

**ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF GODFATHERISM ON CREDIBLE PRIMARY
ELECTIONS IN BENUE STATE: 2018 AND 2022**

BY

Alexander Oscar, APESOUGH

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ABSTRACT

The literature on internal party democracy has paid attention to the politics of godfatherism in Nigeria and its negative effects on politics and administration, particularly bad governance and rising conflict across the country. Yet, few studies have been conducted on how godfather politics in Benue State impacts the electoral process in Benue State. Hence, this study assessed the effects of godfatherism on a credible electoral process in Benue State in 2018 and 2022. The objectives of the study were to understand how the politics of the godfatherism have played out within the PDP in Benue State, investigate how Godfathers have decided and dominated elections in Benue State, assess the effects of Godfatherism on a credible electoral process in Benue State, and investigate how the politics of godfatherism can be curbed in Benue State.

The study employed a mixed research design where primary and secondary data and a simple statistical package for Social Sciences and content analysis were used. The study population was 628, out of which 244 respondents were sampled using Taro Yamane's formula. For the qualitative research component, 12 respondents were interviewed.

Using the elite theory, the study found that first, Political Godfathers had decided the fate of candidates at PDP primary elections in Benue State, as Godfathers had decided the candidates that emerged as consensus candidates among party members and hand-picked by the party executives. Hence, the PDP primary elections in Benue State had been characterized by flawed processes, irregularities, manipulation, and imposition of candidates due to the powerful influence of the political elite and the exclusion of rank-and-file members in the selection processes. To that end, aggrieved card members had in 2018, and 2022 asked the court to restrict the party from submitting

candidate's names to INEC for the General Elections. Second, the politics of godfatherism have had negative effects on credible electoral processes in Benue State. Furthermore, the politics of Godfatherism led to lopsided political appointments, inefficient employees, and nepotism in the award of contracts as well as lack of essential services.

The study recommended that the problems of political godfatherism could be solved through the adoption of direct primary elections, addressing the misuse of the power of incumbency, consolidating and strengthening the democratic process to nip in the bud, the ugly incidence of political godfatherism that is milking the country dry, and increasing voter education to help address the problem of Godfatherism in Benue State.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Worldwide, democratic government needs political parties to recruit members in order to aggregate diverse opinions from society to produce a common policy and to also perform the roles of educating electorates to make informed choice during elections so as to vote individual candidates of their choice. Political parties are essential components of representative democracy. This, according to Reilly (2008), is because parties organize voters, aggregate and articulate interests, craft policy alternatives, recruit and socialize new candidates for offices, set policymaking agenda, integrate disparate groups and individuals into the democratic process and provide the basis for coordinated electoral and legislative activity. Well-functioning political parties are therefore central to the process of democratic development (Muhammad, 2021).

Election is a necessary condition for democracy. Indeed, it is central to democracy. This is for simple reasons that it gives opportunity for citizens of any country to freely choose their leaders at periodic intervals. Freedom of choice, it has been argued, is at the very heart of democracy (Siddique, 2007). In achieving these objectives, there should be proper internal democracy or intra party politics devoid of ethnicity, religious bigotry, clan cleavages and godfatherism. The lack of internal democracy is likely not only to cripple the parties internally, but also to adversely affect their electoral successes.

However, Godfatherism has become a scary phenomenon in Nigerian politics. As rightly observed by Omotola (2007:139), Godfatherism in Nigeria, particularly in its current form and character, is distributive. Though it is a longstanding and deeply rooted feature of the cultural values of Nigerian society, where it is purely socio-economic in nature and mutually productive for both parties, its politicization would appear to have contributed to the criminalization of politics. According to Anchi (2013):

A godfather is known in Hausa as ‘maigida’ (landlord, or the head of a household). In Yoruba land, a godfather is known as ‘baba kekere’ (the small father), ‘baba isale’ (the father of the underground world), or ‘baba nigbejo’ (a great help in times of trouble). While in Igbo land, a godfather is known as ‘Nnam-Ukwu’ (my master). In these three cases mentioned, a person of lesser social status attached himself to another person, usually of higher status, for support, which could be social or economic. Godfather gets something in return from the adopted son for the transactional relationship. It is probably on this understanding that the modern notion of godfatherism is based. (Anchi, 2013: 119-120)

Consequently, the impact of the godfathers on Nigeria's general elections was unprecedented. Godfathers are those who have the security connections, extended local links, enormous financial weight to plot and determine the success of a power seeker at any level of a supposedly competitive electoral politics. Although godfatherism has an institutionalized feature in Nigerian politics over the years, its contemporary manifestations suggest that it has assumed epidemic proportions, becoming one of the greatest threats to democratic consolidation in Nigeria (Omotola, 2007, 135).

In Nigeria today, the activities of some godfathers could be likened to attributes of mafianism; however, some still see the existence of godfathers as the balancer of power in a democracy. Akinola (2009) believes in the need to have a good-hearted individual

(people's hero) at the sole realm of absolute power, a godfather distributes power as he deems, and anoints who rules. But, godfatherism has taken a strange dimension in Nigeria's political environment. It has become a menace pulling down the foundations of masses-driven governance, thereby denying Nigerians the much-deserved dividends of democracy.

In fact, since the country's democratic transition in 1999 (4th Republic) Nigeria's democracy has remained incredibly dysfunctional, with politics becoming increasingly partisan and patronage becoming necessary to retain power. Democracy, as a moral and legitimate means of governing a nation, has spread to many parts of the globe but it's yet to take root in Nigeria. Multiple political parties, frequent and democratic rule have instead resulted in corresponding flourishing of fundamental liberal ideas that are vital to democracy's survival (Igbini *et al*, 2020).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Over the years, while attention was divided to the power and influence of the elected officials, the role played by individuals, group sponsors, and godfathers have received little attention until recently.

According to Omotseye, in Ovirosuyi (2009), in fact, like the thugs, the godfather is the main artery of Nigerian politics. He breeds in every local government area, traffics in lies and duplicity, intimidates, maims and murder. It should be noted that, the main tragedy of these godfathers is that they not only preside over fellow illiterates and semi-illiterates, but

also many university graduates and the ‘so called sophisticated persons’ in our society are all under their thrall. Hence “the metaphor for folly” is that the godfathers in Nigerian politics determines whether the right person or not in various positions. The politics of godfatherism, which denies peaceful coexistence, law and order and all the tenets of democratic process by obstructing candidates’ selection and even executive selection once government is established, has resulted in a transmutation of authoritarianism rather than democratic consolidation in Nigeria (Igbini *et al*, 2020).

The dominance of godfatherism in Nigerian politics has skewed the national priorities and the outcome of legislative decisions, and more also, it has made the states and National Assembly less representative and less responsive to the yearnings and aspirations of Nigerians. The ordinary voters with ballots to give rather than money, are powerless and most times disenfranchised due to the activities of godfatherism.

In Benue state, as a result of irregularities in the conduct of PDP Primaries in 2018 and 2022, which has to do with the imposition of candidates, substitution of candidates’ names in INEC some weeks to the general election, submission of names to INEC of candidates who were defeated at the primary election, neglecting rank-and-file members in most decisions affecting party primaries, the party has been bedeviled by crisis in varying proportions, ranging from distrust among members, inability of the democracy, political thuggery, inter-party defections, anti-party politics, verbal warfare and physical violence.

All these have resulted in huge looting and wastage of the financial resources of Nigeria and Nigerians in general and the Benue State in particular. Consequently, it is postulated that for Benue State in particular and Nigeria in general to move forward, there is need for a paradigm shift.

1.3 Research Questions

At the end of this research, answers would be provided to the following questions:

- i. What was the nature of the primary elections conducted by PDP in picking its flag bearers in 2018 and 2022?
- ii. What was the role of godfatherism in the PDP primaries conducted in Benue State in 2018 and 2022?
- iii. What are the implications of the PDP primaries conducted in Benue State in 2018 and 2022?
- iv. What measures that can be taken to curb this political problems that is threatening the tenets of democracy in Benue State?

1.4 Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to examine the implications of the politics of godfatherism and credible primary elections in Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) in Benue State.

The operational objectives to realize the aim are to:

- i. Examine the nature of PDP Primaries in Benue State in 2018 and 2022
- ii. Find out the role played by godfathers in the PDP Primaries in 2018 and 2022
- iii. Examine the impact of politics of godfatherism within PDP in Benue State
- iv. Determine if incumbency is a factor in the PDP primary elections in Benue State.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The contextual scope of this research borders on godfatherism, primary elections and democratic dividends. The scope of the study is limited to 2018 and 2022 PDP primary elections in Benue State. This covers the primary elections conducted in the last two election cycles in Nigeria for the State House of Assembly, House of Representatives, Senate, and Governorship.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The following limitations were encountered during study. These include:

- i. A study of this nature needs relatively long time during which information for accurate or at least near accurate inference could be drawn. However, the period of the study was short and this posed a constraint to the research.
- ii. The challenge of transportation cost and sourcing of materials needed study also constituted a great constraint.
- iii. Many of the respondents were not willing to provide the needed information that was required for the study.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study intends to contribute to existing body of knowledge on political party internal democracy and the literature on elections in Benue State as is reflective of Nigeria. It is believed that the outcome of this research work would be of interest to political parties in

Benue State and Nigeria in general. The research work would provide them with vital information regarding the problems of Godfatherism and credible electoral process.

Benue State and Nigeria in general, can utilize this study to make amendments or control a number of lapses that affects electoral processes, in terms of lack of constitutional policies, political instabilities, godfather-godson problems.

The study would also serve as a vital material to those who may want to carry out further research work in this regard. Also, the conclusion and recommendations of the study will be immeasurable to political parties, politicians, and the independent National Electoral Commission. This will also consolidate the active role of civil society organizations in ensuring credible elections Benue State and Nigeria at large.

1.8 Definitions of Related Terms

Constituency: This is the people of an area district who vote for their congress person and are represented by him or her for the congressional period.

Democracy: Democracy, or democratic government, is "a system of government in which all the people of a state or polity are involved in making decisions about its affairs, typically by voting to elect representatives to a parliament or similar assembly.

Electoral process: This is an election is a formal decision-making process by which a population chooses an individual to hold public office.

Government: This is the system by which a state or community is controlled.

