenon that is practice across all societies globally. It is commonly found in American, Italian, and French politics. However, in the case of Nigerian, godfather politics has a very long history in the political culture. This history is rooted in the various cultural practices that are transplanted into the political process by the political class. Hence, the political history and political development of Nigeria are replete with the accounts of godfatherism.

Politics is the struggle for power and influence to control state power. The political godfathers as power brokers join politics to either directly or indirectly control the state particularly in the distribution of resources and favours by the party in power. Every society constitutes the governing and non-governing elites and the political class and non-political class in society (Pareto 1935, p 1419-1424.; Mosca 1939, p.50). According to Mamah (2004, p.1) godfather, politics has started long ago during the political activities in Nigeria's first republic.

As far as politics is concerned, various political engineering is done to promote democratic principles and consolidation in society. Nigeria as a developing country is faced with the negative consequences of godfather politics which undermine democracy, development, leadership recruitment, and peaceful political transition of power. Most outsiders of the political process in Nigeria define “*politics as a dirty game*” from the prism of godfather and godson’s clash of interests.

The relationship between a godfather and a godson is instrumental. “It is more of you rub my back and I rub yours” (Albert 2005, p.94). The manifestation of godfather politics can be seen in political thuggery, money politics, and electoral violence which are more often than not the by-product of godfather politics in the Nigerian electoral process. The godfather is a self-seeking individual against society, democracy, and the political system (Nnamani 2003, p.45).

In the Fourth Republic, the manifestations of godfather politics in Nigeria have raised questions on the nature and character of the Nigerian democracy and its consolidation. The activities of godfathers have brought about violence, political instability, unending legal battles, and loss of lives in the Nigerian political system from Oyo state to Kano and from Maiduguri to Anambra state among others respectively.

It is against this backdrop that this paper will contextualize and historicize the trajectory of godfather politics in the Nigeria’s Fourth Republic to extrapolate the transformation of the phenomenon and show its effects on democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Godfather(ism): The term godfather has a different meaning to different people. The word is very popular in the Catholic Church tradition. However, in both America, Italy, and France godfather is a very common term in politics, economy, and among criminal gangs

(Bernard 2009, p.7); for instance, the popular American Cowboys or Mafia groups like Mario Puzo.

In the Catholic traditions, a godson is usually attached to an uncle or godfather who oversees his baptism, marriage, or spiritual development in the Church. In this context, a godfather is not a relationship based on any instrumental or worldly engagements. It is purely religious guidance for the members of the Catholic Church congregation which has a very long history.

Furthermore, it is believed that godfather is a universal Christian practice. It is aimed at religious guidance, education, and lifelong spiritual development. It is sometimes called godfather, godmother, or godparent. However, in Judaism, Chinese traditions, humanism, and Santería traditions, they all have the godfather’s role in their civilizations and religious development (Martin, 1962; Parsons, 1953; Rebekah 1994).

Hence, godfatherism as commonly used in Nigerian politics which seeks to describe the character, ideology, and practice of political elites who through political machinations aspire to control state power through their godsons. It can be argued that godfather politics in Nigeria is not politics of ideology but politics of interest, violence, power, and money. As Edigin (2010, p.1) has argued, the godson who is the holder of political position becomes a stooge to his godfather because he who pays the piper dictates the tune.

Moreover, according to Ibrahim (2003), godfathers are men who have the power to personally determine who gets nominated and who wins election in a state. This position directly links the godfather to the electoral victory of the godson who must be a loyal servant in the political arrangement (BBC, 2003 November 10).

According to Adeoye (2009, p.79), a godfather in its simple form is a term used to describe a relationship between a godfather and a godson. A godfather is a kingmaker, boss, mentor, and principal, while the godson is the beneficiary and recipient of the legacy of

the godfather. A godfather in politics anoints a godson who is expected to win an election by using the influence, wealth, political structure, and political experience of the godfather.

In the Nigerian political context, the godfathers are not mere financiers of political campaigns. They are individuals whose power stems not just from wealth but from their ability to deploy violence and corruption to manipulate national, state, or local political systems in support of the politicians they sponsor. In return they demand a substantial degree of control over the government they help bring into existence not to shape government policy, but to exact direct financial “returns” in the form of government resources stolen by their protégés or lucrative government contracts awarded to them as further opportunities for graft. Godfathers also require their sponsored politicians to use government institutions to generate patronage for other protégés (Human Rights Watch, 2007, p.3).

Etymologically the term politics is derived from the Greek word “*politika*” meaning affairs of the cities. It is sometimes used as “*polis*” the affairs of the State or city-state. English politics has its roots in the name of Aristotle’s classic work *Politika*. According to Aristotle politics is a noble activity in which men decide the rules they will live by and the goals they will collectively pursue. The term first appears in English in the 1430s coming from the middle French word *politique* which would become politics in modern English (Buhler 1961, p.ix). In a broader sense, politics is the process of making a collective decision by a people in a given social environment or society.

Aristotle, referred to as the father of political science started his great book, *Politics* (1253a, p.1) with a statement that man is by nature a political animal. The import of this aphorism is that man is a social creature with the power of speech and moral reasoning. Aristotle maintained that every man by nature has an impulse towards partnership with others. Moreover, Aristotle believes

people can realize their best self in the state. The nature of man and his needs for family and survival must relate through interactions. Aristotle sees politics as a practical science and master science that makes people happy and attains a good life as an end.

There is no consensus among scholars on the meaning of politics between philosophers, scholars, and politicians. This is because in most cases the conceptions are overlapping or contradictory. This confusion has led to the perception that politics like most social science concepts is highly contested. Politics is a universal feature of all human societies, past and present. It is found in all groups and organizations, large or small, formal or informal (Leftwich 2004, p.22).

The conception of politics is in itself a political act. This is because of the divergent ideologies inherent among scholars (Leftwich 1984, ix; Heywood 2007, pp.1-8). According to Heywood (2007, p.5), politics can be classified as four-fold. First, politics as government is when it is primarily associated with the art of government and the activities of the state. Secondly, politics is public life where politics is primarily concerned with the conduct and management of community affairs. Thirdly, politics as conflict resolution is concerned with the expression and resolution of conflicts through compromise, conciliation, negotiation, and other strategies. Fourthly, politics as power is the process through which the production, distribution, and use of scarce resources are determined in all areas of social existence.

In the context of the state, politics means “reason of state” is the doctrine that asserts the preservation of the state understood as a dominion (legitimate or illegitimate) and can be pursued by any means, just and unjust. The emergence of this conception was a revolution in the sense of representing a profound change in the meaning and scope of the concept of politics as well as that of political man and political science (Maurizio 1992, p.5).

Contextualizing the Godfather Politics in Nigeria

Politics has three major connotations- political activity, political process, and political power. The later connotation, political power, deals with human relationship whereby the capacity of an individual or a group of individuals to modify the conduct of other individuals or the groups in a manner one desires (Johari 1989, p.7). This perspective involves three things; politics as a struggle for group politics and interests, and the individual godfather who aspires to control as he wishes.

The crux of the matter revolves around politics and morality. This issue has been contentious even among the scholars of Renaissance and Enlightenment on the separation of politics from morality or politics from religion (Machiavelli 1532, p. xxiv). From the foregoing, Omoregbe asserts thus:

We are made to believe that politics and morality do not go together with that once a person starts playing politics, he must ignore morality. Hence, we often hear it said that “politics is a dirty game” by its nature, politics involves the use of immoral means. Thus, Nigerian politicians have followed Machiavelli in removing morality from politics and in thinking that the best way to be successful in politics is to use immoral means (Omoregbe 1998, p.24).

This explains the understanding of godfather as based on power struggles. The relationship between a godfather and godson revolves around power and influence. It presupposes a “social exchange” between two or more persons beneficial to both parties at the expense of the innocent public or national interest. This is why most political scientists referred to the phenomenon as godfather politics, not godfatherism even though the concepts are used here interchangeably.

For instance, deducting from his sorrowful experience Nnamani (2003, p.17) captured the nature and character of the Nigerian godfather thus: “political godfather [s] use their power and influence to block the involvement of the masses from Nigerian politics”. This statement provides us with the negative effects and strategy of the Nigeria godfather in politics.

Most Nigerians, both professional politicians and citizens, perceive politics as a preserve of people who see themselves as rich, powerful, violent, treacherous, and callous. If you have integrity and honesty politics is not for you; rather it is for the touts and gangs and people without integrity and sagacity. This makes entry into politics a preoccupation of the godfathers with dark and dirty money. Onuoha (2020, pp.23-36.) described Africa and Nigerian politics as mostly influenced, practiced, and controlled by touts who are lawless, fearless, and shameless. Nigeria practises “toutocracy” instead of democracy with tout-touts, corporate touts, supreme touts, and chief touts holding sway in the political space as godfathers. This is why he conceived and described the Nigerian democratic experiment as motor park democracy.

Hence, in this study two major types of godfathers are identified: - the Progressives godfathers: whose aim is to train, recruit and mentor young politicians for political leadership succession and for national development. This type of godfather politics was the practice in the First and partly Second Republics by the nationalists and political elites of the time.

The Political Entrepreneur godfathers are the second; their main goal is to invest and harvest in the political game. The relationship is instrumental. This type of godfather politics was mostly anti-people and anti-national development. This is usually practised by business tycoons and military elites who amass wealth, power, and influence in Nigeria.

The end of this political relationship in the first typology above is mentorship and guidance based on discipline and patriotism. Unfortunately, the second one is based on instrumental advantages, power, money, corruption, violence, and killings. It undermines people's will and democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Historicizing Godfather Politics

Godfather politics is not new in Nigeria, what is new is the nature and the characters of the politicians involved. This study aims to explain its transformation and impact on the democratic experiment in Nigeria in the Fourth Republic. In the political arena, the godfathers are the power brokers and political bulldozers who specialize in the game of politics.

As is earlier mentioned, godfather politics originate from socio-cultural traditions of our people before it was adopted in the political culture of our nation. Examples of traditional society application of the godfather or master-servant concept among the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba have been documented. The *maigida* or *ubangida* (landlord or head of a household), was the practice among the Hausa traders in West Africa where services were provided by the *Maigida* for the Hausa people who sold cattle in exchange for kola nuts. A certain percentage of kola nut is kept aside for the *maigidain* a patron-client relationship. Similarly, in Yoruba land godfather is known as the *baba kekere* (the small father). Among criminals it is called the *baba isale* (the father of the underground world). In addition, there is *baba nigbejo* (father for a great help in times of trouble). In the history of Ibadan in the early 19th century, Yoruba refugees settled with *baba kekere* in the city. These were military chiefs and patrons appointed in charge of certain Ibadan colonies by the town's Traditional Council. Most of the migrants in the city paid tribute to *baba kekere* who also reported back to the Ibadan Chiefs (Falola 1985; Albert 2005, p.86).

According to Dibia (2003) in the sociology of Igbo society, the concept of *Nnam-Ukwu* (my master) and *Odibo* (servant) is a cultural fact. A younger person is entrusted to an elder or experienced person for training in social, economic, and moral adulthood. Hence, the role played by the older person in this type of relationship is akin to that of a godfather.

The coming of the colonialists who consolidated on the traditional or rather transformed the nationalists into a form of political elites in emergent nations set in motion this development. Subsequently, this development spanning from the 1800s to 1900, and 1900 to 1960; these periods witnessed the formation of another class of elites in the political realm. However, the party politics of the 1940s to 1950s that ushered in independence was a decisive trajectory in the emergence of pre-colonial and colonial godfathers in Nigeria. The political class was the trustee of the Europeans and representatives of their people. The introduction of indirect rule and slavery has created a class of powerful people in all societies in Nigeria who would later transform into godfathers of their time. The introduction of party politics and regional political class in Nigeria through their cocoons formed a united force to contest political power between them.

To better understand this, we must consider the nature and transformation of the godfather phenomenon from the early period to the present. In the First Republic, the nationalists have transformed into politicians representing various interests arising from their regions. Sir Ahmadu Bello the leader of the Northern People's Congress (NPC), Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the Action Group (AG), and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC) were the political elites who dictated all political decisions and positions of the people they represent. By the position they occupy from 1956 to 1966 they were the political godfathers who tried to ensure solid footing in Nigeria. During this period, political activities are based on the

national interest and to a lesser extent regional interests in Nigeria. Most of these politicians were referred to as progressive godfathers. There is some level of sanity and integrity among the political class during this period.

The Second Republic was the continuation of the transformation of nationalist politicians as godsons and goddaughters. All the key players of the First Republic were part of the political process:- Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, and Alhaji Aminu Kano were very active in the political development. However, what played out in the government 1979-1983 was prebendalism, patron-client relationship, and corrupt practices (Joseph 1987, p.26). The Kaduna Mafia was born and ethnic politics was heightened between the northern and southern groups in the body polity by the power elites (Bala & Sonni 1987, p.45).

In contrast, the aborted Third Republic was expected to be tough so that it can build on the personality of political gladiators. This development brought about military intervention which truncated the democratic experiment. The political leadership at that time lacked leadership with examples, there was corruption and ethnic politics was widespread (Achebe 1983, p.1). The subsequent military regimes were worse from 1983 to 1998; such as under Generals Buhari, Babangida, Abacha, and Abdulsalami respectively. The military has formed a clique of the power elite in the country with strong backing from coopted civilians who agreed to work with them. The military cliques were the godfathers by this time.

In 1999 Nigeria returned to civil rule marking the beginning of the Fourth Republic. During this period young politicians who participated in the aborted Third Republic and the truncated Second Republic under the tutelage of the military cliques succeeded in capturing state power in most states of the federation. However, few powerful politicians controlled their respective states. For Instance, Kwara, Enugu, Lagos, Kano, and Adamawa states were

left to powerful godfathers like Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, Dr. Olusola Saraki, Bola Tinubu, and Chief Jim Nwobodo, among others.

Drawing from the above narrative the two major types of godfather politics can be discerned in Nigeria as progressive godfatherism particularly in the First and partly Second Republics 1960 and 1983. The era of political entrepreneurs godfatherism has become dominant in the Fourth Republic- since 1999 to date.

Theoretical Framework

The elite theory was developed to debunk the Marxist ideology of antagonism of classes from the liberal point of view. The theory also goes with the views of pluralism in the modern state. Many elite theory models seek to explain classes in human society about power relations and group dynamics.

According to Pareto (1935, p.1421), every society has two classes which are the governing and non-governing elites. From this point of view, the elites of the two classes take care of their class interests. Mosca (1939, pp.50-53) divided the society into two and described the elites as “political class”. He believes that no matter how old or small society is, there are two classes that comprise the ruling class and the class that is ruled.

Mills (1956, p.304) conceived the elite in terms of the position they occupy in the state especially in American society. According to him, the American state produces three types of the elite who control the state. He identified the politicians or political elites, the military elites, and the corporate elites as the most powerful groups in America. This argument can also be said to apply to present-day Nigeria.

In *Iron Law of Oligarchy*, Michel (1911, p.50) posits that all organisations including democratic ones with good ideals and practices will inevitably succumb to the rule of few elite (oligarchy).

The focus is mainly on political parties in the 20th century. He believes that the organisational imperatives of superior knowledge, skills, and status gave rise to the caste of leaders. This would lead to elite domination of the internal power control of the institutions. The elite (godfathers in this case) manipulate and take control of the organisations and the people in them especially political parties.

In his view on the political class and democracy in Nigeria Jega (2007, p.9) averred that since Nigeria has experienced long years of military rule which made the military class more powerful in succeeding and co-opting the civilians into joining their military junta that is considered as an aberration. Hence, Jega identified the two classes of elites as “*militicians*” (military and politicians) who were united as a class or strong force undermining democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Jalingo (2006, cited in Jiddere, p.4) argued that elites in Nigeria can be both traditional and modern. He argued that the traditional elites are the traditional rulers (obas, emirs, chiefs, and titleholders), clergies, and community leaders in the society while the modern elites are politicians, academic elites (university professors, lecturers, and senior research fellows), military officers (serving and retired), politicians (president, governors, senators, representatives, chairmen, councillors), bureaucrats like senior public servants in ministries, departments, and agencies, and business tycoons who exert power, influence, and control in the political affairs of the state. They are always coherent, conscious of their interests, and fraternity. In spite of seeming solidarity, they are always in power tussles and conspiracy among themselves.

The elites have some special qualities that make them successful; they are intelligent, skilful, wealthy, show solidarity or *esprit de corps*, capacity, aptitude, and moral character among others. Hence, politics serves as a link and better networking opportunity and maintains the elite circulation processes.

Similarly, Mosca (1939, p.268) postulated that:

In all societies, right from societies that are meagrely developed and have barely attained the dawn of civilization down to the most advanced and powerful societies-two classes of people appear,- a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power, and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous is directed and controlled by the first, in a manner that is now more or less legal, now more or less arbitrary and violent. What is more it supplies the first, in appearance at least, with the instrumentalities that are essential to the vitality of the political organism.

One more thing that contributes to the perpetuation of godfather politics is the patron-client model adopted by the Nigerian political class. The existence of neo-patrimonialism through ethnicity and patronage has contributed greatly to understanding the dynamics of godfather politics in Nigerian politics. Patronage is high-level politics where the reward system of patronage is the distribution of collective goods such as schools, roads, and contracts for the clients who in turn give support to the godfather (Chul and Mohammed 2020, p.198).

This argument is true in post-colonial African politics. Elites or ruling groups through elite assimilation gang up to enjoy access to state resources by excluding the masses. The elites ensure the merging of public wealth with private business; bribery and corruption are rampant to take advantage of the state power. These ruling classes are godfathers in African democracy (Bayart 1989, p. 100). In Nigeria, godfather politics continue to thrive through nepotism, tribalism, and the use of religion by the politicians who ensure a divide and rule strategy is achieved.

Table1. Major Instances of Godfather Politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic 1999-2019

S/N	Godfather(s)	Godson(s)	State	Year	Reported clashes
1	Saraki Olusola	Mohammed Lawal	Kwara	1999-03	2003
2	Emeka Ofor	Mbadinuju Chinwoke	Anambra	1999-03	2003
3	Jim Nwodo	Nnamani Ken	Enugu	1999-03	2003
4	Sheriff Ali	Kachallah Malla	Borno	1999-03	2003
5	Christ Uba	Ngige Christ	Anambra	2003-06	2003
6	Atiku Abubakar	Haruna Boni	Adamawa	1999-07	N/A
7	Adedibu Lamidi	Ladoja Rasheed	Oyo	2003-06	2003
8	Yarima Ahmed	Shinkafi Mahmud	Zamfara	2007-11	2011
9	Nyame Jolly	Danbaba Suntai	Taraba	2007-11	2011
10	Emeka Ojukwu	Peter Obi	Anambra	2007-11	2011
11	Bukar Abba	MammanAli.	Yobe	2011-09	N/A
12	Saraki Bukola	Ahmed Abdulfatah	Kwara	2011-19	N/A
13	Obi Peter	Obiano Willie.	Anambra	2014-19	2019
14	Rabiu Kwankwaso	Ganduje Abdullahi	Kano	2015-19	2018
15	Bola Tinubu	Ambode Akinwunmi	Lagos	2015-19	2019
16	Goje Danjuma	Dankwambo Ibrahim	Gombe	2015-19	2015
17	Wamakko Aliyu.	Aminu Tambuwal	Sokoto	2015-19	2019
18	Akpabio Godswill	Udom Emmanuel	Akwa-Ibom	2015-19	2019

19	Adam Oshiomhole	Obaseki Godwin.	Edo	2016-20	2019
20	Shettima Kashim	Zulum Ibrahim	Borno	2019-	N/A

Source: Various sources compiled by the Authors, 2021.

Discussion of Findings

The phenomenon of godfather politics is very common and rampant in the democratic experiment of Nigeria. The development is found in all the political parties and in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. However, the fundamental issue is that the immediate disengagement of the military from politics and the return to civil rule in 1999 gave the old politicians ample opportunity to re-launch themselves into the political reckoning. For instance, Chief Lamidi Adedibu, Dr. Olusola Saraki, Alhaji Abubakar Rimi, Chief Audu Ogbeh, Chief Alex Ekwueme, and Atiku Abubakar played leading roles in the political transition process rather than the young amateur politicians.

In the above scenarios of major instances of godfather politics in Nigeria, we will examine nine case studies in the six geo-political zones of the country. In the South-west, we will examine the case between Chief Lamidi Adedibu against Governor Rashid Ladoja of Oyo state. Chief Adedibu played a very prominent role in bringing Ladoja to power. Unfortunately, issues about not approving Adedibu's list of nominees for appointments, not visiting the *Molete Palace* to regularly pay tribute, and above all not sharing the N65 million Naira security votes of the state with him created a crisis. No doubt, Adedibu was a power broker who joined politics in the 1950s and participated in all party politics, political struggles, and negotiations in Ibadan politics. Chief Adedibu demanded that the Governor should remit N15 million out of the N65 million security votes every month. Governor Ladoja refused, arguing instead that

government is for service to the people, not a business and that there was no agreement to that effect for him to distribute money. The crisis erupted and Chief Adedibu used the Oyo State House of Assembly members loyal to him to impeach the Governor with 18 out of 32 legislators; this was in spite of court injunction (Adegbamigbe 2007, pp.21-29).

In the South-east, a similar scenario played out between two friends who turned foes: - Chief Chris Uba and Dr. Chris Ngige. They were friends since 1993 and have been supportive of each other. In Anambra state, Dr. Ngige attempted to contest for the position of National Financial Secretary of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in 1999 and lost the opportunity because the then-Governor Mbadinuju did not support him. When disagreement broke out between Chief Emeka Ofor and Governor Mbadinuju in 2003 that cost him re-election, Chief Uba had prepared his governorship candidate, Dr. Ngige who won the election against all odds. However, it was agreed that Chief Uba would surrender to him seven out of the ten commissioners in juicy ministries. Dr. Ngige won the election and Chief Uba boasted that he is the greatest of godfathers in Nigeria for having sponsored a governor, three senators, ten out of eleven Members of the House of Representatives, and twenty-nine House of Assembly Members. Subsequently, the two disagreed over appointments and spending of state money. Chief Uba asked Governor Dr. Ngige to regularly remit N10 million for 87 months totalling N870 million from the Federation Account. Dr. Ngige refused to sign a memo brought to him by his godfather for this purpose (Ngige 2003, pp.42-43).

Unfortunately, the godfather has surrounded the governor with his loyalists in the government. On 10 July 2003, he was abducted through an attempted coup where a resignation letter was fabricated purportedly originating from Dr. Ngige. The Anambra State House of Assembly hurriedly accepted the resignation of Dr. Ngige and his deputy Chief Chris Ude was sworn-in as the

acting Governor. Later, Dr. Ngige came out of hiding and debunked his resignation; he explained that he signed the document under duress (Albert 2005, p.100). In the two cases, the Presidency under President Olusegun Obasanjo was accused of taking sides with godfathers.

In Kwara state in the North-central, another prominent godfather known as the lion and the founder of the Saraki political dynasty held sway in power and influence. Saraki has been in control of the politics of Kwara state for over 40 years. He contested for election and lost in 1964, won in 1979 and 1983 as Senator where he became the Senate Leader. The *Oloye of Ilorin*, as he was known, has sponsored and made whoever becomes Governor in Kwara State from 1979, 1983, 1992, 1999, and 2003 until he died in 2012. Saraki was the godfather to Rear Admiral Mohammed Lawal who became governor with Saraki's support in 1999 on the platform of All Peoples Party (APP). Disagreements soon broke out over loyalty, appointments and juicy contracts. In the run-up to the 2003 elections, Saraki decamped to PDP and mobilized his supporters and loyalists against the governor by sponsoring the candidature of his son Dr. Bukola Saraki who defeated the incumbent Governor Mohammed Lawal. The godfather has won and his biological son became the Governor of Kwara State. This event marked the institutionalization of the Saraki dynasty in Kwara state politics (Hamzat 2012, pp.1-3).

The case of Borno state became popular in Nigeria due to the clashes and coverage the scenario received from the media. The good relationship between Mala Kachallah and Ali Modu Sherif, popularly known as SAS. The two are family friends and very close. It was said that Kachallah was the best man during the SAS father's marriage to his mother. By implication, Kachallah is like a father to SAS and he addresses him as such "*baba*" (father). Fortunately for Kachallah because SAS has money to spend and is well known both at the local and national levels in the APP,

everyone sought his support in contesting the governorship election of Borno state. SAS used his influence and money to get him elected as governor. Immediately after winning the election, Kachallah failed to honour the list of commissioners from SAS. Although, SAS was also elected Senator to the National Assembly at the same party APP in 1999. Consequently, SAS mobilized his thugs, the ECOMOG, to threaten the Governor in case of any attempt on his (SAS) life. SAS used the Borno State House of Assembly to bargain and threatened the Governor with impeachment. In the 2003 re-election, SAS deployed his money, power, and influence as the godfather of Borno state politics to wrestle the APP's governorship ticket from the governor which forced the latter to seek another platform in the Alliance for Democracy (AD) to contest; he lost. SAS won the election which confirms his status as the power broker in Borno state politics.

The situation in Kano state was not much different between Former Governor Engr. Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso and his friend and political ally Governor Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje. The two most powerful politicians have been friends for decades and were together since 1999. They were elected Governor and Deputy Governor of Kano State 1999-2003 but lost re-election to Malam Ibrahim Shekarau in 2003. Kwankwaso was later appointed Minister of Defence and worked together with Ganduje. In 2011 Kwankwaso and Ganduje were re-elected as Governor and Deputy Governor of Kano state.