Godfatherism: This is a symbiotic relationship between two persons namely; the godfather and the godson, where the godfather uses his political power and wealth to secure political position for the godson, who upon ascension into power, pays gratification to his mentor in kind or in cash.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This work is organized into five chapters: Chapter one is introduction and it contains, the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, aims and objectives of the study, scope and limitations of the study, significance of the study, definition of terms and organization of the study. Chapter two is the literature review and theoretical framework, which contains the conceptualization of political godfatherism, theoretical review empirical review, theoretical framework and the application of the elite theory to the study. Chapter three deals with research methodology focusing on research design, sources of data, data collection techniques, study population and sampling, sample size, and method of data analysis. Chapter Four deals with data presentation, analysis and discussion. This chapter deals with data presentation, socio-demographic characteristics, emergence of party delegates for primary elections in Benue State in 2018 and 2022, the nature of PDP primaries conducted in Benue State in 2018 and 2022, the negative impact of godfatherism in the PDP primaries in Benue State in 2018 and 2022, Dominance of godfatherism in PDP primary elections in Benue State in 2018 and 2022, the effects of

godfatherism in PDP primary elections in Benue State in 2018 and 2022, the impact of incumbency factor on PDP primary elections in Benue State in 2018 and 2022 and curbing the politics of godfatherism in Benue State. Chapter Five is summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A lot has been written on the effects of Godfatherism on a credible electoral process. This chapter consists of a review of relevant literature in the areas of the phenomenon of Godfatherism in Nigeria, the effects of Godfatherism on credible electoral processes, and the ways through which Godfatherism can be curbed.

2.1 Conceptualizing Political Godfatherism

Political Godfatherism: This is one of the concepts that open narrow doors when it comes to deciding who gets what in the political scene. However, for the purpose of this study, the literary meaning and attributes of godfather needs to be emphasized. Literarily Godfathers are seen in Nigeria to be men who have the power personally to determine both who gets nominated to contest elections and who wins an election. According to Audu (2006:8), Godfathers are people of questionable wealth and influences who robbed political parties of their conventional and legitimate functions of presenting clear and coherent programmes on the basis of which the candidates presented by them are chosen by the voters. He observes that ideally, government that is freely and fairly instituted by the people must be accountable to them as the source of its moral authority to rule. However, this is not possible with people of questionable wealth whose major concern is to recover the money spent for installing their candidates in power and thereafter share certain percentage of what comes to the government purse as their share of the economy.

2.1.1 Credible Primary Election

Credible primary elections in a constitutional democracy presuppose open, regular and competitive electoral politics in which the processes are transparent and honestly conducted to reflect the choice, views and opinions of the electorate. In a credible election, people were given equal rights and liberties to decide who should lead them and the will of the majority of voters prevails. Candidates who did not win election are never imposed on voters in any credible election.

2.1.2 An Overview of the Politics of Godfatherism in Nigeria

The advent of godfatherism in the Nigerian partisan politics dates back to the First Republic when leaders of the three main political parties [Northern People's Congress (NPC), Action Group (AG) and National Congress of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC)] carefully and meticulously cultivated godsons that they were convinced would advance the wellbeing of the citizens. According to Gambo, Sir Ahmadu Bello of the NPC, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe of the NCNC and Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the AG were motivated to do so and not to use godsons as surrogates to promote parochial interests, but to promote the developmental aspirations of the people. Unlike the present crop of political godfathers, the first generation godfathers were essentially benevolent and progressive because they did not abuse their status as godfathers by imposing frivolous demands on their godsons as it is the case today. They served as a huge reservoir of wisdom and experience to be consulted on the business of governance. Indeed, in a relative sense, the first republic political godfathers were drawn by community sense of interest in seeking to influence the electorates to vote for some candidates of their choice. It was enough satisfaction for them that they wielded tremendous influence in the society and this inevitably generated a groundswell of

goodwill and reverence for them, as their views on political issues were scarcely contested in their respective regions of the country.

2.1.3 Manifestation of the Politics of Godfatherism in Nigeria

Godfathers play important role in democratic sustenance in Nigerian politicking since 1953 during the era of self-government up to the fourth republic where uninterrupted democracy is experienced from 1999 to 2011.

Anchi, 2013 asserts:

“Godfatherism has categories of manifestation. The first type is ‘geo-political’ or ‘ethnic’ organizations that arrogate themselves the right to decide who represents their jurisdiction in government. The second type consists of ‘geo-political’ or ‘ethnic father figures’. These are some prominent individuals within some geo-political or ethnic organizations who are popularly respected by members of the movement they belong to, as a result of some past ‘nationalist activities.’ Such people, very few in the Nigerian society, have occupied public positions in the past and were found to have served their people to the best of their ability so their political opinions are much respected. They third category of political godfathers consists of some rich Nigerians who see sponsorship of political candidates as a source of upward social and economic mobility. Such politicians go around, like a typical businessman, looking for ‘materials’ to invest their money in. The clients are usually people who are interested in the grassroots support, the money, or the violent dispositions for winning elections... And the fifth category consists of rich patrons who are willing to provide what it takes for either rich or poor clients to win elections....” (Anchi, optcit. 120-121)

As indicated earlier, the power and influence of the godfather is enhanced by political connections at the highest tier of government. Where this is absent the individual can only operate as a mentor, benefactor or financier. He must avoid a brush with the law because it will be visited with heavy penalty. Considering Kwara State from 1979, Dr. Olusola

Saraki operated as a financier or benefactor to Alhaji Adamu Attah the Governor of Kwara State.

The relationship turned sour and he withdrew the support. Dr Olusola Saraki then shifted his support to Chief Cornelius Adebayo who was in the Unity Party of Nigeria although he (Saraki) remained in the National Party of Nigeria. Chief Cornelius Adebayo went ahead to win the gubernatorial election in Kwara in 1983. Dr Olusola Saraki was clearly the deciding factor in the election as he had proved that whichever candidate he backed could win the election irrespective of party affiliation (Ayoade, 2008: 124). In furtherance to this, Dr. Olusola Saraki, the strongman of Kwara politics also succeeded in taking overpower from late Mohammed Lawal in 2003 to install his son Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki as Executive Governor of Kwara State from 2003 to 2011. However, at the tail of his son's administration, Baba Saraki wanted Gbemisola Saraki to take over the power from her brother under the platform of PDP but to no avail, the situation could not help Baba Saraki to achieve this objective in the Kwara State ruling party and this led to the rift between father and son to depart ways in the control of PDP.

Therefore, Governor Saraki who has been in firm control of the PDP structure in Kwara while his father was forced to move to Allied Congress Party of Nigeria (ACPN), a less popular political party, where Gbemisola Saraki gained the party gubernatorial flag bearer through politics of consensus among party members to enable her replace the brother as governor in year 2011. Consequently, the legislative elections conducted on the 9th April, 2011 indicated that the PDP party leader in Kwara State has succeeded in taking over the

political power from his father because his party, PDP claimed all Senatorial seats and all house of Reps without sharing the position with other parties and this serve as emergence of new political godfather in kwara state. In addition to this assertion, Dr. Bukola Saraki backed Alhaji Fatai Ahmed as PDP gubernatorial candidate and urged other contestants from central and northern senatorial districts to step down for the contesters from southern senatorial district to pave way for his Godson at the primary level which eventually actualized his objective in installation of Alhaji Fatai Ahmed.

In Ogun, son of former governor Olusegun Osoba, Olumide is also in fray. The younger Osoba is the standard bearer of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) for the House of Representatives slot in Odeda/Abeokuta North/Obafemi Owode federal constituency. Considering his father's pedigree in politics and the growing influence of the party in Ogun, the young Osoba was able to achieve his political ambition to Abuja as a result of his father's influence, the father therefore stood as political godfather to his son to serve as member of the Green Chamber with the 7th legislative council. Senator Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello, a veterinary doctor and a daughter of former President Olusegun Obasanjo. She started her political career as commissioner for health under 5 Governor Gbenga Daniel from 2003-2007. She was promoted to become a Senator in 2007 where she served as chairman, Senate Committee on Health. Her father being the Chairman of PDP's Board of Trustees wanted her daughter to enjoy second term in the Senate. During this process, there were factions in the party at the state level to the extent that separate primaries were conducted by the two factions.

But later on, Obasanjo's faction enjoyed judicial pronouncement which compelled INEC to recognize Iyabo as the candidate for Ogun Central Senatorial District and other members of his group to received party tickets to various positions both at state cum federal constituencies. The factional crisis which was between Obasanjo and his Godson, Daniel on who would be the next state godfather. Obasanjo supported Olurin as party governorship flag bearer while Governor Daniel picked Isiaka as his own godson for the position. This led to calamity between the two godfathers and both later lost to the opposition party, ACN, during the 2011 National Assembly and Gubernatorial elections (The Nation, April 11, 2011; 12).

In Abia State, there were serious doubts over who was really in charge. While vowed it was former Governor Orji Kalu, others said the incumbent Theodore Orji had taken over. But the results of the National Assembly and Gubernatorial elections of the 2011 confirmed the incumbent Governor as the new kingpin in the state politics. All PDP candidates won convincingly in the race for the National Assembly. The former governor who contested for a senatorial seat also lost to the serving senator, Uche Chukwumerije. The PPA chieftain, who ruled the state for eight years and installed the incumbent against all odds, could not deliver a seat for the party. With the recent experience, there is no doubt that Ochondo, as the Governor is fondly called, is now the new strongman of Abia politics. This is despite the fact that he defected from PPA to APGA and now PDP. He has proven that wherever he goes, Abia voters will follow him (The Nation Thursday, April 14, 2011; 2).

Another example of the significance of political connections is the Anambra case where Chris Uba installed Dr. Chris Ngige as Governor for only one term as he had signed an agreement saying “I SHALL NOT seek re-election or stand for nomination to recontest the gubernatorial seat of Anambra State for a second term” (Ayoade, 2008: 126 cited in Adeyemo, 2004:18). Prior to the election, Dr. Ngige also signed a covenant of relationship on March 28, 2003 in which he pledged to continue to do the biddings of Chris Uba. In addition, on May 5, 2003 he was also alleged to have signed three undated letters of resignation as PDP Candidate, Governor elect, and Governor respectively (Adeyemo, 2004:18). Thus if he reneged on his pledge the appropriate letter would be dated and submitted as a letter of resignation. Chris Uba was alleged to have put in place a collegial administration in the name of a caucus. And on May 19, 2003 the Caucus decided (Adeyemo, 2004:16 and 17)

Chris Ngige was alleged to have reneged on his promises within six weeks of his inauguration as Governor. Consequently, he was abducted by the Police on July 10, 2003 and was saved by a telephone call that he made from where he was kept. Ngige was alleged to have resigned as Governor on July 10, 2003 using the pre-signed letter of resignation of May 5, 2003 (Ayoade, 2008: 126 cited in Agbo, 2004a: 18) That attempt to remove him from office failed and it was followed in November 2003 by a four-day riot resulting in the wanton destruction of public property. The mercenaries were allegedly paid N10, 000 each per day for four days of the 6 operation. The massive arson of public property in the State was organized to discredit Dr. Ngige (Agbo, 2004b: 32-33). In fact, in a release, the Uba camp claimed that the action was taken to “let the world know that we have taken charge

to implant a new government” and thus enjoined everyone to join the crusade because “Ngige is going today” (Agbo, 2004a:23). It is believed that the Godfather can make and unmake. In this vein, Dan Ulasi, a believer in Chris Uba, is quoted as saying If you read what the Minister of Works said about Obasanjo and his first term (sic). The President realized that he came through a source and you will see that it would appear the source managed his government for the first four years and the President pretended to be a fool because he knew that people spent a lot of money to make him President from prison (Adeyemo 2004:21quoted in Ayoade, 2008).