After the successful completion of the joint ticket, Kwankwaso anointed Ganduje as his successor and won the Governorship election in Kano in 2015. The disagreement between the two started immediately after the elections over the appointment and formation of the cabinet. There were many attempts at reconciliation between the two in 2016, 2017, and 2018 even by the Governors of the North-west, but to no avail. Kwankwaso decamped to PDP in 2018 and fought the Ganduje administration with his

Kwankwasiyya movement that was very strong. However, Ganduje controversially won re-election as Governor of Kano state in 2019. The import of the whole political issue is that Kwankwaso sees himself as the godfather and Ganduje as the godson. Nevertheless, Ganduje claims that they are brothers, friends, and political allies. In Kano state, politics is influenced by the Kano Emirate, Council of Islamic scholars, and the business class.

The case in Taraba state is not much different; after influencing the election of Danbaba Suntai as Governor in 2007, former Governor Jolly Nyame was engaged in a political survival fight with Suntai. The issues were on the sacking of Nyame's loyalists from government, the case of Danladi Baido Tijo's mandate on who won the 2006 PDP primaries, and the alleged patronage system disagreements. Suntai wanted Nyame to intervene by influencing Baido to withdraw his case against him from the court about who was the valid winner of the PDP primaries. However, Nyame's refusal to prevail on Baido to withdraw the case pushed Suntai into a political vendetta of Nyame supporters in government. The deputy Governor, Alhaji Sani Abubakar Danladi was in the middle of the conflict between his brother Baido and his boss Suntai. In 2011, Nyame, Baido, Ikenya, Ajiya decamped to Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN). Senator Joel Ikenya contested for Governor and Nyame contested for Senator for Taraba North but they lost everything to Governor Suntai and Senator Aisha-Jummai Alhassan. Nyame the godfather lost the fight to his godson who now controls the political direction and machinery of the state.

In Edo state, what started as political sweetheart turned into a bitter political rivalry between former Governor Comrade Adams Oshiomhole and his political ally Governor Godwin Obaseki. In their encounter during his tenure, Oshiomhole described Obaseki as a man of ideas and creativity when he appointed him as the chairman of the Edo State Economic and Strategy Team in 2009 (Akinpelu, Premium times 2020 June 25). The unfolding events

between the duo became tense immediately Oshiomhole anointed and sponsored Obaseki to be his successor as Governor of Edo state in 2016 under the platform of the APC. The disagreement started between the two on appointments and the formation of government in the state.

Consequently, Oshiomhole became the National Chairman of the APC where he thinks he could have his pound of flesh. In the ensuing struggle, the first casualty was Oshiomhole whose suspension at Ward level was sponsored by Governor Obaseki. The suspension was used by the court as the basis to suspend him as National Chairman. In the same vein, on November 12, 2019, a vote of no confidence was passed on Oshiomhole by the 18 Local Government Chairmen of the APC in the Edo state. In his reaction to his suspension, Oshiomhole orchestrated the disqualification of Governor Obaseki from contesting the gubernatorial election under the APC on July 12, 2020. The drama continued with the affirmation of suspension of Oshiomhole by the Court of Appeal Abuja. Governor Obaseki met President Buhari on the issue but could not be saved by the President. On July 16, 2020, Governor Obaseki resigned from the APC and was accepted by the PDP. He won the PDP gubernatorial ticket after horse-trading and was re-elected governor of Edo state by defeating Oshiomhole's anointed candidate Pastor Ize-Iyamu at the polls.

In retrospect, there were cases here and there that stand out for consideration in this study. Former Governor of Zamfara state Ahmad Sani Yarima was the only Governor who anointed his deputy to succeed him in 2007. However, before the 2011 elections, Governor Mahmud Shinkafi defected to PDP from the ANPP. This development angered Yarima who brought Hon. Abdulaziz Yari to contest under the platform of the ANPP and defeated the incumbent Governor Shinkafi. This is a clear case of godfather politics. Yarima was the kingmaker and power broker in Zamfara state politics. In 2014, Bukola Saraki influenced the decamping of the Governor of

Kwara state Abdulfatah Ahmed to the APC from PDP to challenge the re-election of President Jonathan. This development confirmed the power of Saraki as the godfather of Kwara state politics.

Another important case is between Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Akinwumi Ambode the former Governor of Lagos state. The disagreement which was reported on Lagos Master Plan and negligence on the welfare of APC executives of Lagos state were the issues that came to the fore. In the run-up to the 2019 elections, Tinubu outrightly rejected the re-election bid of his former godson Ambode. Despite pleas from prominent governors, Vice President and President, Tinubu ensured that Ambode was defeated in the party primaries that brought his preferred candidate Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu. Tinubu prides himself as the national leader of the APC and godfather of Lagos state politics and the South-west in general.

Conclusion

In this paper, we attempted to examine the phenomenon of godfather politics in the political and democratic experience of Nigeria since 1999. The fact about godfatherism is its universal practice in all democracies in the world. However, in the Third World, Africa, and Nigeria in particular, it is used to undermine democratic governance. In Nigeria, the cultural roots of godfather which was good have been abused and infused into politics for selfish aggrandisement by the political elites against the national interest.

It can be established from this study that the godfather politics in Nigeria has been transformed from the progressive venture into political entrepreneurs' ventures where politics is seen as a business for profit making after an investment by the godfathers through their godsons in the political process. The many instances of clashes between godfathers and their godsons discussed across the country

attest to the instrumental nature of the relationship that exists between them.

We conclude by noting that godfather politics has many negative impacts on the democratic culture, practice, and consolidation in Nigeria in different ways that include among others, monetization of politics, political thuggery and political vendetta, bad leadership recruitment process, and above all undermines political participation which is the basic fundamental right of citizens. Hence, political mentorship and progressive politics are lacking and this is partly responsible for Nigeria's leadership and development question failure after two decades of the democratic experiment in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Drawing from the findings and aim of this paper the following recommendations are made:

1. There is a need for Nigerians to play politics of ideology through the formation of political parties that are ideologically based. This is the starting point of instilling national interest in the minds of the political actors and citizens in general in the political process.
2. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the electoral umpire, should perform its supervisory role in the formation, function, and running of political parties in Nigeria to prevent the hijacking of the political parties by money bags (godfathers) who use them for personal interests against the wishes of the people.
3. Government and INEC must enforce the laws on punishing offenders and violators of the Electoral Acts 2010 as amended regarding the use of money and criminal politics through electoral violence perpetrated by political elites in Nigeria.

4. Nigerians should be made to understand that politics is a call to service and is for good people. Politics should not be left in the hands of touts, money bags, and politicians alone.
5. There is a need for creating general awareness to the citizens on the importance of popular political participation to reduce the influence of money, identity politics, and parochialism in the political system.
6. Political leadership through mentorship should be imbibed by politicians to change the growing influence of godfather politics in the democratic and political space in Nigeria.

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5

Monetisation of Politics and its Debilitating Impact on Social Services in Nigeria, 1999 – 2020

Timothy O. Erinoshio & Jibrin Ubale Yahaya

Introduction

Monetisation of politics, otherwise known as money politics, is a global phenomenon and not peculiar to Nigeria and Africa. The concept covers the funding of activities of political parties from registration, campaigning during elections and how parties canvass or advertise their ideologies or manifestoes. Ojo (2008) bluntly asserts that monetisation of politics is synonymous with vote buying and selling. It is viewed beyond monetary exchange and transaction. The issue of money is very central to political ambition as it determines who gets nominated by his/her party and eventually elected into office. According to Sakariyau, Aliu and Adamu (2015:3) vote buying is common to all political systems and it takes place in all regions and climes; it only differs in magnitude and manifestations from one polity to another. While buttressing this view, Ojo (2008) affirms that electoral gratifications are common in countries like Benin Republic, Taiwan, Japan, Northern Portugal and in the Philippines. In the United Kingdom, legislation to prevent excessive spending or misuse of money by electoral candidates was enacted in 1883 (Feikert, 2009), while in the United States of America, money has been at the root of its political crisis (*Gillan,*

2000). Indeed, Theodore Roosevelt, the twenty-sixth American President (1901-1909) proposed campaign finance reform in 1907 to curb corruption in the expenditure of public funds in the United States election campaign (Horowitz, 2014). The case of the United States is more glaring as far as money is concerned in the struggle for political power and elective offices. Obama (2006) cited by Olorunmola (n.d.) asserts that incumbent “Peter Fitzgerald had spent \$19million of his personal wealth to unseat his predecessor, Carol Mosley Braun”.

The importance of money in party politics cannot be overemphasized. It is probably the most essential factor in the mobilization of other strategies and activities needed for a successful political career. It is in this light that Green (2006) avers that money is an especially valuable resource among several other resources which parties harness in the process of seeking control of government. Therefore, it is instructive to say that monetisation of politics is present in every nook and cranny of the international community. Consequently, Africa and Nigeria inclusive, caught the fever of democracy and party politics from the Western colonial governments whose mother countries partitioned the continent in the twilight of the 19th century.

Nigerian politicians became acquainted with party politics during the politics of decolonization the resultant the imposition of the British Westminster parliamentary democracy. As Oji (2014:2) has demonstrated, the use of money in politics began in Nigeria in the 1950s due to the absence of strict legislation to regulate party finance. This made it possible for politicians and political parties to engage in unlimited party financing and corruption during the First Republic. The electoral laws under which elections were conducted in the 1950s and the 1960s derived from the provision of the British Representation of the People’s Act of 1948/9 and its regulations. Oji further said that the 1959 elections were conducted under the provision of the Nigeria (Electoral Provisions) Order-in-Council,

LN117 of 1958 enacted by the British parliament. At this material time, “there was no clearly defined regulatory framework on party financing and political funding was primarily carried out through private parties since candidates were responsible for election expenses.

The 1979 Constitution made provision for party funding in the Second Republic (1979 – 1983). The Constitution states unequivocally that “No association other than a political party (was allowed to) to canvas for votes for any election or contribute to funds of any political or to the election expenses of any candidate at an election”. Thus, the 1979 Constitution in Section 205 empowers the National Assembly to make laws “for an annual grant to the Federal Electoral Commission [now Independent, National Electoral Commission] from disbursement to political parties on a fair and equitable basis to assist them in the discharge of their function”. The government rendered financial assistance to political parties through subventions. Moreover, private funding was allowed except from external donors. No bench mark was placed on the number of corporate bodies and individuals that could contribute towards funding political parties (Oji, 2014). But in spite of this constitutional provision, money was freely used in politicking and wealthy politicians hijacked politics before the military struck again on 31 December 1983. The aborted Third Republic experienced similar fate. For instance, in the 1992 campaign, one of the presidential candidates spent over one billion naira during primaries while other contenders who were as rich had about #120million as budgetary allocations for primary elections (Sakariyau, et.al 2015). This development portends a danger signal in democratisation process of any given nation. For as Olorunmola (n.d.) asserts “...whether in established or new democracies, unregulated use of money, private or public, for politics is capable of reversing the ethics, practices and spirit of democracy. It confers undue advantages and improperly alters available choice of electorates”.

The dawn of Fourth Republic in 1999 has led to the legislation of party funding in the 1999 Constitution (as amended) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; this is stipulated in section 225 (1-6) conditions and scrutiny of the sources of funds and expenses of political parties. According to Olorumola (ibid) Section 225 (3) (a) and (b) as well as 225 (4) forbid political parties from foreign funding in any form. In addition, section 226 (1 – 3) demands annual reports of account from political parties. The thrust of this study is to interrogate how monetisation of politics impacted on the provision of social services between 1999 and 2020.

Concept of Monetisation of Politics

Democracy, without doubt, is an expensive political system and it therefore requires huge sums of money to thrive. Money is needed by parties in their resolve to make provision for offices, equipment, staffing, and campaign for political offices, organizers, congresses and conventions and pay litigation fees among other electoral processes. All these represent political finance which is influenced by, and influences, relations between parties, politicians, party membership and the electorate. Indeed, Walecki (2008) places high premium on the importance of money in a democratic dispensation. According to him, money matters for democracy because much of democratic political activity could not occur without it. Money may be collected and spent by candidates for public office and also by their political parties or by other individuals or organized group of supporters.

Politics has been monetised globally to the extent that those politicians with large financial resources call the shot in the political arena of their respective countries, particularly in Nigeria. The essence being attached to money in the country has assumed an alarming dimension as it has captured the nation's centre stage. It is reported that former President Olusegun Obasanjo bemoans the dangerous dimension of money politics in Nigeria as so much

resources are being deployed to capture offices that it has become difficult to see the correlation between politics and the potential high level of corruption. The greatest losers are unfortunately the masses who constitute the electorate whose faith and investment in the system are hijacked and subverted because money, not their will, is made the determining factors in elections (Obasanjo, 2003 in Sakariyau et.al).

In his own conceptualization, Ovwasa (2013:2) opines that money politics is the phenomenon in the Nigeria political process in which contenders or aspirants for elective positions use money, or money is used on their behalf, as inducement to sway support, which is not based on persuading the electorate to vote according to their wish and conviction, but on the force of money that has changed hands. However, a broader connotation is advanced by Aspinall (2019), who regards money politics or monetisation of politics as a general term which implies other aspects of inducements, including offering of material gifts and vote- buying. He therefore remarks that:

A second category of election – induced gift is those that are handed out to larger public campaign events, such as public rallies and village parties. Also, provision of food, drinks and transport money, all sponsored by candidates of elective positions, constitute portions of money politics. The third category entails the provision of individual cash payments, or goods, to voters in the immediate lead up to election (cited in Nwoko, 2019:8).