The Anambra case demonstrated the importance of political connections to the survival of the Godfather himself. Andy Uba, the senior brother of Chris Uba, the Godfather was a Special Adviser to the President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, while Ugochukwu Uba is a Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Before the advent of the Ubas in the political firmament of Anambra, Chief Emeka Offor who is said to be close to the Presidency on account of his large donation to the Presidential campaign in 1999 bestrided the State as godfather of the governor, Chinwoke Mbadinuju (Adebanjo 2001:34). Mbadinuju the Governor himself confessed to the fact that Offor contributed N4m to his campaign and on that account nominated the Commissioner for Finance and the Commissioner for Works (Adebanjo 2001:36). Just like Uba, Offor also insisted that Mbadinuju would not return as Governor of the state in 2003 (Adebanjo 2001:32). And through a combination of factors beyond the scope of this paper he lost the nomination for the office giving room for the Uba- Ngige show.

The legal battle for the removal of Ngige as Governor however continued until the Supreme Court invalidated his election and Mr. Peter Obi, who actually won the election, became Governor. The Anambra case demonstrated the significance of political connections. Chris Uba had confessed to an electoral crime but got away with it. The troika of the Uba brothers still dominate the politics of Anambra because they have political and security connections as well as the finance for the project. In 1999, Alimodu Sheriff was said to have financed the Bomo State gubernatorial election. His candidate won the election and was Governor of Bomo State from 1999-2003. But the relationship between him and his benefactor was not cordial. Consequently, in 2003 the benefactor himself decided to contest the election against his godson, Alhaji Mala Kchala, and he claimed the victory.

The benefactor, Ali Modu Sheriff in the last ANPP primaries was able to backed the candidature of Alhaji Gubio as the next ANPP's governorship flag bearer while his brother was chosen as running mate for the 2011/2015 general elections but man proposes God disposes, two of them were shot death by unknown “boko haram” members. Alimodu Sheriff himself contested for the position of senator again in the last general elections but he was crushed by PDP candidate. Though he is still maintaining the position of godfather in the state because he was the one that installed Alhaji Shettima Kasim, the current governor into the system despite the fact that he lost his desired position to an opposition party.

2.1.4 Reasons for Godfatherism in Nigerian Politics

In Nigeria, the reason for the politics of godfatherism is not far-fetched. According to Rasak, Oye & Ake (2017: 79) noted that a onetime governor Chimaroke Nnamani, affirms

that godfather is “an impervious guardian figure who provided the lifeline and direction to the godson, perceived to live a life of total submission, subservience, and protection of the oracular personality located in the large, material frame of opulence, affluence, and decisiveness, that is, if not ruthless...strictly.”

According to Ahmed & Ali (2019:14) the “power of incumbency, influence, political thugs, money politics, lack of political knowledge, selfishness, greediness, lack of publicity, over-ambition, nepotism, and politics of regionalism are among the factors that led to the politics of godfatherism in Nigeria.” Since the godfathers use their influence and resources to put their godsons and relatives in various positions of power, it is understood that corruptive tendencies exacerbate the godfathers' economic base by causing a wide variety of difficulties in politics and rule. Those in authority often use their role to determine who will represent the citizens' interests at all costs.

Governor Ifeanyi Okowa, for example, transforms Delta state into a family company, handing over 400 million naira (N400, 000,000) to his daughter's office at the expense of the people. In addition, the military's foray into politics helped in the consolidation of Nigerian godfatherism. The promotion of political and economic centralization, corruption, the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, and the transfer of much power to the chief executive at all levels, making the role more desirable, were all high on their list of misrule (Igbini & Okolie, 2020:98).

In Nigeria, political godfathers erect a phalanx of loyalists around them and use their clout, which is often based on monetary considerations, to dominate the rest of society (Oviasuyi, 2009). According to (Ohiole & Ojo, 2016:4), election sponsors are wealthy, popular, and influential individuals who freely contribute to a party's voting success or support candidates during an election. Furthermore, according to Ohiole & Ojo (2016), the political godfather may be less concerned with active politics or regime organization and more concerned with approachable policies from the government. In the twenty-first century, Nigeria's godfathers fund elections, but not all election sponsors are godfathers. Godfathers, on the other hand, rule over all aspects of society, including academia, the legal system, and the religious climate. To back up the above assertion, Popoola (2014:1-2) revealed that the nation's socioeconomic growth has been disrupted by the political godfather and godson feud. This conflict, which was rooted in a collision of interests, needs, values, and capitals, involved politicians at the highest levels of government. This has a direct impact on the nation's socioeconomic and political growth. A good example was between Ambode the former governor of Lagos and his godfather Tinubu prior to the 2019 elections.

2.1.5 The Crisis of Godfather and Godson in Nigerian Politics

Godfatherism is a philosophy based on the idea that a few people with significant wealth who have the power to arbitrarily decide who gets a party ticket and also determines who wins or loses an election. The godfathers, on the other hand, intend to rule by proxy. As a result, they use violence openly and indiscriminately against those who stand in their way, including their godsons. In Nigerian politics, godfathers are fear merchants and power

brokers. On a regular basis, people throng in and out of their homes, running errands or requesting one favour or another (Osayi, 2015:6). Olawale (2005: 80) notes that “In certain cases, the relationship between political godfathers and their adopted sons is transactional.” As Nigerians say, it's a case of “you rub my back, and I rub your back.” Just like every business man/woman, godfathers invest in their godsons and expects returns after winning election. This is most times accomplished by lucrative political positions, contracts, land grants, political control and power sharing with incumbents, and, if the allegations against some of them are to be taken seriously, unjustified requests for monetary backing.”

The privileges a godfather receives from his godson are strategic. In several cases, he requests the right to appoint about 8% of those who are eligible function in his godson's cabinet. Many godfathers often make certain that they have complete influence over the situation. Most of the godfathers also make sure they influence majority of representatives in state legislatures, and they readily use these to threaten governors with impeachment at any time misunderstanding occurs. Political godfathers in Nigeria make more money from the political process than anybody else in Nigerian politics. Those they imposed as commissioners, permanent secretaries, board chairmen, and other officials make equal monthly payments to their godfathers, just as the principal godsons do. On June 10th, 2003, the Nigerian godfather-godson relationship brought Nigerian juvenile democracy to an end. Chris Uba, a self-described godfather, used miscreants and Nigerian police to kidnap his godson, Chris Ngige, the elected governor of Anambra State. Ngige's crime was his refusal to let his godfather, Chris Uba, nominate all political positions and take the lion's share of the state's allocation and instantly pay him N2.5billion. He claimed that was what

he spent in making the Ngige the governor (Igbini & Okolie, 2020; Animasawun, 2013; Atere & Akinwale, 2006; Thovoethin, 2004; Adeyemi-suenu, 2004).

While in Kwara state, the conflict began in 1999 to 2003 where Saraki the ex-Senate president was in competition for relevance with his former protégé Mohammed Lawal, who was at the time the state governor. Saraki who has brought four of his political godsons including Lawal into power had a fallout with him due to sharing political commissions and gains. Mohammed Lawal's refusal to agree to Saraki's wish led to serious political crisis between him (Lawal) and his godfather (Saraki). As a result of this Saraki was expelled from the "All people's Party" (APP) now "All Nigerian People's Party" (ANPP) (Ohiole & Ojo, 2016: 6). Then, in 2003, both men faced off in the ultimate fight to decide who would be the State's political grandmaster. To fight the "war," they used their immense resources. The peace of Ilorin was shattered during this "battle" when a bomb exploded on the premises of National Pilot, which is owned by the Saraki's. During the upheaval, many people were assassinated, maimed, injured, and so on. Among those killed was Shmed PATIGI, the State Chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), who was brutally murdered in August 2002. Supporters of the two (2) camps openly threatened each other with lethal weapons, with the police acting as onlookers (Ohiole & Ojo, 2016: 6). However, when the junior Saraki won the State Governorship election in 2003, all of that came to an end, and the rest is history.

Similarly, the battle was also drawn in Oyo state between Ladoja and Adebibu. Adebibu claimed to have contributed financially to the "instalment" of Ladoja as governor, with the

understanding that the governor would be loyal and submissive, obeying his orders and subjecting public resources to his personal whims and caprices. Ladoja, on the other hand, reneged and refused to abide by the rules. This resulted in the chaos that erupted in Ibadan after the 2003 elections until January 2006. Many lives and properties were lost, and the State House of Assembly became polarized along two (2) lines, leading to the expulsion of fourteen (14) of the thirty-two (32) members of the Assembly. In January 2006, Ladoja was impeached in less than 25 minutes, paving the way for his deputy Alao Akala. Alao Akala, his deputy, is another eager godson eager to better represent the godfather. The status quo was upheld until the Supreme Court's final decision on December 7, 2006. His expulsion was found to be unconstitutional by the court, and he was reinstated after eleven (11) months. His return to office was met with fierce opposition from his former godfather's (ADEDIBU) faction, resulting in a break in law and order in the State capital for a few days and the deaths of several innocent people (Azeez, 2014).

Other instances was between Ambode-Tinubu in Lagos; Kachalla-Alimodu Sheriff in Borno. In these cases, the godfathers made sure that the disobedient godsons were not re-elected for a second term and that some of them were impeached. Godfatherism has become phenomenal and parasitic in Nigeria's fourth republic as a result of patronage politics, with grave implications for participation, political stability, democratic consolidation, and peace. Osayi (2015:7) aptly captured this thought “godfatherism and money politics are two indispensable characteristics in political discourse that can either promote or impede political stability. Godfatherism is thus, a very powerful tool that can

be used to destabilize a nation due to its ability to incorporate all of the primordial components of chaos.”

2.1.6 The Impacts of Godfatherism in Nigerian Politics

Since 1999 when Nigeria regained her legitimate political power from military administrator under the auspices of General Abdulsalam many cases of political violent from north and south poles of the country have become order of the day which characterized the efforts of political godfathers and some godsons in various states. Among the effect of political godfathers are:

Massive destruction of lives and properties: In the beginning and post elections of April, 2011 polls in Nigeria, there were many cases of massive destruction of lives and properties as a result of the instructions given by the godfathers to their supporters in various state of the federation. In Kano State, some unspecified number of people died, non-indigenes fled Kano as the violence spread. Despite the indefinite curfew imposed on the city to douse tension, nonnatives still live in fear of attacks several places of worship were burnt down by youths. Thousands of non-natives were seeking refuge in military and police barracks, sleeping in the open, without essential facilities (The Nation Wednesday, April 20, 2011; 7). Bauchi state is also a place of crises where many lives and properties were lost, five Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) offices were burnt and property worth of millions of naira destroyed in five local governments, more than 500 lap-top computers and 13 generators were burnt and windows and doors were stolen by hoodlums after post presidential poll in the State. Also many lives of leaders of tomorrow “corps members”

were claimed by some groups of people before and aftermath of the presidential election in Bauch, Niger, Kogi and some other state.