Ojo (2008) contends that monetisation of politics similarly involves distribution of items such as food stuffs, T shirts, Face caps etc as another form of commodities. This has become part and parcel of Nigeria's political culture because in a situation where an aspirant fails to provide these, withdrawal of support is expected and naturally follows.

Funding of political parties is associated with the phenomenon of godfathers who have emerged since 1999 as the major financiers of parties and their electoral candidates particularly the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). The political dominance of godfathers is a major disservice to the nation and the ordinary citizens because as Ibeanu (2008) comments, they use the party (PDP) as an "astutely thought out investment outlet to be recovered through frivolous and bloated government contracts, appointments of cronies into chosen public offices and other prebendal returns by the beneficiaries". Oji (2014) sheds more light on godfatherism as having led to the personalisation of the party, siphoning of public resources, embezzlement, mismanagement and outright theft. The political gladiators have become dangerous and they decide party nominations and campaign outcomes. One of the victims of godfatherism and its negative effects is Chris Ngige who makes it known that godfathers use violence in dealing with recalcitrant and resistant candidates (Ngige, 2008). He argues further that the so-called godfathers are mainly interested in controlling the party (PDP) machinery instead of presenting popular candidates for healthy electoral competition.

The PDP uses a variety of mechanisms in dealing with uncompromising candidates in preventing them from participating in party primaries according to Nigige who is quoted extensively by Oji (2014). These include: (i) a declaration by the powerful political barons, state governors, godfathers, and others that those entitled to vote must support one candidate and other aspirants must withdraw. Since these people are very powerful and feared in their communities, their declarations carry so much weight. (ii) Zoning and other procedures exclude unwanted candidates by moving the party zone out of the seat or position in question to an area where the excluded candidate is not known locally. (iii) Candidates who oppose the godfathers' protégés are often subject to violence by thugs or security personnel. (iv) Money, a significant

factor in the primaries, is used to bribe officials and induce voters to support particular candidates. Since the godfather generally has more money than the independent candidates, many of the latter are eliminated because they cannot match his spending. (v) Furthermore, in what Nigerians call "results by declaration", an aspirant wins a nomination or election, but polling officials disregard the results and declare the winner (Nigige in Oji 2014: 11 – 12).

The All Progressives Congress (APC) national leader and former Lagos State governor, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu (BAT) was and is the strongman of Lagos politics in particular and some states in the Southwest in general. He boasted during the election that brought Mr Rauf Aregbesola into office as governor for the second term in Osun State that he was richer than the State. Mr Akinwunmi Ambode paid the price of his political immaturity while contesting for Lagos APC gubernatorial primaries in 2019 after he had been advised by Bola Ahmed Tinubu, BAT, and the erstwhile godfather to jettison his second term ambition. Since assuming the Lagos political ascendancy in 1999, BAT has consistently retained Lagos State for the Alliance for Democracy, Action Congress of Nigeria ACN, and now APC. His political sagacity and wizardry served as a masterstroke and the catalyst combined with Kawu Baraje's unalloyed support that led to the formation of APC with the merger of the erstwhile Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, and Congress for Progressive Change, All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and a faction of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) (Otumala and Ayuba 2019). Another example is the political career of the late Lamidi Ariyibi Adedibu who dealt merciless with Rasheed Ladoja during the latter's tenure as Oyo State governor. He was impeached to pave way for his deputy, Chief Christopher Alao-Akala.

Monetisation of politics or vote buying and selling distorts good governance as service delivery, transparency, accountability, public probity, popular participation, efficiency and effectiveness, and

responsiveness are pushed to the backyard. This is because politics has become commercialised and is seen as the quickest and probably easiest way of becoming super-rich. It is against the background that Sakariyau, Aliu and Adamu write:

The industrialisation of politics in Nigeria has enhanced the investors (politicians) to pursue selfish monetary benefits and thus politicking has become a marketing avenue where the highest bidders determine, dictate and control the socio-economic and political affairs of the country. It has become a game of the rich manoeuvring the electoral behaviour of the poor. This has jettisoned politics of ideology and creativity to the extent that political parties and candidates bother not to outline manifestoes while vying for elective posts. Today, money drowns votes and voices in Nigeria as ‘godfathers’ openly confess about shady deals funding or sponsoring elections for ‘godsons’ and purchasing electoral victory (2015: 4)

The dilemma is however, that Nigeria’s brand of democracy is facilitated by some factors. One of these is the inability of political parties and their candidates to develop, articulate, any comprehensive and comprehensible manifestoes (Davies 2006). In affirming the candidates’ ignorance regarding their parties’ programmes, Ayoade (2008) said they emphasize issues they think are attractive to the electorate. In addition, poverty and illiteracy contribute to monetization of politics. The poor are vulnerable to the crumbs that fall from the ‘masters’ tables in form of gratifications. Furthermore, there is the ‘winner-takes all’ syndrome. This is not peculiar to Nigeria but to Africa at large where there is insufficient accountability of leaders’ lack of transparency in regimes, inadequate checks and balances, political control becomes excessively important, and the stakes become dangerously high. This is exacerbated, when, as is often the case in Africa, the state is the major provider of employment and political parties are largely either regionally or ethnically based (Annan 2000 in Erinsho 2010).

Theoretical Framework

This research is anchored on the ‘Failed State Theory’ which is very suitable in addressing the issue at hand. A failed State represents a politically organized society where the various structures, institutions and organs that constitute the society are administratively weak, ineffectual and incapacitated, with regard to the provision of basic social services to the citizenry, and this is a major focus of this study. As a result, the leadership of such society loses the capacity to assert its authority and control over the citizenry (Stewart, 2007 and Rotberg, 2004).

Call (2008) in Nwoko (2019) re-affirms that the failure of state leadership to assert its authority and constitutionally enabling control of the people gradually transforms into subsequent epochs of social dissensions, demonstrated in forms of overall public cry, ethnic militancy and civil violence. While relying on Nwoko, the following among others are indices of lack of responsiveness and insensitivity of leaders to the governed:

- Personalization of resources and means of resources of state;
- Deliberate impoverishment of the people, as a means of acquiring stupendous wealth;
- Avaricious accumulation of private riches from the coffers of public wealth, at the expense of general interest;
- Conscious act of frustrating evenness and fairness in the distribution of the ‘common wealth of the public’;
- Huge financial compensations and bribe to dissenting groups, loyalists and sycophants, with State-owned fund; and
- Unhealthy and defective tendency to financially compromise the policies, activities and decisions of the various institutions and agencies of government.

Above hallmarks or attributes of a failed State are reinforced by Taylor (2013) in Nwoko, listing the following as indicators of a state being rendered incapacitated and ineffective:

- Rising trend of unemployment among the youths and employable workforce;
- Biting era of poverty, hunger and lack and their consequences, expressed in the appearances of widespread frustration and depression in the society;
- Grave incidences of social malaise and crime;
- Unchecked means of accessing tremendous wealth by members of the political class and their cronies, in the midst of ravaging economic depression, witnessed by members of the public; and
- Covert or manoeuvred display of lack of political will on the part of the political class to address the situations highlighted in i – iv above (Nwoko 2019).

The theory of a failed State succinctly captures the political scenario and socio-economic plunders ravaging the current Nigeria State. Monetisation of politics has led to the total marginalization of the masses while the political class members amass the commonwealth to themselves. Consequently, nothing works in favour of the followership but economic depression, and socio-infrastural deficits.

Monetization of Politics in the Fourth Republic

With the birth of the Fourth Republic, the erstwhile Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) and National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) assumed a new name, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) which was during the short-lived military oligarchy of General Abudulsalami Abubakar. The 1999 Constitution empowered INEC to monitor and regulate the finances of political parties through annual audit of their accounts and publish a report for public consumption. In addition, Section 228(c) of the 1999 Constitution also empowered the National Assembly to provide an annual grant to INEC for disbursement to political parties on a fair and equitable basis to assist them in carrying out their functions. As Oji (2014) has demonstrated, the National Assembly

approved a ₦600 million budget for the 30 registered parties in the April 2003 general elections. The electoral umpire shared ₦180 million to all the political parties at the rate of ₦6 million each in accordance with section 80 (2) (a) of the 2002 Electoral Act, ₦420 million was shared by INEC to seven political parties, namely the Alliance for Democracy (AD); All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP); Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP); All Progressives' Grand Alliance (APGA); National Democratic Party (NDP); Peoples Redemption Party (PRP); and United Nigeria People's Party (UNPP).

Despite this precautionary measure towards regulating and monitoring parties' funds and elevate sound democratic culture through popular participation, the primaries that took place in January 2003 were fraught with widespread bribery of delegates with sacks stuffed with money to influence their votes. This allegation by the Transition Monitoring Group – a coalition of civil society organization indicted the PDP, ANPP, UNPP, and NDP in respect of widescale bribery that characterized their primaries. In addition, misappropriation of parties' funds was also wide spread. This implies that the candidates who emerged at the end may not reflect the true representation of the people via their delegations who had been 'bought' with money politics.

As Olorunmola has revealed, fund raising carried out ahead of the 2015 elections were without regards to legal provisions. According to him:

Campaign expenses, particularly of the two main presidential candidates, overshot the one ₦1 billion limit.

Money was illegally used to buy votes and permanent voters' cards. State administrative resources were used by incumbent officials to facilitate party activities. Political party primaries became a cash affair to lead to the possible emergence of the highest bidders. Yet, the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the

regulatory body, is yet to investigate, prosecute and sanction erring parties and candidates for infringements. This has been the case since the transition to democratic governance in 1999.

This flagrant violation of electoral/financial regulations is a clear demonstration of the nation's weak legal system. This weakness has encouraged corruption among the parties and their candidates for elective positions and by extension, appointive offices. Godfatherism thus became highly pronounced between 1999 and 2020 and this unfortunate situation is accentuating rather than abating. The strategy adopted by the parties and the so-called political godfathers to prevent popular participation found expression in the high amounts attached to nomination forms. For instance, President Muhammadu Buhari reportedly obtained a loan facility from his bank to purchase the forms. For the APC, which was formed toward the end of 2013, less than two years before the 2015 general elections, candidates had to pay #27.5million for the forms. (Olorunmola,8). As Oladimeji (2014) opines, insinuation by political analysts was that the high price tag was intended to stop Buhari's candidate.

This unwholesome development attached to the prices placed on nomination forms forced indigent aspirants to look for sponsors who turned themselves into monsters as they expected financial and contractual returns for their 'political investment'. The godfathers became mean, devious, and devilish. Prominent politicians like the late Dr (Alhaji) Olusola Saraki (Kwara State), Chief Alhaji Lamidi Ariyibi Adedibu (Oyo State) and Chris Uba (Anambra State) were a force to reckon with as they, in most cases, determined the fate of politicians seeking elective positions. Adedibu once bragged publicly that he sponsored every successful politician in Oyo State including the governor, federal and state lawmakers. It is imperative to note that "Getting the support of godfathers does not come cheap, whether in monetary terms, which have to be paid in advance, or through a commitment to regular

returns of a percentage of certain budget lines of state resources, usually the vote for security." (Olorunmola p.9).

The godfathers thus traded their commercial interests with the improvement of the masses' welfare. They lived above the law and became dangerous in the society. Former Governor Chris Ngige of Anambra State (2003) and 2006 Oyo State Governor Rashidi Ladoja were severely punished by Chris Ubah and Lamidi Adedibu respectively for failing to keep faith with their contractual pledges and promises. The two governors were impeached through the instigation and financial sponsorship of law makers in both Oyo and Anambra Houses of Assembly. The so called godfathers became so violent, implacable and uncompromising while dealing with their sponsored candidates who were not forthcoming in sharing the State resources.

Politics became a dangerous game between 1999 and 2020 because it became a do-or-die affair. Candidates and political parties invested huge amounts of money in the process for electoral victory. The winner takes all syndrome exacerbated the situation because "contestants and supporters alike become desperate and resort to illegal means to manipulate or subvert the process." (Olorunmola p. 13).

A harvest of corruption permeated all the three levels of government as the elective political office holders, particularly the law makers and governors, had to recover the monies they had invested. The situation created hopelessness for the electorate who became grossly marginalized and their conditions of living worsened. The National Assembly legislators did not hide their greed and propensity for looting the nation's treasury. Hence, before budgets were approved for the ministries, commissions, agencies and parastatals, money had to change hands between the ministers or chairmen of the affected ministries and agencies.

The financial racketeering in the National Assembly involved a former Senate President Adolph Wabara who demanded gratification from Prof. Fabian Osuji, a former Minister of Education to facilitate the approval of the Ministry of Education budget proposal in the appropriation bill. In addition, bribery of the legislators to support proposed third term bid of Obasanjo in 2005 / 2006 and the counter bribe to oppose tenure elongation backed up monetary interests in the legislative function (Dung Pam, 2008 in Sakariyau et al p.5). Similarly, the demand for a #5m bribe and a #44m donation to the House Committee on Security and Exchange Commission created strained relationship between Ms Aruma Oteh the Director General of the Commission and Hembe, the House Committee Chairman.

The drama between Farouk Lawan former chairman ad-hoc committee on fuel subsidy, and Femi Otedola, Chairman Zinol oil limited over N620million bribe offered to the former by the latter is testimony of money politics in the country. As Nasir (2012) opines, the El-Rufai's fallout with the leadership of the Senate relates to the alleged #150million request by Ibrahim Mantu, former Deputy Senate President, to settle his colleagues before ratifying El-Rufai's ministerial appointment (Sakariyau et al. p.5)

Monetisation of politics influenced and encouraged most of the law makers at the state level in getting involved in the impeachment saga of deputy governors and governors. The unceremonious removal of Ms Kofo Bucknor-Akerele, the former estranged deputy of Bola Ahmed Tinubu as Lagos State Governor was not without money exchanging hands. The flamboyant Ibadan political titan, Lamidi Adedibu bought the Oyo State House of Assembly members before former Governor Rashidi Ladoja was impeached. Chris Ubah's huge financial vault saw to the removal of Chris Ngige as Anambra State governor. The face-off between the former Ekiti State governor Peter Ayodele Fayose and his deputy, Abiodun Olujinmi had similar financial undertones. The crisis between the

former Ogun State Governor, Otunba Gbenga Daniel and the so-called G9 of the State House lawmakers led by Shoyemi Coker involved the exchange of money between the two factional groups – those who supported Daniel led by Rt. Hon. Titi Oseni and the Coker led factional group. In a nutshell, show of shame took the nation's political centre stage duly influenced by personal inordinate greed for money and other inducements.

The electoral process of the local, state and federal levels was fraught with violence, massive irregularities and manipulation of election results simply because of billions of naira were spent for vote buying. The 2015 Ogun East Senatorial District was characterized by vote buying between the late Buruji Kashamu, the PDP flag bearer from Ijebu Igbo, and Prince Dapo Abiodun who contested on the APC platform and hails from Iperu. The former clinched the position as #5,000 = was given to each of the voters under the slogan '*dibo ko se be*' which literally means "vote and cook soup" which was in line with Peter Ayodele Fayose's stomach infrastructure. The October 2020 gubernatorial election in Ondo State saw the return of the incumbent, *Arakunrin* Rotimi Akeredolu who had stronger financial base and used the financial muzzle to defeat his estranged former deputy Alfred Agboola Ajayi. The monetisation of politics was also responsible for the bogus and scandalous salaries and other emoluments being paid to the National Assembly legislators, Ministers and other political appointees as compensation for their "investment" and party loyalty' at the detriment of the masses (Erinosho and Ayodeji 2020:12). It is quite unfortunate that INEC officials were involved in the vote buying saga. Babatunde, Shaibu and Ariyo (2019:38) have noted with disdain that:

The phenomena of money-politics is (*sic*) alarming and escalating from one civilian transition to another. The political landscape has been hijacked by money-bag politicians, wealthy candidates and political godfathers. The act of 'see-and-buy'

of votes by political parties and candidates are trendy in Nigeria electioneering process. The conspiratorial involvement of some officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the orchestrated vote buying regime is worsening the bastardised electoral system. The 23billion naira bribe fund facilitated by Diezani Alison – Madueke, former Minister of Petroleum Resources, ahead of 2015 general elections is a reflection of the prearranged act of money politics and vote buying in the Nigerian electoral process.

The Debilitating Impact of Monetization of Politics on Social Services

The expectation of the electorate and masses generally at the threshold of Fourth Republic was socio-economic transformation of the country. The long period of military rule had done untold damage to the nation's social and infrastructural facilities; it also created regressive economic policies. As Erinsho and Ayodeji (2020:11) aver, the military rulers were not trained as economic managers or public administrators. It is therefore not surprising that the military oligarchy plunged the nation into worse socio-economic crises. The new civilian political elite were expected to correct the wrongs of the military by putting smiles on the faces of the citizenry. The transformation agenda included quality and affordable education; creation of employment opportunities; effective and accessible health care services; motor-able roads; stable interrupted aviation and maritime services; provision of potable water; stable electricity; effective and efficient security; regular payment of salaries and allowances; immediate payment of salaries and pensions to the retired civil / public servants. Also on the list were habitable, low cost and affordable housing schemes; sound fiscal policies, and uninterrupted telecommunication system, among others.

The Fourth Republic political rulers greatly disappointed the voters and indeed the general public and the international community. Monetisation of politics implied diversion of state resources for personal interests of the privileged few. The failure of the new political rulers to turnaround the economy on whose compass other sectors rotates, further worsened the living conditions of the citizenry during the period covered by this study. For instance, the four major refineries in the country were forced to close down due to neglect and despite the billions of Naira expended on Turn-Around Maintenance (TAM). As a result, Nigeria began to import refined oil at current international prices. This development led to the rise in prices of petroleum products locally and resulted in social unrest and demonstrations, spearheaded by the Nigeria Labour Congress and its civil society allies – Labour Civil Society Coalition (LASCO) (Sani 2006:4).

The neglect and unresponsive attitude of the government towards the provision of stable and interrupted power supply increased the people's burden as their means of livelihood could not function without electricity. The manufacturers were badly affected because,

in 2003, the average firm affiliated to the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), suffered 14:26hours daily black out. Consequently, “alternative sources of power supply, through private generating plants were sought, and this has impacted on overheads, turnover and general productivity and capital utilization. But these alternative sources of power supply are very expensive and impose extra costs, which make it hard for locally produced goods to compete effectively in the world market”. (Sani, p.4)

The importation of generators implied capital flight which further worsened the financial profile of the country. Moreover, the political rulers' ineptitude in the economic sector led to massive job losses as the factories, companies and organizations had to spend huge

amounts on overheads. The importation of petroleum products led to galloping inflation across the country as prices charged on transportation of human beings and goods, and for rendering services powered by generating sets escalated. The politicians lacked initiative regarding industrialisation of the economy as they were only interested in looting the nation's treasury.

Nigerians at the receiving end gained nothing from the politicians who were only interested in opulent lifestyle. As a result, practically all social services were neglected. There are also damaged and unmotorable roads, power outages, dwindling fortunes in the education sector leading to intense and prolonged strike actions in the tertiary institutions. Gratuities and pensions remained unpaid as at when due leading to premature deaths of most of the retirees. The case of Osun State under the rule of Rauf Aregbesola and Kogi State under the young Yaya Adoza Bello can easily be recalled as the workforce in the two States were subjected to harrowing experiences arising from the non-payment of salaries and other fringe benefits. Worse still, the health services also groaned as public general and specialist hospitals and even many universities teaching hospitals were reduced to mere dispensaries due to utter neglected and poor funding; the so-called ruling elite were not ashamed of seeking medical treatment abroad. Nothing to show as far as information and telecommunication were concerned as a result of poor services rendered by the communication service providers at cutthroat tariff charges; the National Communication Commission lacked the will to deal with erring communication companies.

Furthermore, millions of people lived in poorly ventilated houses, shanties and under the flyover shacks in the big cities since the nation had proved itself a failed state. The youth were neglected and have to carry their own cross. The people felt aggrieved, frustrated and disillusioned particularly the youth who mostly constituted themselves into ethnic militias and sub-ethnic

organisations. The various ethnic group-formations transferred their loyalty to their ethnic umbrella organisations due to the social injustices, marginalisation, alienation, exclusion and frustration they have suffered in the hands of successive governments (Erinosho and Ayodeji p.14). The general insecurity prevailing in the country painted the image of the country in bad light in the comity of nations. Kidnapping, armed robbery, sectarian violence/ ethnic cleansing, Boko Haram, bomb blasts, and other manifestations of insecurity further weakened the state as a result of irresponsible and unresponsive political elite. There was worse violence in Lekki Toll Gate Massacre in Lagos on Tuesday, 20 October 2020 which claimed the lives of many youths and severely wounded peaceful protesters against political brutality marked the climax of reaction against utter neglect and insensitivity of the ruling class. It is appropriate to cite Erinosho 2019:107:

The consequence of the poor disposition of Nigerian political class ... is that the country has become a failed state where practically nothing works. The damage being done to social infrastructural facilities like roads, potable water, health services, educational institutions, aviation, housing as well as the mistreatment being meted to the working class and retired civil / public servants are a testimony of the cruelty of the leaders. They shed innocent blood through untimely deaths due to poor road networks claiming several lives in auto crashes, poor health facilities and services, general insecurity as the monies budgeted for these and other essential services are embezzled with impunity. Unemployment and heavy job losses with the attendant violence wrecked by the jobless, armed robbers, kidnappers, money ritual killers and killer squads of the various ethnically and religious motivated militants and religious fundamentalists.

Conclusion

This study investigated monetisation of politics vis-à-vis Nigeria's Fourth Republic between 1999 and 2020. It discussed the concept of monetisation of politics and linked it with global phenomenon. It is established that money politics is not a new development in the country as it began during the politics of decolonisation as well as the First and Second Republics. The dawn of Fourth Republic which was expected to correct the wrongs of the previous republics and military's misadventures only worsened the existing situation. Politics was seen and invested in as an industry or commercial enterprise. Wealthy candidates and godfathers of poor political aspirants hijacked political and electoral processes to the detriment of the already impoverished masses. The shenanigans of the political titans further traumatised the electorate and generality of the people precipitated by the mass looting of the treasury and violence that permeated the nation's political landscape. The total neglect of transparency and accountability, poor and backward economic policies impacted negatively on the provision of social services which further increased the people's misery and sorrow. This is the end result of money politics or monetisation of politics in Nigeria, the giant of Africa.

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6

Highlighting the Nature, Manifestations, Causes and Implications of Vote Buying for Democratic Governance in Nigeria

Okechukwu Innocent Eme & Jude Ani

Introduction

Vote buying and vote selling are among the most prominent practices of political clientelism worldwide (Bliznakovski, Borjan and Popovikj, 2017, Nichter, 2018). In most democracies, vote buying is considered an electoral offence. For instance, it is prohibited in Nigeria by Article 130 of the Electoral Act 2010, which states that:

A person who — (a) corruptly by himself or by any other person at any time after the date of an election has been announced, directly or indirectly gives or provides or pays money to or for any person for the purpose of corruptly influencing that person or any other person to vote or refrain from voting at such election, or on account of such person or any other person having voted or refrained from voting at such election; or (b) being a voter, corruptly accepts or takes money or any other inducement during any of the period stated in paragraph (a) of this section, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of N100,000 or 12 months imprisonment or both (FGN, 2010).

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Similarly, the 2018 Revised Code of Conduct for Political Parties in section VIII (e) provides that, “... all political parties and their agents shall not engage in the following practice: buying of votes or offer any bribe, gift, reward, gratification or any other monetary or material considerations or allurements to voters and electoral officials”. Notwithstanding its prohibition, vote buying continues to be a widespread practice in Nigeria’s recent elections (INEC, 2018).

As observed in his study, Matenga (2016) notes that vote buying is not fundamentally new to Nigeria’s electoral politics or only restricted to Nigeria or Africa. According to him, “nearly 80% of voters from 36 African countries believe voters are bribed sometimes, often or always. Furthermore, 16% of voters in African countries reported being offered money or goods in exchange for their vote during the last election”.

Supporting the above assertion, Adetula, (2015, Onalopa, Francis & Uzodike, 2015) Onuoha, & Ojo, 2018, D Agbese, 2015, Onyekpere, 2015, Aidt, Asatryan, Badalyan, & Heinemann, 2015) & Eme & Onuigbo, 2015, Olorumola, 2016, Onyekpere, 2017a & b), observe that over the past twenty years of Nigeria’s Fourth Republic, the polity was being hunted by the spectre of corruption fuelled by moneybag politics; a politics whereby politicians are more interested in amassing wealth than in rendering service. They argue that the Nigerian politicians have not yet imbibed the democratic principles that permit them to act as true democrats, except to steal and destroy others. Analysts say that this manner of politics has discouraged good and honest men from taking part in politics. They also argued that the country has not made much progress because of the calibre of people who should be in politics are absent and the field is dominated by moneybags.

Although vote buying has become ubiquitous in recent elections as pointed out by scholars, its history predates the return to democracy in May 1999. There have been allegations of vote buying in the electoral history of Nigeria. It was rife during the Social Democratic Party presidential primary in Jos in 1992 that then military president Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida used as pretext to annul the 12 June 1993 presidential poll which was otherwise hailed as the freest and fairest election in Nigeria's history:

Even before the presidential election, and indeed at the party conventions, we had full knowledge of the bad signals pertaining to the enormous breach of the rules and regulations of democratic elections.... There were proofs as well as documented evidence of widespread use of money during the party primaries as well as the presidential election.... Evidence available to government put the total amount of money spent by the presidential candidates at over two billion, one hundred million naira (N2.1 billion). The use of money was again the major source of undermining the electoral process (Ajani, 2013, & Onuoha&Ojo, 2018).