Turning young citizen to Hooligans cum thugs: In the 2011 April polls, cases of suspected thugs were reported in some states. In Kwara state, the state police command arrested 23 persons suspected to be political thugs during the 16th April, 2011 election. In his remarks, the police commissioner, Mr. Mamman Tsafe stated that a political party imported thugs from Lagos to disrupt the election in the state. Also, an Ilorin magistrate court in kwara state remanded 14 supporters of ACN in prison custody for alleged public disturbance. The accused were arraigned on a four-count charge of criminal conspiracy inciting disturbance, mischief and causing injury contrary to sections 97,114,327, and 246 of penal code. The charge sheet said Otunba Bode Oyedepo of No. 16 Adebayo Avenue Oro told the police how he was attacked at Iludun-Oro with his fellow PDP members by thugs allegedly sent by ACN senatorial candidate for Kwara south Anu Ibiwoye. Oyedepo further explained that the thugs allegedly came in vehicle and attacked them with bottles and guns (The Nation Monday, April, 2011).

Proliferation of arms and ammunitions: The clash between factions in the Oyo State branch of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) claimed many lives and left several others injured and some properties reportedly damaged in Ibadan, the state capital. The slain victim, identified as Dele Ayegbo, was said to be a member of the faction loyal to the reinstated chairman, Lateef Akinsola Oloruntoki. The conflict was sparked off by a struggle by the Tokyo faction to take over some motor-parks hitherto controlled by

the other faction who had taken over reign since the relationship between him and the former governor, Adebayo AlaoAkala, got strained.

The urge to take over the parks was reinforced by the de-proscription of the union by the last regime, as well as the emergence of new government in the state, which was believed to have a soft spot for Tokyo's faction. The invading faction stormed the Iwo-Ife axis of the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway motor parks shooting sporadically to scare the occupants. Several people were reportedly injured while scores of vehicles were damaged during the shooting that lasted for over one hour. The injured, it was learnt, included commuters at the parks, who were trying to escape from the scene having seen the dangerous weapons wielded by the factions of the drivers' union. Traders around the parks and shop owners at the Iwo-Road interchange, Monatan Junction, Lagos Expressway parks and Ojoo way were forced to abandon their wears as they scampered for safety from the booming gun (Next, Tuesday, May 31, 2011).

Disfranchisement of citizens to exercise their political right: Two weeks to the general elections, there are doubts over plans for a credible exercise in Oyo state. Reason: voters' registers in 27 local government areas have been tempered with by members of PDP in collusion with INEC officials, four suspects were arrested Saturday evening 19th March, 2011 in a hotel in old Bodija, Ibadan, the state capital, while allegedly tampering with registration materials in some local governments. INEC materials, including six laptops and voters' registers, were found on the suspect (The Nation, March 21, 2011: 1-2).

Politicized employment in the state cum the center: The appointment of political office holders and some civil servants today is purely political. The godfathers of a particular state as well as center usually task his/her godsons on the kind of people to be employed in his/her cabinet even though the person may not be up-to-the task in term of experience or ability to deliver. He ought to be employed since directive is coming from the godfather.

However, if godson reacted to the directive of his godfather negatively it will lead to political violence. See the case of lower house (House of Representatives) in Nigeria, the emergence of 2011/2015 speaker of the House that led to the destruction of zoning arrangement drew by PDP as both former president Olusegun Obasanjo imposed Hon. Muraina (PDP) from Oyo and president Goodlock Jonathan in collaboration with his wife Dame Patience under the policy of affirmative action and 35% involvement of women in government presented Mulikat (PDP) from Oyo but the work of godfathers in these policies failed as the honourable members decided to installed Honourable Aminu Tambuwal of PDP from Sokoto by majority votes of 252 as against 90 votes cast for Honourable Mulikat. As a result of this, the PDP executives are still not recognize the current speaker as the winner, no congratulatory message has ever been sent to him rather they continue preaching zoning arrangement.

Promote high level of poverty: from all indications, most of the political godfathers do engage most of inhabitants of a given state with high level of poverty to enable them buy their votes during the election. For instance, in Kwara State, the then political godfathers, like Dr. Olusola Saraki and late Governor Muhammed Lawal and the current strongman of

PDP in kwara state, Dr. Bukola Saraki had permanent venue for distributing raw food, cooked food, clothes and money for so many able and disabled individuals within the state.

Enhanced disrespect of the rule of law: The Nigerian styled Patron-Client relationship nearly truncated Nigerian puerile democracy. On 10th June 2003, a self- confessed godfather, Chris Uba employed thugs and Nigerian police to abduct his godson, Chris Ngige, who was the elected governor of Anambra State. Ngige was accused by refusing to allow Chris Uba to nominate all political appointees, take the largest share of state's allocation, and instantly pay him the sum of N2.5 billion; the claimed cost of installing Ngige as the 9th governor (Onwumere, 2007). That resulted to their loyalists embarking in a battle of 'iron' and 'steel'. The State became a war zone, innocent lives were lost, houses were set ablaze, and Anambra state became ungovernable for some weeks. It was not a case of two fighting, but a desperate godfather (Chris Uba and his loyalists) consuming everything at their reach when it became clear that his investment was going down the drain. The only solution the federal government proffered was the threat to declare a state of emergency in the state.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Coalition theory

This theory focuses on government formation, which simply means on how governing political party or parties enter and construct and consolidate their own government identity (Wood, 1998; Furlong, 1989; Scott, 1997). According to this theory, one way to do exactly that is through dispensing patronage politics via state jobs whereby political principals distribute and manage state institutions“ jobs in order to bargain over policy output. For

this school of thought, political patronage or rather political appointment system is an “inherent” feature of all governing political parties in government worldwide and there is no problem in dispensing the system at all.

However, there are variations between countries on the quality and integrity of bureaucrats appointed based on political patronage rather than merit. It is argued that all governing political parties widely apply this political tool to tame, control and regulate the behaviour of the state agents as they may not be entirely trusted, especially as they deal daily with public monies and other state resources. Even countries castigated as developmental states such as Malaysia, Brazil, China, Japan, South Korea, etc., apply the system at varying degree (Wood, 1998; Furlong, 1989; Scott, 1997).

In similar tone, Du Gay (2000) argues that political principals dispense political patronage via state jobs to tame the power of agency officials and to enhance their (politicians) own positions within government. According to this theory, political patronage via state jobs is not only about controlling but also about ensuring that the state agents achieve the principals’ policy objectives particularly given the danger of the opposition political parties’ agents to derail and sabotage the governing political party’s policy vision and objectives.

2.2.2 Expectancy Theory

Victor Vroom’s expectancy theory, also called Valence-expectancy theory (Agbonifoh et al. 2005:214), can be used to explain the actions of political godfathers in the country. According to him, individuals are motivated to perform certain actions to achieve certain

goals if they know or expect that such actions will help them attain the desired goals. Seen in this light, it means that a political godfather will be ready to place his material and political resources at the behest of a neophyte seeking public office in so far as he expects or believes that such 'benevolence' will yield economic dividends if the latter wins the general election (Epelle, 2007, p. 5–6). The theory can be summarised as: Force = valence x expectancy (where force is the strength of a person's motivation; valence is the strength of an individual's preference for a particular outcome; and expectancy is the probability that a particular action will lead to a desired outcome) has been widely acknowledged for its recognition of the role of individual differences and preferences in the process of human motivation. Though the theory has been roundly criticised for being too difficult to apply in practise due to its complexity and doubts as to whether individuals perform these multiple calculations before performing any action, it brings to the fore the fact that individuals come into politics with different needs that they want satisfied.

While some see it as an opportunity to offer selfless service to the community, others see it as an investment that must yield dividends. The latter is the context in which Nigeria's godfathers see politics. Any attempt by the godson to renege on earlier agreements is often met with an orgy of violence, thuggery, arson, and assassination, thus replicating the Hobberian state of nature. Unfortunately, as with every confrontation among ruling elites, the ultimate losers are the Nigerian masses, whose resources are being plundered and frittered away in the course of the egoistic war. The combatants, notably the godfathers, most times come out unscathed, as top party bigwigs will always wade in to either placate the feuding parties or more rightly massage the ego of the mafia. A few examples will be

drawn to show that, despite their negative influence in the country's politics, godfatherism is a concept that may have tacitly acquired official legitimacy in Nigeria's body politics.

2.2.3 Party System Theory

The party system theory also agrees that the conduct of political parties influences the performance of the state institutions including the legislatures since government is constructed by political parties. They can either limit or enhance the powers and operations of the state institutions. According to this theory, certain party systems are able to limit the extent or level of political principals or political parties dispensing political patronage.

This theory distinguishes between „fragile party system“ and „competitive party system“. One basic difference is on the level of competitiveness, meaning the likelihood that the incumbent governing political party or parties can be defeated. GrzymanA-Busse (2003) argues that lack of robust competition between programmatic political parties in the state results into ineffective and inefficient state institutions evident in poor institutional quality or performance thus allowing a governing party or parties to dispense political patronage via state jobs.

This in turn leads to corruption and poor governance, which are used widely by the World Bank, Transparency International, etc., as indices for measuring the quality or performance of the state institutions worldwide. In such situation where the state is inefficient due to poor governance systems and or corruption, the governing political party or parties legitimizes itself or themselves based on their ability to reward supporters through selective

incentives rather than their ability to generate the kinds of public goods necessary for human and economic development as well as growth.

2.2.4 Meritocratic Theory

This theory literally rejects political patronage via state jobs as enhancing the performance or quality of state institutions. Proponents of this theory (Weber, 1948; 1968; Evans & Rauch, 1999; Henderson et al, 2007, Miller, 2000; Ritzer, 1975; Dahlstrom, Lapuente & Teorell, 2011; Andreski, 1983, Johnson & Libecap, 1994) argue that political patronage leads to politicization rather than professionalization of state institutions. Politicization of the state institutions eventually culminates into poor institutional capacity and lack of accountability on public goods provision as the system is immoral and a democratic pathology.

Dahlstrom et al (2012) gives an example of the mayor of Spain between 2001 and 2003 who replaced „merit-recruited“ state agents with political appointees. According to these scholars, the Spanish mayor was able to coordinate his corruption intentions with appointees he had himself selected based on political patronage. Conspicuously, the theory of meritocracy argues that poor performance by state agents appointed on political patronage is often blamed on others or covered up by their political principals.