This position supports the thesis that vote buying has been an integral element of money politics in Nigeria as captured by Matenga (2016). According to him, recent experiences however show that vote buying takes place at multiple stages of the electoral cycle and has been observed eminently during voter registration, the nomination period, campaigning and election day. According to him, it is more predominant onelection day, shortly before or during voting.

Vote buying has multiple consequences as it compromises the credibility, legitimacy and integrity of elections. This is because since good leadership is the foundation of every progressive democracy, the defective system practised in Nigeria cannot

guarantee the true dividends of democracy (Onapajo, 2015 & Animashaun, 2015).

As the 2019 general elections have come and gone and as the 2020 -of-seasons elections approach, scholars have again expressed concerns with the exorbitant nomination fees announced by the political parties for various elective offices. They argue that many honest politicians cannot afford such huge amounts. Both in the past and now, and in utter disregard of Section 95 of the 2006 Act, and now Sections 92-93 of the 2010 Act, politicians and political parties have routinely abused the rules on campaign finance and deliberately raised the cost of participation. This speaks to the failure of regulation and the reluctance to ensure campaign finance reform. There is no record of anyone being punished for violating the rule on election expenses.

As Onyekpere (2015, p.4) puts it: "it is a fact that Nigeria has a history of not coming out with election spending figures, and data are equally unavailable on the actual spending of politicians on campaigns. In this regard much of what is available are through newspaper reportage, one of which shows:

For instance, the PDP organized a fund-raising dinner for its presidential candidate, President Goodluck Jonathan, at which it raised more than N22 billion, from just one fund raising dinner, Jonathan breached the maximum limits prescribed by the 2010 Electoral Act. Though the donors attempted to dodge these laws claiming their donations were made on behalf of groups, the Nigerian electoral law in section 91 (2) and 91 (9) clearly stipulate that neither individual nor group/entity may donate over N1 million (Eme & Onuigbo, 2019, p.5)

However, a report of the campaign expenditure of both Jonathan and Buhari indicated that both breached the maximum limits in the

Act. They were therefore in violation 2010 Electoral Act. In spite of spirited efforts to cover up their expenditure profile clearly shows that the two main political parties flagrantly flouted laid down laws on campaign financing; both raised and spent more than N1 billion. In view of the above, we can now conclude that how campaigns are financed and what candidates and political parties do with donations are sources of many integrity problems. It is believed that corruption and abuses related to the financing of elections and political parties are among the common dangers confronting democracies today. In Nigeria it is hard to forget the controversies surrounding how \$2.1bn purportedly earmarked for acquisition of military hardware to prosecute the war against Boko Haram insurgents or the so- called security vote was allegedly diverted to finance the re-election campaign of former President Goodluck Jonathan (Eme & Asadu, 2018).

In short, vote buying has steadily grown in scale and shamelessness. Several videos and images have emerged, showing unabashed sharing of cash, food and valuable items among the electorates by politicians and parties during recent elections such as Edo and Ekiti states. This has led to the description of Nigeria's electoral politics as "cash-and-carry democracy" (Matenga,2016). If not urgently addressed, this trend portends grave danger for Nigeria's democracy. This essay therefore highlights the nature and manifestations, causes and implications of vote buying for democracy in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications:Vote Buying and Its Manifestations

The past decade has witnessed an explosion in the use of the term "vote buying" in academic and media circles. In a popular parlance, *vote buying* and *vote selling* is the exchange of votes for particularistic benefits between and among actors in a political

system. Colloquially, as captured by Bliznakovski, Jovan, Borjan Gjuzelov and Misha Popovikj (2017), the local terms for vote buying and selling signify an exchange of one's right to vote in elections for a benefit (typically cash, but also food, clothes, house appliances, or minor administrative favours), given, sponsored, or assisted by a political party. Both terms, vote buying and vote selling, point to the same give-and-take practice: the former from the perspective of the patron (a political party), the latter from the perspective of the client (a citizen).

The above relationships may be described as "the exchange of private material benefits for political support". In these dealings, vote buying is seen both as a contract and an auctioning process in which the voter sells his or her vote to the highest bidder in exchange for material benefits. Vote buying according to Onuoha and Ojo (2018) is defined as any form of financial, material or promissory inducement or reward by a candidate, political party, agent or supporter to influence a voter to cast his or her vote or even abstain from doing in order to enhance the chances of a particular contestant winning an election. Vote buying has two dimensions: negative and positive.

Vote buying can be in form of monetary or material form aimed at influencing a voter. As parties and contestants begin buying their ways into office, the people begin to find their voting rights and powers useless, and are instead trading it for money, or material things. Norder they view it as a means to gain money or other things of value, some refer to it as a means to also partake in the "national cake" that politicians enjoy.

These broad descriptions of vote 'bribery' did not make a clear distinction between negative inducements such as pressurising or threatening voters by the governments, and political factions to prevent voters from supporting political opponents which are also common. However it captures the positive aspect by redefining

the concept to include material inducements to “citizens” rather than only voters, so that gifts to communities would be included within its scope. But an actionable provision of goods or services would have to create “incentives” for voters, which would be difficult or impossible to prove.

Depending on how “vote buying” is defined in law, there are numerous obstacles to bringing action against perpetrators. Some of these include:

- Did the perpetrator give a gift in order (or, with the “specific intent”) to influence voters to cast their votes in favour of a particular candidate or political party?
- Was the giver the candidate, an agent or a third party with an interest in the result?
- Was the value of the gift sufficient to influence the voter(s), and would they have felt a sufficient inducement to give their vote in return?
- Was the gift given to voters directly, or to relations (such as their family or community) of the voters?
- Was the giver in a position to pressure the voters to give their vote, such as by withholding their expected gift until after the vote?
- Would the voters themselves be liable if they were found to have been influenced in this manner? (IFES, 2008).

In an effort to answer these puzzles, **Adeyemi (2022)** argued that to buy votes, payment is not often done in the open. Party agents stand at strategic positions near polling booths to see the thumb-printed ballot paper before payment. As soon as the thumb-printed paper is sighted and acknowledged through eye contact, the agent leads the voter to a canvasser, who will follow their ‘customer’ to a party member in a vehicle or a nearby house where the payment is made. Party agents are properly trained in the act to avoid prying eyes of observers, whether international or local.

Unknown to many, vote buying, as a concept, initially termed ‘see and buy’ began in Ekiti State in 2011 during a National Assembly election, which was cancelled mid-way and postponed for a week by INEC. The politicians penetrated and had access to the cancelled ballot boxes and discovered that a particular candidate heavily supported by the powers-that-be in the state was not voted for even by the ward and local council the candidate came from, despite huge “mobilisation” deployed to the area.

Experience at the botched election forced politicians to stop pre-election inducement and decided to give N5, 000 to whoever voted for the party and the strategy worked. The party, again, deployed the same style of inducement during the Ondo State governorship election in 2013, where party canvassers and mobilisers described the post-voting payment as *Dibo ko sebe ede*, meaning, vote and cook Ede soup, a special delicacy in the state (**Adeyemi, 2022**).

Supporting the above, thesis, *The Guardian* gathered that in the 2014 off-season governorship election in Ekiti, the party failed in its execution of the ‘see and buy’ strategy, as the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) candidate, Mr. Ayodele Fayose, who, with support from Goodluck Jonathan-led Federal Government, practically controlled the security apparatus in the state.

Being a victim when it was introduced (he had contested for Senatorial seat under the platform of Labour Party (LP), Fayose, on the eve of the 2014 governorship election, in concert with the Presidency, deployed some hooded security agents in a midnight operation, where they apprehended almost all the agents of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), which is one of the legacy parties that transmuted to the All Progressives Congress, holding ‘logistics’ to prosecute the election, beat them and collected the cash from them. PDP had a field day at the heavily militarised election and the result was clear to APC members, who had been

traumatised in the hands of agents throughout the night (See Eme, and **Adeyemi**).

The case was, however different in 2018 in Ekiti, with the APC in control of the Federal Government. The PDP had expected the APC to retaliate and go after their agents the night before the election. So, it adopted the traditional pre-election inducement by asking the electorate to present their PVCs and collect N5, 000, a day before the election. All major awards, including the old Governor's Office were filled with people, who collected the money and allowed party agents to take record of their PVC details but that did not work for the party.

The APC retained its 'see and buy' strategy and many voters, who had collected cash from the PDP the previous day could not turn down the APC's inducement, which was given after they had voted for the party. The strategy was also adopted by the party in Osun, in the same year. The just-concluded 2022 governorship election in Ekiti confirmed that vote buying had come to stay as a strategy for politicians (**Adeyemi**, 2022).

In 2008, there was a celebrated case during Georgian parliamentary election where a local official was filmed threatening local administration employees with loss of their jobs if there was no record of strong vote in favour of his candidacy. This threat drew the attention of international observers' report and litigations. Finally, the complaints on this subject were rejected on various legal grounds, such as: A public official who was on duty did not actually ask for votes when speaking at a campaign rally; other individuals were involved in vote-buying, not a candidate or campaign organization; a gift given or promise made was insufficiently valuable to influence how a voter would vote; and/or the influence could never be verified as acted upon in the voting booth. In the Caribbean state of *Solomon Islands*, where a Parliamentary election was held returned a different verdict over allegations of

vote-buying. Many elected candidates faced judicial proceedings and the High Court in 2011 found that apparently minor vote-buying by a candidate and his supporters constituted a violation that required the election in his district to be repeated.

Nichter & Hidalgo (2016) define vote buying as direct or indirect influencing or inducement of (potential) voters (individually or in groups), with material distribution, in favour of a particular candidate or a party, mostly in the lead-up to and during elections. Thus, any practice of immediate or promised reward to a person for voting or refraining from voting in a particular way can be regarded as vote buying and is considered an electoral offence.

According to Paolo & Edward Van Gyampo (2019), the buyers usually involve candidates themselves, or persons or groups close to them, who are willing to contribute to the victory of particular competitors or their respective political parties. The literature identifies many forms of vote buying; common amongst these are direct payments to voters; donations of cash or items (e.g., food, building materials, etc.); promise of employment; social services; payment of cash or fees; award of contracts and provision of certain programmes upon a victory in an election (Nathan, 2016).

Page (2018a, p.6) captures this form of kleptocratic capture of political party structures and stated that it is a *sine qua non* of gaining power and thereby unlocking corruption opportunities across a range of other sectors. Olorumola, (2016) also remarks that as a result of this observation, little distinguishes Nigeria's two main political parties—the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) party and the opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP)—in this regard. Both are constellations of fluid national, state, and local elite networks. Both are almost identically structured, non-ideological organizations. Both rely on misappropriated public funds to finance election campaigns. Neither value internal party democracy, allowing money and high-level interference to corrupt candidate selection processes (Olorumola, 2016, p.9)

Individual political candidates jockey to secure high-level backing for their ambitions or to be granted lucrative public appointments. Working-level party operatives, meanwhile, seek to monetize their influence over internal party processes by soliciting cash from or seeking to be co-opted by aspiring politicians. According to the chairman of a national political party,

[Party officials] are not supposed to [receive money for expenses and allowances] but they make money, sometimes in many, many crooked ways. The party sells membership cards . . . [but] party officials at that level keep the money for themselves. People who want to run for office . . . virtually bankroll the parties in their localities. Sometimes they even decide who becomes the chairman in their ward or the secretary of the party. They actually pocket the person; they take care of his daily needs. [Party officials] have no other business other than running the party. They also have to find a way of running their families, so the way they do it is through this very indecent manner (Page, 2018a, p.6).

This is why Eme & Onuigbo (2015) posit that politicking and campaigning require a lot of money. Political campaigners spend money on rallies and face to face contacts with the electorate. The cost under this heading will include hiring of large venues, public address systems, transport, and accommodation expenses, etc. Large expenses are also incurred in the print and electronic media to send out messages to the populace. In these days of the social media, expenditures are also incurred on that front. Again, resources are spent on campaign offices, billboards, posters, handbills, hire of offices, campaign staff and logistics to reach out to the electorate. After the election results have been declared, election petitions go through the gamut of the courts and are usually fought on behalf of candidates by very senior and expensive

lawyers. These costs cannot be borne by the candidate alone. His or her party and men and women of means, incorporated organisations, all manner of associations, approach the candidates with very large donations and of course, they expect returns when their candidate wins the election. Even third parties without a resort to the candidate and his campaign organisation spend money to facilitate the campaigns. These persons will eventually be paid back, not with the salary of the office holder but through public revenues which belong to all.

For our purpose, vote buying refers to any reward (economic or financial material or non- material) given to a person for marking his or her ballot. As a result of the above, different polities or communities experience different vote-buying practices based on many variables, for example, the economic condition of the polity or community and the level of education or civic awareness of voters, but the influence of these conditions have equally provoked debates. Like a typical market place, the politicians, political parties, and party agents are the vote buyers while prospective voters are the sellers. The commodity on sale is the vote to be cast while the medium of exchange could be monetary and non-monetary items. The market force that determines the value or price of a vote is the level of desperation of politicians to win in a locality. Although money and other valuables can be used to effectuate vote buying, political actors have adopted two main approaches for buying votes for Election Day.

The first is the *Cash for Vote* approach, which involves giving or promising the prospective voter some agreed amount of money well before the individual casts his or her vote at the polling station. The payment is made before the actual voting, and could be within the vicinity of the polling station or farther away. For instance, during the recent Edo election, a source, told the Guardian Newspaper about the massive inducement of voters in Egor Local Council, particularly in Ward 9, Unit 11, 12, 13 and 14. He further

alleged some voters trooped to a popular recreational centre along Okhoro Road in the area, where they were paid N5, 000 after casting their votes (**Sobechi, Egbejule, Azimazi & Laoye, 2020**).

However, *The Guardian* observed that the two front row political parties, the PDP and the APC evolved novel ways of inducing prospective voters. For instance, at Adesuwa, some women were heard asking each other whether they had collected their Akara, after information was stealthily passed around about the existence of the “incentive.” The rampant vote-buying across the state manifests in politicians promising voters N5, 000 reward for each vote cast in their parties’ favour. At Ward 4, polling units 7 to 9, Obe Primary School, Sabongida-Ora Local Council, political party agents got a number of voters to write down their names in order to benefit from the N5, 000 larges. Also at Ward 03, Polling Unit 03, Evbiobie Central School, Sabo II, in the same local council, voters openly received gratification for voting one of the political parties. At Ward 4, Eguare Polling Unit 5, in Ekpoma Local Council, voters equally had instant gratification for doing the bidding of political parties of their choice (**Sobechi, Egbejule, Azimazi & Laoye, 2020**).

From the above description, “voter settlement” is made either secretly or in the open and often takes place in the presence of security agents who appear unable, unwilling or too compromised to deter such electoral offences. Since 2015, there are new forms of electoral corruption equally witnessed. There are also some indirect methods such as all manners of federal government-induced vote buying proxy schemes like Trader-moni and school feeding programme, called social investment programme. They were fully deployed ahead of 2019 general election, which was superintended by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, who went from market to market to distribute cash to would-be voters before the elections, with allegations of the APC government collating the permanent voter’s card numbers of the beneficiaries.

Similarly, in 2018 in Kogi State, billions of naira were released to the state some few days to the state governorship election, an act seen by many stakeholders as monies intended for vote buying. In Edo State, barely three days to the state governorship election, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) under the Minister of State for Labour and Employment, Mr Festus Keyamo, and an APC member, found the wife of the APC governorship candidate, Idia Ize-Iyamu, as a partner in *empowering* women in the state. This raises the question of how the wife of a candidate in an impending election would be partnering with the federal government a few days before the election. How does one defend it? That is a clear vote buying by proxy. Often, the vote buyers demand evidence of ownership of a voter’s card and assurance that the voter will vote for their party before offering the money. In this approach, *trust* is key to the contract; this also known as the pre-paid method of vote buying.

The second approach is what the Daily Tribune editorial (2018) describes as the *VoteforCash*. It involves giving or rewarding the voter with the agreed amount of money or material compensation after the individual has shown evidence that s/he voted for the party. There are several ways the voter can prove to the vote buyer that s/he voted for the agreed candidate. One method is where the voter openly displays the ballot paper that s/he has thumb printed in favour of a particular party, so that the party agent standing strategically nearby can confirm compliance when the voter emerges from the cubicle at the polling station.¹⁰ Another method is for the voter to photograph the thumb printed ballot paper to show as evidence. Thereafter, compensation in cash and/or kind can occur either immediately or at the close of balloting, and may take place within the precinct of the polling station or at an agreed place. In this instance, *evidence* is key to the consummation of the contract. This approach is also known as the “see and buy” or the post-paid method.

The vote buying practice, which is completely antithetical to the ethos and norms of democracy, has become a common feature of party primaries and general elections conducted in recent years in Nigeria. For example, during the All-Progressive Congress (APC) presidential primary in Lagos State before the 2015 elections, it was reported that “over 8 000 delegates who participated allegedly made US\$5 000 each from the candidates. Delegates were supposed to have received US\$2 000 each from the Atiku Abubakar group and also US\$3 000 each from the Buhari group. Given that more than 8 000 delegates were reported to have attended the primaries, the competing camps could have spent more than US\$16 million and US\$24 million respectively on vote buying at the primary stage” (Onyekpere, 2015). The impunity of vote-buying is becoming the norm in Nigeria’s electoral politics with political parties trying to outwit each other in the amounts paid to voters.

Theoretical Framework of Analysis

The good governance theory was developed from a set of principles/policies of the World Bank which were aimed at developing governance in Third world countries. According to Muhammad (2015), the modern form of government is not just about efficiency, but about accountability between the state and its citizens. The good governance theory sets out certain basic principles which any good government should adhere. These principles include, among others: accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and public participation. Keping, (2018) also notes that in line with the World Bank’s principles and policy intervention in third world countries, good governance involves an efficient public service, an independent judicial system and legal framework to enforce contracts and responsible administration of funds. He also notes that another requirement for good governance include an independent public auditor responsible to a representative legislature, respect for the law and human rights at all levels and a pluralistic

institutional structure (World Bank, 1992, Minogue, Polidano and Hulme, 1998).

In Summary, the principles and indices of the good governance theory according to Keping (2018) are:

- Participation: this could be direct participation by individuals themselves or indirect participation through elected or accredited representatives;
- Rule of law: it entails complete adherence to the tenets of the law in all activities of government;
- Transparency: this is based on the free flow of information, as effective governance cannot be achieved in the absence of transparency;
- Responsiveness: every good government must have the ability to adapt to changes in its socio- political/economic environment. A good government should be able to respond to and accommodate change;
- Broad Consensus: a good government must ensure that it carries different segments of the society along in all its decisions. The civil society must be allowed to make policy inputs and be part of the political process. Policies should be a product of consensus not coercion;
- Effectiveness and Efficiency: every good government should be able make judicious use of available resources to achieve set government goals;
- Accountability: government exists to serve the people. Hence, a good government should have effective institutions and mechanisms which ensure that political actors and public office holders are answerable to the citizens for their actions;
- Strategic Vision: this principle stipulates that government should be liberal and proactive in its approach to governance issues. A good government must prepare for future challenges.

Theoretical Application

Just like most other post colonial states, Nigeria has been unable to overcome the effects of colonialism from the fabric of society. By the early 1990s, most third world countries had adopted some kind of democratic government. In Nigeria, the presidential system of government was adopted after the return to civilian rule in 1999. Like the American system, the legislature became the mechanism through which the people indirectly participated in government. While the chief executive is elected by the people, it is the constitutional responsibility of the legislature to curtail any excesses. It is the duty of the legislature to ensure that government remains accountable to the people. It is also the responsibility of the electoral body to ensure that governance is by consensus and not force.

Elections are major events in the life of a polity. They are accompanied by greatly increased discussion and interest on the part of the population as a whole, by intense political activity and by massive coverage in the mass media. This is why elections occupy a central place in the democratic process through the animating force they provide for representative government. On the one hand, they serve as an instrument of legitimization for the state and those who manage the reins of state power, while on the other they ensure political accountability to the people.

In addition to from the above, election promotes political accountability, citizens' participation and gives voice and power to the people. This means that, elections are an expression of the people's sovereign will. This process of choice usually involves rules and regulations designed to ensure a certain degree of fairness and justice to all concerned. For effective governance to be achieved, the legislature in Nigeria must endeavour to embrace the principles of good governance and its principles of transparency, accountability, and the rule of law.

To attain good governance in Nigeria, some questions must be answered. The extant Constitution (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999), demands from public office holders as officials of government and agents of the state, great responsibility in and out of office. The details of these strict expectations in high office are clearly spelt out in the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, the Code of Conduct for Public Officers, and the respective oaths of Allegiance. Against this backdrop, just why anyone will pay so much to 'serve' Nigeria and its people is baffling. By every sensible calculation, these payments are investments expected to yield huge returns. With so much money being flaunted, this is the perfect time for both the Internal Revenue authorities, and the anti-corruption bodies to ask where these huge amounts of money are coming from who earns what, from what source, and what tax is paid as and when due. This also applies to donors and fundraisers for aspirants.

There are many other avenues to serve one's country, not only through political office. Indeed, honest persons in the private and other sectors are serving Nigeria admirably; and they are being celebrated. Politician and electors can do the same.

Methods of Research

In this study, we used data from secondary sources. These data were obtained from books, journals, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, government publications/documents, symposia and workshop papers, communiqué, unpublished seminars and theses, and on line materials. Secondary data generated in the course of this research were analysed. Obasi (1999) is of the view that content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative analysis and description of the manifest content of communications. Content analysis as a method of analysing qualitative information was used to determine the relative emphasis placed on political financing.

Understanding Factors behind Vote Buying

Babarinsa (2022) observed that vote-buying, contrary to popular opinion, was not invented in Ekiti State. In 1979, Simbiat Abiola, the senior wife of Chief Moshood Abiola, contested for the Senate on the platform of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). To soften the ground for the matriarch, the Abiolas spent money and distributed hundreds of Volkswagen cars, motorcycles, sewing machines and other equipment. Despite the largesse, the electorate still rejected her and voted for her rival, the candidate of Awolowo's Unity Party of Nigeria. In 1979, a Volkswagen beetle car cost about N5,000.00; the equivalent of today's \$8,000 or N4 million. That sum was the worth of a voter in 1979. A voter today is worth N10,000.00 or there about. What a decline and fall for the Nigerian voter! The today's voter is beckoning to the politician and advertising himself: "Here I am! Buy me!"

<https://guardian.ng/sunday-magazine/with-vote-buying-cash-and-carry-democracy-on-the-rise/>

According to a statement by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI): "Vote-buying is a frightening development in our elections, it also undermines the legitimacy of elections and weakens representative democracy" (Iyare, 2020). The NDI and IRI also observed that during the Edo and Ondo gubernatorial elections, Watching the Vote (WTV) election observers saw cases of vote buying or bribery on election day. Various individuals commented that poverty, disillusionment with the performance of elected representatives, and low civic awareness of voters contributed to the expansion of the crime.

Furthermore, according to Auwal Musa Rafsanjani from the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Center (CISLAC), while citizens sell their rights for monetary gain, our democracy is at stake and suffering a serious setback:

Vote buying has hitherto been an undemocratic strategy employed by politicians who prey on the existing high level poverty, hunger and unemployment in the country. Vote-selling on the other hand has become an escape route from poverty. The poor are the worst hit by vote buying, as their limited means make them susceptible to material inducements, including offers of basic commodities or modest amounts of money,... if holistic mechanisms are not put in place, there is a high tendency that vote buying may mar electoral credibility in 2019 general elections (Eme & Onuigbo, 2019).

In addition, Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi of Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), a coalition of over 400 civil society organisations, said: "Voter buying is becoming the norm with political parties trying to outwit each other in the amount paid to voters. This practice is a bad omen for the country's democracy" (Eme & Onuigbo, 2019). To ensure that elections are conducted seamlessly during the Covid pandemic, INEC in May 2020 released a policy document on "conducting elections in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic" to guide for engagement with stakeholders during elections. Similarly, to strengthen INEC's transparency in the election result management system, the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, on Thursday 6, August 2020 announced the introduction of a dedicated public portal called the INEC Result Viewing (IREV), which would enable Nigerians to view real-time results in polling stations as the voting ends on Election Day.

However, INEC emphasised that this does not constitute an electronic collation of results as that shall remain as provided by the law. This innovation was tested during the Nasarawa Central State Constituency by-election on August 8 and thereafter, extended to Edo and Ondo governorship elections. Amidst all the concerns ahead of September and October Governorship elections in Edo

and Ondo respectively, the recent conduct of the Nasarawa state constituency election has shown INEC's level of preparedness.

From the foregoing, we are positing that the use of technology is one of the several factors contributing to the rise in vote buying. Top on the list is recent technological innovations such as the introduction of handheld devices to read biometric voter identity cards and electronic tracking of electoral materials, which have vastly reduced traditional forms of rigging. The Electoral Commission recognizes the critical role that ICT will play in an electoral process that is being vastly reshaped by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the growing demands by Nigerians for the deepening of the use of technology in elections (INEC, 2020).

Hence, politicians have come to realise that falsification of election results in order to emerge winners is becoming counter-productive, especially as the judiciary has often nullified many rigged elections. They have therefore resorted to wooing voters with money, foodstuffs, clothes and other souvenirs in exchange for their votes. The desperation of politicians or politics of anxiety among them who want to win at all costs is another factor. Politicians engage in vote buying because of the promise of enormous power and wealth they hope to gain once they are in government. There is also the fear among many politicians that if they do not engage in the act, their opponents will still do so and gain electoral advantage. This dilemma has thus made vote buying a race of sorts especially among the "big" political parties.