Empirical evidence indicates that officials appointed based on political patronage may be recalled at any time once they have lost favour with their political principals. As noted by Kanyane (2006), with a culture of patronage politics an atmosphere of playing safe is often

created, which is not conducive for responsible and accountable bureaucratic institutions. Proponents of this theory strongly maintain that people in the state should be appointed on merit because such officials see office holding as a vocation.

For this theory, office holding is not considered a source to be exploited for rents or emoluments nor is considered a usual exchange of services for equivalents (Weber, 1948). In the study of bureaucracy, Max Weber, for example, advocated for „career personnel“ with specialized training and expertise, among others, as the prerequisite for employment in any bureaucratic institutions. Of course, Weber’s work on bureaucracy has a profound impact on our theoretical understanding of how principal-agent relationship within institutions plays out and how the bureaucratic institution developed. Therefore, the theory of meritocracy has intellectual roots from the Max Weber’s study of a bureaucracy.

Moreover, Woodrow Wilsons (1887 in Rosenbloom, 2008) in his study of administration also argued for an administration apparatus that is devoid of politics and meddling after he was concerned about the bureaucratic system in America that operated as a bastion for political patronage. Proponents of this theory suggest that democratic states all over the world should shun away from political patronage via state jobs and embrace a culture of meritocratic recruitment and promotion. They argue that access to institutions of government as an employee should be conditioned on the bases of possession of relevant knowledge, skills and qualification credentials, what Max Weber (1968) refers to as „expert-officialdom“.

This is due to the fact that partly qualified officials in terms of specialized training and examination always enter the state as employees with an understanding that office holding is a vocation. The executive office is separated from the households much as business assets are separated from private fortunes. Proponents of this school of thought give examples of some countries such as Australia, Brazil, Malaysia, China, Japan, UK, etc., that have also introduced a 16 system of tough public civil service examination to select the best potential candidates for the state institutions as agents. The civil service examination system in China, for example, has created a unique class of „scholar-bureaucrats“ irrespective of family or party pedigree (Fukai & Fukui, 1992) even if cadre deployment is applied.

Throughout the period of military rule and in the Nigeria’s fourth republic (1999-2013), emergence of political patronage posed a great threat not only to good governance but also to the socio-economic development and stability of democratic governance. Perhaps, one of the most disturbing and damaging influence of political patronage in Nigeria’s fourth republic was in domain of making nonsense of a truly free, fair and credible electoral process in which the electorates by right are expected to freely elect people of their choice into public office to represent their interests.

Indeed, the privilege of electing people of their choice into public office was denied given the situations in which patrons foisted candidates of their preference on the generality of the people. This is to say the least very inimical to the tenets of democratic rule (Chukwuma, 2008). When public office holders would not be accountable to the people,

who at any rate did not count in their elections into public office, invariably, the loyalty of such public office holder would be tilted towards their godfathers and this in itself negates one of the critical attributes of governance and democracy which is responsive and transparent government. This scenario is also inimical to good governance and political stability which are predicated on the rule of law, due process, accountability and transparency in the management of public business.

The emergence of political patronage has also robbed the citizens of the privilege of enjoying the dividends of democratic governance in the sense that government has become reluctant to initiate and implement policies that would advance the well-being of the generality of the citizens. This was a result of the fact that political patronage in Nigeria was basically predatory in nature. The primary motive of venturing into politics was born out of the need to acquire wealth (money) from the coffers of government to which their „godsons“ held sways (Chukwumeka, 2012). Therefore, the lean financial resource accruable to the state from the federation account which was meant for the improvement of living standards of the citizens was paramount interest to them.

Instances where the „godsons“ (governors, chairmen) etc. refused to settle their “godfathers” as agreed before securing public office, hell was let loose. The experiences recorded in Senator Rashidi Ladoja of Oyo state and Lamidi Adedibu between 2003 and 2007, Olusola Saraki and Mohammed Lawal (2003-2007), and Chris Uba and Chris Ngige (2003-2006) were 17 awful and devastating. The end point and consequences of these „godfatherism“ in our politic is that economic activities are brought to a halt, especially

education sectors, health, security (political wrangling), agriculture, housing and infrastructural developments etc.

The political patrons or godfathers in Nigeria see governance and political power as the cheapest and surest method of amassing wealth to the detriment of the governed. Sponsoring a weak and poor candidate to win election by appointment is seen as a lucrative business whereby the sponsor will invest heavily in imposing his candidate on the people as their leader, with all intent and protégé, called chairmen, and governors.

Political patronage is a dangerous development in Nigeria politics. The electorates are impoverished the more, and the corrupt rich godfathers are corruptly enriching themselves the more. The circle is endless, as the solution to this menaces is the serious problem facing Nigeria until a morally sound, committed and patriotic leader emerge to lead the people honestly with the attribute of transparency, openness, people oriented policies and programmes, Nigeria economic development will be a mirage. The susceptibility of the political structures and institutions to the influence and control of forces operating outside the government but within the political system is a great and potential threat to growth and economic development of the country.

2.2.5 Elite Theory

The elite theory can be defined as a set of ideas, principles, and assumptions about the concept, structure, and exercise of power. It is a theory that inquires about and elucidates on power relationships in modern society. The theory postulates that a small group of

people, which can be found in the economic, policy-planning, and military institutions of the state, is vested with overriding power. Thus, the elite theory is based on two main sets of ideas, principles, or assumptions about the concept, structure, and exercise of power. Firstly, that power lies in positions of authority in key economic, political, and military institutions. Secondly, the psychological difference that sets apart the political elite from the non-elite is that they have personal resources, for instance, intelligence, skills, and a vested interest in government (Mills, 1956). Elite theory is also a theory of the state that seeks to describe and explain the power relationships in contemporary society. The theory posits that a small minority consisting of members of the economic elite, policy-planning networks, and military institutions holds the most power in any society. According to the elite theory, the small group of people with overriding power is referred to as the political elite. It is a group of people with exceptional abilities in politics and a great monopoly of power. This so-called power elite abounds in all societies, and they always have the exceptional ability to secure power, perpetuate it, and rule (Okonofua, 2013). The proponents of the theory include Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, Robert Michels, James Burnham, Floyd Hunter, C. Wright Mills, and Robert D. Putnam.

Based on the views expressed by the proponents of the elite theory and from the standpoint of other scholars and theorists, the central theme that runs through the theory is the concept, structure, and exercise of power in any society. Politics is, essentially, a relationship between rulers and the ruled, and it is defined in terms of the power that exists between the rulers and the ruled (Tashjean, 2014). It is the ruling class that produces the power elite, the power-wielding minority group, in any society. It is a group of achievers in politics,

and they are highly organised and cohesive and will do everything to secure, conserve, preserve, and perpetuate power. The power elites are present in any society, no matter how small or large, old or new.

The basic assumptions of the elite theory are that the overriding and ultimate power can be found among the people who hold key positions in the economic, political, and military institutions of any society. The theory assumes that all men love power. Hence, through the elite theory, those in power do not want to surrender power easily but to hold on to it tenaciously and through any means. The theory states that not all men are endowed alike. Hence the emphasis on the psychological and intellectual superiority obtained by the elite. It further reinforces the psychological, intellectual, and other differences that set apart the political elite from the non-elite. The theory emphasises inequality rather than equality in society. It stresses the belief that the elites are the highest accomplishers in their fields and that the political elite are imbued with personal resources such as social skills, intelligence, and a special interest in politics. The theory divides society into two different groups because politics is essentially a relationship between rulers and the ruled and is defined in terms of power. It is the ruling class that produces the power elite, the power-wielding minority group, in any society. The theory emphasises the rule of the minority over the majority in any society. Society is usually ruled by the political elite, a minority group of achievers in politics who are highly organised and cohesive and will do everything to secure, conserve, preserve, and perpetuate their power over a majority that is largely unorganised.

The elite theory is limited in that it is opposed to pluralism and also contradicts state autonomy theory. Elite theory is anti-democratic and views democracy as a fraud and a utopian ideal. It does not depend upon the majority or the willingness of a sufficient part of the population to ensure accountability and the transformation of the political elite through a free and fair election. Rather, it relies upon the virtue and other standards of the self-appointed political elite for securing responsible conduct to perpetuate or maintain power. Also, the theory postulates that political elites devise a variety of methods for maintaining themselves perpetually in power through the re-cycling of leaders, elite circulation, or perpetuation of regimes, contrary to the belief or assumption that there is the possibility of a gradual and continuous expansion of the political elite. More so, the theory is oligarchical and has been severally and severely criticised for its tacit support for the selfish use of power by a few. Only the minority elite group is favoured by the theory at the expense of the non-elite majority. The theory abhors equality and thrives more on inequality. It is therefore predicated on the inequalities that exist among the people and in the various segments of society. Lastly, the theory has been criticised as more normative than empirical in content and intent. It therefore does not easily lend itself to empiricism and the science of politics.

2.3 Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have been conducted on the concept of godfatherism in Nigerian politics. For example, Muhammad (2015) asserted that the conduct of 2015 Gubernatorial Primaries by the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Kaduna State has been marred by irregularities and flaws. The improper conduct of this important segment of internal

democracy became a great challenge facing the party which has its root from the zero sum nature of politics in the state, godfatherism, money politics, powerful influence of elite, incumbency factor, exclusiveness of rank-and-file members in Party Primaries and infact; this has left in its wake wanton destruction of party ideology, democratic practices and values, lives and properties in Kaduna State.

Oviasuyi (2009) in the study of Oyo and Anambra noted that the politics of godfatherism has brought a lot of crises in Nigerian politics and Administration. The study recommends that if godfatherism must be stamped out of the Nigerian political and administrative systems, corruptive tendencies which increases the financial base of the godfathers by creating a wide range of problems in our politics and administration must be tackled head-on because they use such moneys to place their godsons and protégés in various positions of government. The study concluded that there is the need for an increased confidence in the duly elected officials and also increase faith in the democratization process. Electorates should be allowed to vote for their preferred candidates during elections without intimidation by political thugs who are part of the instruments of godfatherism.

Ejiroghene (2023) also asserted that Godfatherism has been the focal point of political gangalism in Africa and other developing countries around the globe. The study noted that godfatherism has been a hallmark of Nigeria's democracy today. With the restoration of democratic rule in 1999, the nation has seen an increase in the politics of godfatherism, which has slowed the consolidation of democracy while also undermining efficient state governance and restricting rather than broadening democratic representation. The study

further stated that godfatherism has taken its toll in the country's politics, causing disharmony, disunity, conflict, and disaffection among various political and interest groups in the country. The study therefore, concludes that political godfathers and godsons have denied the people the rights to vote for their preferred candidate as their leaders. The study however, recommends that voting should be reformed to make it more difficult for individuals and institutions to finance political parties and politicians, this will go a long way towards eradicating godfatherism in Nigeria, and give room for democracy to flourish.

Asogwa (2017) examined democracy and the politics of godfatherism in Nigeria with an emphasis on its effects and way forward, using primary and secondary data. The study argued that political godfatherism is one of the factors that have embedded democratic settings in Nigeria since the first republic. The study further explores the relationship between godfathers and godsons, with particular attention to who becomes the next strongman in the area of politics and who retains the' status quo. Finally, the study concludes that godfatherism is a major debacle to political stability in any given society because it involves the employment of all illegal means to achieve their political objectives during registration of voters and the conduct of both primaries and general elections in the state and at the centre.

Similarly, Ali, Bukar, and Babagana (2019) examined the determinants and impacts of politics of godson and regionalism in Yobe State using a qualitative research design that generated data from secondary sources where several related articles, newspapers, magazines, and books were consulted. In explaining the topic under study, the researcher

adopted the elite theory. The study found that the politics of godfatherism affect the political development of Yobe State by restricting power in the hands of the few in a specific geopolitical zone of the state. This has led to inter-party and intra-party defections, decamping, and conflicts among the party members. Therefore, the study recommends the adoption of a direct primary election for the chosen candidate at all levels of governance. INEC should also make a law that will discourage money politics and punish the culprits involved in such an illegal act. To minimise the politics of Godfatherism, there is a need for political awareness campaigns on the effects of political godson on the political development of the state.

Bello and Kehinde (2020) examined the effects of godfatherism on good governance and the provision of essential services in Lagos State using a quantitative method through survey research design. Twenty-four (24) online questionnaires were administered to respondents within the Alimosho local government area of Lagos State. For further analysis, two hypotheses were raised, and regression analysis was adopted. At the end of the statistical analysis, all the two hypotheses agreed with the alternative hypotheses, and the findings revealed that godfatherism occurs in Lagos State due to the high corruption rate, the centralised nature of Nigerian federalism, and the monetization of political offices. To address the problem above, the study recommends that the anti-corruption crusade of the government be vigorously intensified and the independence of the judiciary stabilized.

Using a qualitative research design where interviews were conducted with some selected informants from various categories involving politicians, party stakeholders, academicians,

and focus groups with some selected electorates, Sule, Sani, and Mat (2018) examined the role played by godfathers in sponsoring politicians during the 2015 General Elections, including the nature and dimension of the financing as well as its effects on the outcome of elections. The study discovered that godfatherism played a vital role in determining candidates for the major parties and that a new dimension of godfatherism emerged where politicians who controlled power now transformed into financiers of their elections, unlike before.

Despite the huge researches that has been done to find the nature and dynamics of the politics of godfatherism in Nigeria, however, there has been few studies that elucidate on the nature of primary elections in Benue State, and the impact of godfatherism in the good governance of Benue State and Nigeria in general.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The elite's theory was adopted for this work to examine the domineering relevance of godfatherism on Nigeria's newly emerging democracy. The theory proposes that power is shared among the elites at regular intervals and at the detriment of the electorate or the masses. As Pareto (1935:26) asserted, "political elites shield and disassociate themselves from society, attempting to reproduce themselves as much as possible from within. They do everything necessary within their control to ensure that non-elites do not enter their membership." The political elites keep a safe, functional distance from the rest of society. They replicate themselves on an individual and selective basis in a method, which Pareto explicitly referred to as the 'circulation of elites' (Pareto, 1935). The standards for such

elite recruitment are frequently parochial, and the procedure is typically carried out in a way that does not jeopardize the dominant elite class's conventional reputation. The ruling class, according to Pareto, also attempts to sabotage efforts at 'collective circulation of elites,' preferring instead to promote individual recruitment (Pareto, 1935).

Mosca (1939), on the other hand, disagrees with Pareto that elite recruiting can only be done on a personal level. He argues that one social class should replace another and that non-elite members can enter the elite class through a process known as "collective social mobility." This refers to the social, economic, and professional status that people achieve as a result of their efforts. Mosca (1939) also believes that a group of people known as the "sub-elite" already exists in many societies around the world. These individuals promote contact between the elite and the non-elite, making them potential vehicles for elite recruitment on a wide scale. Because of this argument, both sub-elite and non-elite Nigerians can be recruited into the political elite class. Elites, according to the elite theory, are players who govern the state and national wealth and hold key roles in power systems (Mosca, 1939). As a result, elite class understanding is more closely linked to "Weberian understanding of power, recognized as the ability to carry out one's will, even against the will of the wider population." In Nigeria, godfatherism acts as a conduit for such limited elite recruitment. Underdevelopment, abject hunger, extreme youth unemployment, low health opportunities, and misinterpretation of what politics can be are the consequences in Nigeria polity (Pareto, 1935).

The importance of the elite hypothesis to this study is founded on its potential to explain how politics of godfatherism facilitates the transformation of individuals into the political elite class. Liberalism, as we have seen in Nigeria, fosters extreme elitist democracy and a money-driven electioneering structure, putting the populace as 'onlookers,' and continues to deny Nigerians much-needed institutional, political and socioeconomic advancement. Central to elite theory is structures, especially authority structures. It is founded on the premise that elite behaviour has a causal impact on the state-society dynamic while insiders have more authority and power over the state than the people. Elite ideology, according to Mosca (1939), refers to the accumulation of authority in the hands of a few people that "performs all government roles, monopolizes power, and retains the benefits of power." As a result, public policy can be perceived as a reflection of political elites' values and preferences. The Nigerian polity exemplifies a state in which the wellbeing of the people is blatantly sacrificed to the needs of a few politicians and their cronies. The electorate is becoming increasingly poorer, while the greedy rich godfathers are becoming increasingly wealthy.

2.5 Application of the Elite Theory

In spite of the foregoing analysis of the weaknesses of the elite theory, it can be said to be applicable and relevant to political elite recruitment in Nigeria: The power elite is present in any society, no matter how small or large, old or new. For instance, the power elite has been identified with those occupying key positions in the economic, political, and military institutions of any country, as in the United States of America. In the case of Nigeria, the economic, political, and military powers are subsumed by the Hausa-Fulani aristocracy and

their collaborators from other ethnic groups. However, the power elite have remained dominant as the Hausa-Fulani aristocratic class, which exercises overriding power in Nigeria through political, economic, and military institutions.

However, they have collaborators from other ethnic groups. Also, with the aid of the elite theory, it is much easier and better to understand and appreciate the concept, structure, and exercise of power in Nigeria and such other concepts as oligarchy, power brokers, mafia, et cetera, and their meanings, particularly in the Nigerian context. Furthermore, the elite theory as a framework will help in illuminating and throwing more light on politics and other related concepts such as elite circulation, re-cycling of leaders, and regime elongation or longevity in Nigeria.

Through the elite theory, it becomes clear that those in power do not want to surrender power easily but to hold on to it tenaciously, whereas some are also out there struggling fiercely to gain or hijack power. More so, Elite theory is very relevant, particularly in the area of political elite recruitment in Nigeria. This is so because, as it will be seen later in this paper, the underlying assumptions of the theory shed more light on the process of political elite recruitment. In the preceding analysis, a comprehensive exposition has been made on the definition, assumptions, and weaknesses of political elite theory, as well as its strengths, application, and relevance to political elite recruitment in Nigeria. This, therefore, explains the reason why the history as well as the process of political elite recruitment in Nigeria has been one of a fierce struggle among politicians and political power seekers, usually characterised by godfatherism, militarism, thuggery, rigging,

ethnicity, corrupt practises, and delayed judgements from election tribunals. Apart from the foregoing assertion, an attempt is further made in this paper to clearly illustrate the political elite theory as a framework for analysis of political elite recruitment in Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research assessed the effects of Godfatherism on a credible electoral process in Benue State, 2018 and 2022. This chapter covers the research method, design, population, and sampling technique, as well as the instruments of data collection and analysis used in this research.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design; it adopted both qualitative and quantitative research methods. While qualitative research employs non-numerical data derived mostly from oral interviews, observations, written documents, etc., quantitative research employs numerical data derived from surveys, experiments, and other statistical methods. More so, whereas qualitative research seeks textual data that captures the context, such as words and images, quantitative research collects numbers with less emphasis on context. Qualitative research is used to understand how people experience the world. While there are many approaches to qualitative research, they tend to be flexible and focus on retaining rich meaning when interpreting data. Each of the research approaches involve using one or more data collection methods.

3.2 Sources of Data

There are different methods and techniques for data collection, analysis and presentation. Generally, surveys and interviews are the usual approaches to primary sources of data

collection. In addition, data from bulletins, published and unpublished works provide sources of secondary collection method. Both methods have been used in this research.

In this study, the methods adopted falls in line with the stated objectives thus:

- v. Examine the nation of PDP Primaries in Benue State in 2018 and 2022
- vi. Find out the rule played by godfathers in the PDP Primaries in 2018 and 2022
- vii. Examine the impact of politics of godfatherism within PDP in Benue State
- viii. Determine if incumbency is a factor in the PDP primary elections in Benue State.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

The field survey assessing the effects of godfatherism on credible primary elections in Benue State was undertaken. The primary data collections were based on administration of questionnaires using the interview method, which was made and the following data obtained.

- i. Socio-economic characteristics: The data included age and sex characteristics, educational attainment, and different categories of income.
- ii. The nature of PDP Primary conducted in Benue State in 2018 and 2022.
- iii. The role played by godfathers in the primaries.
- iv. The impact of the godfather roles in primaries before and after the primaries.

3.4 Study Population and Sampling Procedure

The study population of 628 was obtained in the three senatorial districts of Benue State.

Table 3.1 Study Population

S/N	VARIABLES	SIZE
1	PDP Contestants for Benue State House of Assembly Primary Elections in 2018 and 2022.	88
2	PDP Contestants in the House of Representatives for 2018 and 2022	51
3	PDP Contestants for Senate in 2018 and 2022	20
4	PDP Contestants for governorship for 2018 and 2022	10
5	PDP Party Delegates	459
	Total	628

Source: Author, 2023.

The multiple-stage sampling procedure was used for the questionnaire survey. The initial stage of sampling was to obtain the sampling local governments. (Two each for a senatorial list). The second phase was the identification and differentiation of the sample population from the target population, while the third stage was the determination of units (wards) within the sample local governments. For the administration of questionnaires, the random sampling techniques was used in all the stages separately. The identification of the wards within the sampled local councils was based on the calculation of the proportion of the total wards in those local councils.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC, 1999) for the purpose of political convenience for conducting elections in the delineated wards. This study find the ward

structure relevant for the survey and out of 276 wards, about 117 councils wards were sampled in the 3 senatorial districts of Benue State.

All the 276 wards were assigned random numbers and the selected 117 wards that are about 4% were drawn randomly without replacement. The wards were further assigned random numbers and the units within the wards where questionnaires were administered to different party contestants and delegates.