The Centre for Democracy and Development on Saturday condemned the high incidence of vote-trading recorded in the Edo State governorship election. The organisation said reports from its observers on the field showed that politicians, in an attempt to circumvent the electoral process, used young girls as their contact with the voters for the trading. It lamented that votes were traded for cash gifts which range from N1, 000 to N15, 000. The Director

of CDD, Idayat Hassan, made the following statement during a press briefing: "Young girls were used for indirect vote-buying during the election. We saw large vote-buying in the Edo election, the most worrisome trend in this election is the level of sophistication at which politicians engaged in the anomaly of vote-buying. In some cases, votes were traded for Ankara materials, and cash gifts from N1,000 to N15,000, Spaghetti and other food items (Olorok, 2020)". She concluded that CDD was concerned that despite expending time and resources to deploy thousands of law enforcement officials for the election, nothing was done in the face of infractions such as vote-buying.

A third factor is the high incidence of poverty in the country. In order to appreciate why buying votes is a powerful tool in swaying elections in Nigeria, one must understand that a large percentage of Nigerians live in extreme poverty. According to the World Poverty Clock, 82 million Nigerians currently live in extreme poverty, a whopping 42.3% of the country's total population and, instead of fighting to alleviate the situation, political office holders have weaponised this and now use it as a tool to gather votes on Election Day (Karishma, & Homer, 2018). Poverty is particularly acute in rural areas and among female-headed households, making many people susceptible to selling their vote for immediate gratification.

Another factor that has contributed to vote buying is the existence of security votes. Security votes are monthly provisions in the 36 states for the sole purpose of funding security services within such states (Page, 2018). However, the failure to subject the funding to legislative oversight or independent audit allowed successive presidents and state governors to treat it as a slush fund which is directed to political activities, such as buying votes during elections. In fact, lack of robust auditing and accountability mechanisms has meant that some incumbents outrightly embezzle the funds.

Today, security votes according to Page (2018, p.4) are budgetary black boxes that are used for abuse by politicians seeking re-election or officials looking to run for political office. Fungible, unaudited, and transacted entirely in cash, security vote is an ideal mechanism for covering electoral expenses—including unsanctioned activities such as hiring political thugs, bribing election officials, running post-election litigation and even praying for divine intervention. In the words of one veteran politician: “Why are we probing security votes now? You see, security votes to my understanding can be used for native doctors, it can be used to hire Alphas [soothsayers] and it can be used for churches to pray for the country. It can be used for even sponsoring things” (Ezigbo,2015).

This lack of equity and transparency is principally the reason the Buhari government’s effort to address the challenge of corrupt campaign financing is considered hypocritical, one-sided, fake and dishonest. Most of the Jonathan men and women who are today being tried are because of campaign finance reasons. The list includes Sambo Dasuki and his team, they are accused of using state security funds to organize political campaigns; Olisah Metuh is accused of taking state money to help Jonathan’s re-election, part of which he allegedly diverted; Femi Fani-Kayode and Nenadi Usman are accused of using state funds to run political campaigns. However, not even one person from the APC has been similarly charged, or accused, and yet the same APC also gave money to politicians, journalists, persons in civil society, including spiritualists and thugs, and there are self-styled Godfathers in that party who have been quarrelling over the redemption of the IOUs they incurred(Eme, Chubike, & David, 2016).

Militarisation of politics, their complacency and complicity and election officials add to the problem. In order to seal their protection and loyalty, security agents are usually the first to be compromised by the political parties or candidates. Hence, vote trading often takes place in the presence of security agents who appear unable

or unwilling or too compromised to curtail such electoral offences. There is also the related problem of the weakness of the rule of law. The fact that those who engage in the act are never arrested and prosecuted encourages many others to adopt the strategy.

The Consequences of Vote Buying

The consequences of vote buying are manifold. First, it unduly raises the cost of elections thereby shutting out contestants with little finances and promoting political corruption.

As Obasanjo once explained:

Even more worrisome, however, is the total absence of any controls on spending by candidates and parties towards elections. I have said that we prepare for elections as if we are going to war, and I can state without hesitation, drawing from my previous life, that the parties and candidates together spent during the last elections, more than would have been needed to fight a successful war. The will of the people cannot find expression and flourish in the face of so much money directed solely at achieving victory. Elective offices become mere commodities to be purchased by the highest bidder, and those who literally invest merely see it as an avenue to recoup and make profits. Politics becomes business, and the business of politics becomes merely to divert public funds from the crying needs of our people for real development in their lives (Eme & Onuigbo, 2019.).

As captured by Eme & Onuigbo (2018), democracy in Nigeria does not come cheap. The election cycle that has just limped to its exhausted conclusion in 2015 cost around \$547 million—a new record, as in every new presidential cycle. An estimated N1 trillion was spent by INEC, political parties and candidates for the 2015

elections, it was revealed in February, 2017. The revelation, at a two-day Learning Conference on the Regional Cost of Politics, immediately drew strong disapprovals from concerned stakeholders with assertions that the high cost was the bedrock of the corruption that pervades the political system. Among those who flayed the high cost of elections were legislators, Dr. Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi, President of the Transition Monitoring Group, TMG and Mr. Ibrahim Musa, Executive Director of the Civil Society Advocacy and Legislative Centre and CISLAC. Some in the House of Representatives, however, described the high figure as provided by INEC as unrealistic as they put the blame on civil servants, who they claimed, inflate the cost of elections to their benefit. It was revealed at the conference that the People's Democratic Party, PDP, expended N8.74 billion in traceable media and other related expenses in the 2015 elections while all the other opposition parties spent N2.91 billion for similar activities (Ovuaakporie, et. al, 2017).

Supporting this thesis, Country Representative of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Adebowale Olorunmola, noted that the cost of the 2015 election was higher than that of 2011. According to him, in 2011, all the opposition parties put together spent N2.04 billion in traceable expenditure, while the then ruling Peoples' Democratic Party PDP spent N5.01 billion. In 2015, all the opposition parties spent N2.91 billion while PDP spent N8.74 billion (Olorunmola, 2016). All these expenditures are traceable expenses which were spent on media advertisements, campaign materials among others, to the exclusion of money spent in underhand dealings and the use of state-owned facilities including stadia for campaigns and other political activities.

The implication of when victory is purchased rather than clearly won is what scholars have tagged "state capture". It equally compromises the credibility, legitimacy and integrity of elections. Vote buying undermines the integrity of elections as the winners are often the highest bidders and not necessarily the most popular

or credible contestants (Adamu, Ocheni, & Ibrahim, 2018). It therefore promotes general crisis of democracy and governance in Nigeria, discourages conscientious people from participating in electoral politics and causes citizens to lose faith in state institutions. Vote trading equally has the tendency to perpetuate bad governance. Bad governance has manifested adversely on the human wellbeing through the paucity of social infrastructures – health, education, transportation, electricity etc for the citizenry. Bad governance negates the expected and desired performance in addressing social issues in sectors like education and health of any country. Bad governance has many aspects such as aforementioned, but for the emphasis of this study is on weak transparency/accountability and abuse of rule of law the focused in assessing their effects in combating vote buying in Nigeria. Vote buying not only compromises the wellbeing of those who sold their vote for instant gratification, but also imperils future of those who did not sell their votes. It inevitably exposes the bad governance which results in such fraudulent behaviour. For every vote traded, there are many people who will suffer the unintended consequences when the traded votes make the difference between winning and losing in the election.

Furthermore, the APC needs to be reminded that Article 3 of its manifesto promised to 'attract the best and brightest into our politics and public offices through greater accountability, transparency, and strict enforcement of anti-corruption laws...' If a man is only as good as his promise, this applies too to a political party. It is regrettable that the APC, by the blatant monetisation of political and public offices, effectively keeps out 'the best and the brightest' this country has. This party has neither lived up to its promise, nor even shown leadership in good values.

All political parties should thoroughly and objectively re-examine the values upon which they are founded. Too many of them are not what Nigerians need or want. In short, they do not deserve

Nigeria; Nigeria does not deserve them either. Nigeria's leadership no one needs cheap and obscene politics of filthy lucre but deep thinking, patriotism and focused development. Once again, Nigerians yearn earnestly for a servant-leader full of character, competence, and courage to deliver their country from what increasingly looks like a 'democratic scam.'

As observed by Babarinsa (2022), what is more worrisome is not that the politicians are willing to spend money; it is the transformation of the electorate. The electorate, even more than the politicians, has become insatiable. They would demand from the politicians and political office holders. If their father dies, they reach out to His Excellency. If they want to marry a new wife, it is His Excellency. If they have a new child, His Excellency must be informed immediately! Such is the burden of the politicians in Nigeria today.

This situation has also led to reckless scepticism among the electorate. The population of Ekiti State is about 3.5 million. By that calculation, those who are 18 and above should be at least 2 million. In the last election, only 989,000 people registered. Out of these 360,753 voted for all the candidates, which is less than 40 per cent of the registered voters. Mr. Abiodun Oyebanji, the candidate of the APC who was declared the Governor-elect by INEC, scored 187,057 votes, representing 51.9 per cent of those who voted. However, only 18.9 per cent of the 989,000 registered voters voted for him.

We have seen that a man who received only 18.9 per cent of the votes was declared winner in a crucial governorship election. There is no examination in the world where 18.9 per cent is a pass mark, but that is the situation we have found ourselves, thanks to the efforts, or lack of it, of the Nigerian political elite. They have been devaluing the electorate like the Nigerian naira and now each voter could be bought for a loaf of bread (Babarinsa, 2022).

Recommendations

It is the responsibility of INEC to curb vote buying by effectively implementing the electoral act and punishing politicians and all who engage in the practice. Because of the dangers vote buying poses to democracy in Nigeria, the following recommendations are proffered:

- INEC, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the National Assembly and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) should develop strategic collaborative frameworks in the areas of law making and enforcement for effective monitoring of political parties' campaign funds in order to effectively curb electoral fraud, including vote buying.
- To enhance the secrecy of the ballot, the INEC should construct a collapsible voting cubicle that will make it difficult for party agents to see voter ballot paper. An action that exposes voter choice either by force or by his volition should be criminalized and appropriate punishment enforced.
- Civil society groups should advocate and apply pressure for police and other law enforcement agencies to arrest, investigate and diligently prosecute those involved in the act of vote bribery.
- The National Assembly should fast-track deliberation and passage of the Bill establishing the National Electoral Offences Commission (NEOC) ahead of the 2023 general election. When established, NEOC should be well resourced to perform its statutory functions of arresting, investigating and prosecuting electoral offenders. The existence of this Commission is long overdue.
- The Media, Faith- Based Organisations and civil society organizations, regional socio-cultural organisations need to intensify voter education and enlightenment campaigns on the negative implications of vote trading– particularly on how it raises the costs of elections, promotes political corruption and undermines good governance.

- The Electoral Act should be amended to empower citizens to effectively deploy social media tools in facilitating exposure of electoral fraud like vote buying, and prohibit the photographing of ballot papers by a voter or any person.
- The Nigerian government should pursue a policy of aggressive diversification of the economy to create more employment opportunities and reduce the level of poverty that makes people susceptible to criminal, financial and material inducements.
- We are also advocating electronic voting as was done in Kaduna State recently, which will be difficult for party agents to see who voted or did not vote for their candidates or in the interim, INEC should create a voting environment which will make the cubicles secure and ballot boxes not far from the cubicles.

The paper concludes by positing that Section 91(10) of the Electoral Act states the penalties for violating campaign finance laws, however, these penalties are not strong enough to serve as deterrent.

The last and final set of recommendations goes to the constituency. It needs to be affirmed that monitoring political finance is not a one-off event but must be a continuous exercise which links election expenditure and resources to governance. Continued monitoring and reporting on campaign finance is imperative. The civil society should conduct in-depth studies and research on contributions of notable individuals and organisations to campaign funds of executive and legislative officials and their links to public procurement, privileges, patronage, legislation and corruption in governance. They should initiate dialogue, consultations and prepare drafts for the amendment of existing legislation. Specifically, for the media, raising awareness, agenda setting, etc., are still needed because political finance is yet to occupy its place in the front burner of national discourse. Finally, the church and the mosque and all religious organisations should enhance their teaching and education on moral re-armament about campaign finance.

Conclusion

Political corruption is one of the single greatest obstacles preventing Nigeria from attaining her enormous potentials. The shameful trade in votes that followed the recent gubernatorial elections in Edo, Ondo and Kogi states in the recent past clearly indicates that democracy in Nigeria is on sale in an open shelf. It drains billions of dollars a year from the country's economy, stymies development, promotes bad governance and weakens the social contract between the governments and governed. What is particularly worrisome is the brazen nature vote buying has assumed in recent times and the grave danger it poses to democracy. As the 2023 general elections draw near, the future of genuine democratic rule will hugely depend on how the various stakeholders – politicians, electorates, government officials, political parties, civil society organisations, and the media – work assiduously to roll back the tide of vote buying. Saving Nigeria's budding democracy from collapsing into a cash and carry democracy under the weight of vote buying is a task that must be urgently undertaken.

In February 2018, the INEC Chairman, Professor Mahmood Yakub, was quoted as saying that politicians' proclivity for vote buying could mar the 2019 general elections. To reverse this trend, the commission said it was working on secret balloting to curb vote-buying as witnessed in the Sept. 22 2018 governorship election in Osun State. As INEC works towards ending the ugly trend of voters buying in Nigeria, the reality on ground is that because of the high level of poverty Nigerian voters are very likely to sell their votes.

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