3.4.1 Sample Size and Distribution

The sample size was drawn using Taro Yamane's Formula for calculating sample size from a given population (N).

$$n =$$

Where: n = corrected sample size

$$N = 628$$

$$e = \text{Margin of Error (MoE)} = 0.05$$

$$\text{Therefore, } n = 628 / (1 + 628 (0.05)^2).$$

$$= 628 / (1 + (628 \times 0.0025))$$

$$= 628 / (1 + 1.5)$$

$$= 244$$

This gave a total sampling size of 244.

The spatial patterns of the randomly selected wards indicated that four wards or 1.4% each were randomly selected for Kwande, Vandeikya, Ukum, Gboko, Otukpo, and Buruku. Three or 1% accounts for Makurdi and Apa while two or 0.7% for Ohimini.

The contestants and party delegates constitute the sampling units. To determine the sampling frame, the study adopted random sampling technique.

Table 3.2 The Structure of Sampled wards in Benue State

S/N	Local Councils	Wards	Sample wards	% Sample
1	Kwande	15	4	13.8
2	Vandeikya	12	3	10.3
3	Ukum	13	3	10.3
} Zone A				
4	Gboko	17	4	13.8
5	Makurdi	11	4	13.8
6	Buruku	13	3	10.3
} Zone B				
7	Otukupo	13	4	13.8
8	Apa	11	2	6.9
9	Ohimini	12	2	6.9
} Zone C				
		117	29 (24.8)	99.9

Source: Author, 2023.

Two hundred and forty-four questionnaires were distributed and each of the selected wards was assigned 9 questionnaires each. The large volume of the questionnaires was to make sure that the large number of contestants, and delegates earmarked for interview and the greater segment of PDP stakeholders have an equal opportunity of being interviewed.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics was employed in analyzing the data. The descriptive analysis was to classify tabulate and summarize the data using appropriate proportions. In the process, the measure of central tendency was used for data treatment to produce means. Further to the descriptive analysis, the tabulated and summarized data were transformed into percentages, proportions and other measurable units. The computer-based statistical analysis, statistically packages for social sciences (SPSS 23.0) was used.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presented the data, analysis, and discussion of the findings of the study. The study employed mixed-methods research, and data were collected using oral interviews and survey questionnaires. The results of the findings are presented according to the objectives of the study.

4.1 Data Presentation

4.1.1 Response Rate

Table 4.1 presents the analysis of the response rate of the respondents. The result shows that not all the questionnaires administered were completely returned. Of the 244 questionnaires administered, 234 (96%) of the respondents completed and returned the questionnaires, while 10 (4%) of the respondents did not. This response rate is adequate and satisfactory because the return rate surpassed the 50% threshold.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Rates	Frequency	Percent (%)
Response	234	96
Non-Response	10	4
Total	234	100

Source: Fieldwork, April 2023.

4.2 Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents considered here are sex, age, income and level of education attainment.

4.2.1 Sex Distribution

This section provided the sex distribution of the respondents. Figure 4.2 shows the number and percentage of male and female respondents surveyed for the quantitative aspect of the study.

Table 4.2: Sex Distribution of the Respondents

Responses	Frequency	Percentages Distribution
Male	136	58
Female	98	42
Total	234	100

Source: Fieldwork, April 2023.

The distribution of the respondents based on sex, reveals that male respondents constituted 136 or (58%) of the respondents, while the female account for 98 (42%) of the respondents. This indicates that the majority of the respondents in the study are male. This is so because the majority of the respondents who contested for political positions and delegates were male.

The implication of this analysis is that gender sensitivity plays a great role in political participation in Benue State.

4.2.2 Age Distribution

Table 4.3 shows the age distribution of respondents in the study area.

Age Distribution	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 44	100	47
45 – 54	80	34
55 – 64	36	15
65 and above	8	3
Total	234	100

Source: Author, 2023.

The table shows that 47% account for the age range of 18 to 44 years, 34% constitute the age range of 45 to 54. On the other hand, 15% account for the age range of 55 to 64 years, while 65 and above constitute the least percentage of 3. The implication of age distribution analysis indicates that the youth dominates the political process in Benue State and are the determinant factor in nominating candidates of choice if the system allows them.

4.2.3 Level of Education

Table 4.4: Educational Distribution of the Respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
PhD	5	2
Masters	20	9
First Degree	39	17
Diploma	55	24
School Sat	90	36
Non-formal education	25	11
Total	234	100

Source: Fieldwork, April 2023.

The level of education of the respondents for the study is captured in Table 4.4. The table shows that 5 (2%) of the respondents are PHD holders, 20 (9%) of the respondents Master holders, 39 (17%) of the respondents of the respondents had a first degree; 55 (24%) were Diploma holders; 90 (36%) were school sat; and 25 (11%) of the respondents does not have formal education. The implication of educational attainment shows that 89% of the respondents are educated according to the UNDP Report. This findings demonstrate that high percentage of the respondents are informed and cannot be easily manipulated against their aspirations however, economic influence expose them to be vulnerable.

4.2.4 Income Distribution

Table 4.5 shows the income distribution of the respondents in the study area. The different income brackets from all income sources have been computed and analyzed to determine the various sub-groups and also act as a principal factor for the determination of who have and who have not. Though there are obvious limitations in assessing people's income from surveys of this nature, this is in view of the high risk of lack of reliability of information given.

Table 4.5 Monthly income of respondents from all sources

S/N	Income Bracket	Average Income	Frequency Distribution	% Distribution
1	₦1000 - ₦5000	₦4,000	80	34.2
2	₦5001 - ₦10000	₦7,500	50	21.4
3	₦10001 - ₦20000	₦15,000.5	37	15.8
4	₦20001 - ₦30000	₦15,000.5	30	12.8
5	₦30001 - ₦40000	₦35,000.5	27	11.5
6	Greater than ₦40000	₦40,000	10	4.3
	Total		234	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The analysis in 4.5 shows that the proportion of respondents who earn less than ₦5,000 per month constitute 34.2%, in the category of income bracket between ₦5,000 – ₦10,000 account for 21.4%. Furthermore, the income category of greater than ₦40,000 constitute the least proportion of 4.3%.

Comparatively the pattern income characteristics have shown that the proportion of respondents who earn between ₦1,000 – ₦5,000 or an average of ₦4,000 per month constitute 34.2% or 80 of the sampled respondents, while those whose income per month is between ₦5,000 – ₦10,000 per month or an average of ₦7,500 account for 21.4% or 50 of the sampled respondents. Furthermore, respondents on an average income of ₦15,000.05, ₦25,000.5 and ₦35,000.05 constitute 15.8, 12.08 and 11.05 percent respectively. On the other hand, those on the average income of 40,000 and above accounts for the least proportion of 4.3% or 10 of the sampled respondents.

This analysis tends to suggest that, the intensity of poverty is more pronounced among the respondents. The implication of the income analysis is that, with the intensity of poverty particularly among the political participants makes them not only vulnerable but readily available to godfathers to manipulate, and also buy their votes during the elections. Poverty weakens peoples' capacity to bargain for political and legal rights, voiceless and defenseless.

4.3 Emergence of Party Delegates for Primary Elections in Benue State in 2018 and 2022

This section discusses how party delegates are emerged for primary elections within the PDP in Benue State. This is shown in table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Emergence of PDP party delegates for Primary Elections in Benue State in 2018 and 2022.

Variables	Number of Respondents	Percentage Distribution
Elected by the party card-carrying members	37	15.8
Hand-picked by the party executives	30	12.8
Consensus among party members	27	11.5
Nominated by the delegates	10	4.3
Handpicked by the Governor	130	55.6
Total	234	100

Source: Fieldwork, April 2023.

Table 4.6 indicates that, 15.8% or 37 of the sampled respondents agreed that the emergence of the delegates for PDP primary elections were democratically elected by the card-carrying members of the party. 12.8% or 30 of the sampled respondents said they were hand-picked by the party executives. 27 of the sampled respondents representing 11.5% claimed they emergence as a delegates were through consensus among members, while 130% representing 130 of the sampled respondents agreed that the delegates were hand-picked by the governor.

The analysis of table 4.6 has shown that from 2018 and 2022, there is no doubt that PDP in Benue state lack internal democracy as a result of quest for power among powerful elite, godfathers and money bags. This is a simple reason that, card carrying members were not

given chance to select the candidates of their choice. A political party can legitimize its activities by practicing democratic principles. If to say that, a political ward was asked to submit names of three delegates for the party primaries and consensus in used for their emergence, there must be a contestation among at least nine consensus candidates representing their various polling units. This should be more democratic than imposing candidates or persuading others to decline for some body because democracy is a game of numbers.

4.4 The nature of PDP Primaries conducted in Benue State in 2018 and 2022.

How PDP candidates were selected in 2018 and 2022 at their party primaries is shown in table 4.7.

Table 4.7 the nature of PDP primaries in 2018 and 2022

Variables	Number of Respondents	% Distribution
Elected by the party card-carrying members/delegates	37	15.8
Hand-picked by party Executives	30	12.8
Consensus among party members	167	71.4
Total	234	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

Table 4.7 shows that 15.8% or 37 of the sampled respondents agreed that in 2018 and 2022, primary elections of the PDP in Benue State were selected by PDP card-carrying members who were delegates, while 12.8% of 30 of the sampled respondents said that candidates of the PDP in the state were emerged through hand-picking by party executives. On the other hand, 71.4% or 167 of the sampled respondents claimed that PDP candidates in the 2018 and 2022 in the state were emerged through consensus among party members with the influence of godfathers who preferred their godsons to emerge rather than the preferred choice of the masses.

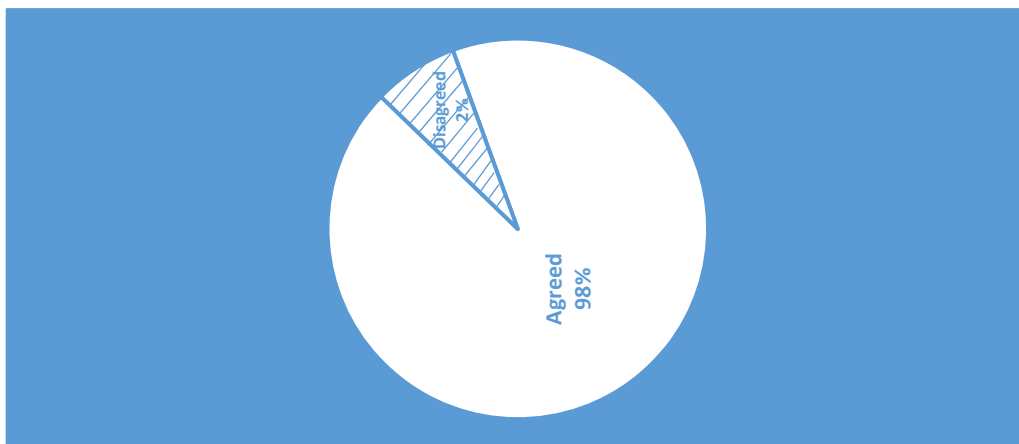
In 2022 for instance, the politics of godfatherism was visibly observed in the PDP primaries in the state. Like the gubernatorial primaries for example, only adhoc delegates from each ward were nominated and 5 statutory delegates from local government (party Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Youth Leader and Women Leader). All elected officers (from LG Chairman – President) who are indigenes of the state were automatic delegates. In the contest, Hon. Terwase Orbunde, Chile Igbawua, Dr. Paul Orhii, Prof. Tyavyar and the host of others contested, through the last three contestants withdrew to pave way for the anointed godson of Samuel Ortom – Titus Uba; Titus Uba was at the end declared the winner with almost 98% of the total votes cast as against Prof. Tyavyar who scored only 3 votes. However, the godson was badly defeated at the end of the general elections.

This indicates that the then governor influenced the nomination of Titus Uba without the wish of the majority of the party faithful. But the question need to be asked, why has these

events keep on repeating itself? Why must party caucus force aspirants to decline for incumbent governor? This may be due to the fact that there is every hope that due to the influence of incumbent, the godson would be able to defeat the opposition party during the election, but the reversed is the case in Benue State as Rev. Dr. Hyacinth Alia of the APC defeated the governor's godson with a landslide victory. The imposition of Titus Uba made some of the aspirants in the PDP to decamp to the opposition party immediately after the primary elections. The same scenario repeated in Houses of Assembly, House of Representatives and the Senate.

4.5 Negative Impact of Godfatherism in the PDP primaries in Benue State in 2018 and 2022.

The negative impact of godfatherism in the politics of PDP primaries in Benue State is shown in figure 4.1.



Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Figure 4.1 Negative Impact of Godfatherism.

Figure 4.1 reveals that out of 234 respondents, 230 representing 98% of the total respondents agreed that, godfatherism has a negative effect on the primary elections and subsequent administration of PDP in Benue State, while 4, representing 2% of the total sampled respondents did not agree that godfatherism has a negative effect on the primary elections and subsequent administration of PDP in Benue State.

Some respondents argued that Political godfatherism in Benue State actually commenced in 1999. Prior to the emergence of George Akume as the governor under the People Democratic Party (PDP), there was a contest for who would become the Governor of Benue between Mike Mku and George Akume. While Mike Mku had Barnabas Gemade, as his Godfather and sponsor, while George Akume had Dr. Iyorchia Ayu, as his Godfather and sponsor. The keenly contested primary election nomination exercise saw George Akume emerge as the nominated candidate of the PDP and consequently the winner of the 1999 election. Hence, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu looked at himself as the one who was instrumental in Akume's emergence as the Governor of Benue State and hence the Godfather of Governor Akume. Consequently, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu hovered over the governor and governance and controlled the State for a reasonably long period.

Also, in his humility and appreciation of the role Ayu played, accepted the position of godson. Thus began the intertwined complexities of the relationship between godfather and godson. Ayu assumed the role of the remote-control governor of the state. The decisions on the positions of a Councillor to the Commissioner, through the chairman of Local governments, etc., were taken in Ayu's Gboko house by Ayu himself. After Akume's eight-

year tenure as governor of Benue State, he wielded enough political power and influence to have considerable control over both the political structure and the government of not just the PDP but also the government of Benue State. After the expiration of his two terms in office, a contest for another chief executive emerged.

In the PDP, 19 individuals registered for the contest to be nominated for the PDP primary election exercise. George Akume, the sitting governor, then had his anointed candidate, his Godson, Dr. Gabriel Torwua Suswam, from the Sankera political axis. Dr. Akume at the PDP gubernatorial primaries reciprocated by giving Suswam total support to emerge as the PDP governorship candidate for the 2007 Benue State Governorship election. Because of the keenly contested primary elections in 2006 that saw the emergence of Suswam, the Godfather of Suswam urged Prince Ogri Ajene, Akume's deputy, and Ralph Igbago, former deputy speaker, to donate their votes to Suswam after the stalemate in the primaries. Akume was able to convince other gubernatorial aspirants to drop their much-cherished political ambitions. He presented the young Gabriel Suswam as a capable young man with the ability to deliver. George Akume was able to subdue the aggrieved anger of politicians who were older than him, both in age and even in politics. This was rather a mysterious political game all together. Because of Akume's influence, the politicians who failed or were rigged out did not decamp to other political organisations to pose an imminent political danger to the victory of the PDP, as was the political tradition in the PDP. This was another mystery. Hence, almost all the other candidates that failed were all united under one umbrella as a united political unit, which ensured Suswam's victory.

As a consequence, Gabriel Torwua Suswam went on to win the nomination exercise of both the PDP and the position of governor of Benue State in 2007. George Akume, by the implications of the political play, made Suswam the governor of Benue State and consequently his political godfather. Of course, it is worth noting that governor Suswam travelled to government house Makurdi after he confessed and conferred on Akume the status of his political godfather.

In the buildup to the 2015 election, at the end of Suswam's second term, a number of PDP politicians, including Samuel Ortom, Hon. Terhemem Tarzoor, and a host of others, clamoured to succeed him. Governor Suswam, acting as Godfather, anointed Hon. Terhemem Tarzoor as his successor. This would see Samuel Ortom move from the PDP to the APC. Unfortunately for the incumbent governor and the ruling party, Ortom of the APC, an opposition party in the state, with George Akume again as the leader of the APC in the state, won the election and was sworn in as the 5th democratically elected governor of Benue State on May 29, 2015.

This shows that the influence and power of godfathers have continued to shape and reshape the nature of internal democracy in PDP of Benue State and this continues to play a significant role in understanding the crisis in political parties in Nigeria in general and Benue State in particular. Not only so godfathers influence politics within the party but also sought to influence other civil societies that could become instruments in their bid to perpetuate their political powers.

Focused group discussions has revealed that the activities associated with godfatherism in Benue State have brought ad resulted into a wide range variety of problems. According to them, these include:

- i. Godfatherism is the collaborating relationship and tendencies of both the godfather and the godson in looting and siphoning resources met for the development of the state into their private pockets.
- ii. Godfatherism has led to placing people in various governmental positions whom themselves do not have the required leadership qualities to bring about good governance and development, and as a result, the godfather sits at home dictating the pace of development and influencing decisions of government on who gets what, when and how.
- iii. Another major problem of godfatherism is the attitude of developing self and his immediate family members, neglecting the electorates, communities and the nation. In most cases, the electorates are coerced to work and make sacrifices towards achieving the ultimate interest of the godfather.
- iv. Many of our unemployed youths are being lured through the activities of godfatherism into committing acts of political violence and thugery through promises of employment or other forms of illegal government patronage that never come to reality at the end.
- v. Godfatherism in all ramifications over the years has resulted in the disenfranchisement of eligible voters through the use of thugs. It has always been instrumental in the final determination of most of our public policies, thereby challenging our idea of “one citizen”, one vote”.

- vi. Godfatherism has virtually succeeded in denying Nigerian citizens the opportunity to shape the decisions that affect them. It has totally fractured our nascent democratic ideas and principles, and the ordinary voters with their ballots to give rather than money are rendered powerless.
- vii. Godfatherism in Nigerian politics and administration determines in all elections who competes, who wins, who get nominated to positions or who gets appointments. Godfatherism has also resulted in the turning around of our national priorities to favour their own personal interest and thereby making the National Assembly less representative and less responsive to the yearnings of the citizens.
- viii. Nigeria today has the worst unemployment problem, deplorable roads, and transportation problem, miserable infrastructures, medical services, educational system and standards, epileptic power outage, the living standard of the average Nigerian does not reflect the oil wealth of the nation. All these are as a result of the activities of godfathers who collaborate with their godsons to siphoned resources met for the overall infrastructural development of the country.

4.6 Dominance of Godfatherism in PDP Primary Elections in Benue State in 2018 and 2022

The issue of godfatherism influence and dominance in PDP primary elections in Benue State is discussed in table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Godfatherism impact and the PDP primaries in Benue State

Options	Number of Respondents	% Distributions
Yes	200	85
No	30	13
No Response	4	2
Total	234	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The table indicates that 85% or 200 of the sampled respondents agreed that political elites within PDP in Benue State decided and dominate decisions regarding its primary elections from 2018 and 2022. 13% or 30 of the sampled respondents did not agree, while 2% or 4 of the sampled respondents did not respond to the question.

Focused group discussions with the stakeholders revealed that PDP primary elections in Benue State have been characterized by flawed processes, irregularities, manipulation, and imposition of candidates, due to the powerful influence of political elite and the exclusion of rank-and-file members in the selection processes, to the extent that – aggrieved card members have in t 2014, 2018, and 2022 asked the court to restrict the party from submitting candidate’s names to INEC for the General Elections.

4.7 The Effects of Godfatherism in the PDP Primaries in Benue State

The effect of godfatherism in the body politics of Benue state especially in the PDP primary elections in 2018 and 2022 has a serious effect on the governance of the state. Respondents

were surveyed on the effects of Godfatherism on certain options. Table 4.9 demonstrates the options.

Table 4.9: The Effects of Godfatherism

Options	Number of Respondents	% Distribution
Lopsided political appointments, inefficient employees, and nepotism in the award of contracts	75	32
Bad Government	70	30
Policy Reversal	30	12.8
Lack of essential services	59	25.2
Total	234	100

Source: Field Work, April 2023

Table 4.9 has shown that 32% or 75 of the sampled respondents said that Godfather leads to lopsided political appointments, inefficient employees, and nepotism in the award of contracts, while 30% or 70 of the sampled respondents were of the view that godfatherism influence leads to bad governance. It is interesting to note that 12.8% or 30 of the sampled respondents claimed of policy reversal, and, 25.2% or 59 of the sampled respondents hinged on lack of essential services.

Focused group discussions with 12 respondents reveal that political Godfathers dictates for their Godsons once in office what is to be done throughout the State. This is in terms of political development, the award of contracts, and political appointments, as was the case between George Akume and Suswam and between George Akume and Samuel Ortom. This has led Party members to complain bitterly over the issue, but there was nothing they could do, which is why, in their view, many active members of the party, even among the founding members, cross-carpeted in 2018, and 2022 (Interview, April 2023). Also, this led many PDP members to work against the Party in the 2018 and 2022 Benue State elections. This shows that the influence and power of godfathers have continued to shape and reshape the nature of internal democracy in the PDP of Benue State, and this continues to play a significant role in understanding the crises in political parties in Nigeria. Not only do godfathers influence politics within the party, but they also seek to influence other civil societies that could become instruments in their bid to perpetuate their political powers.

4.8 The impact of Incumbency factor on PDP primaries in Benue State in 2018 and 2022

Table 4.10 shows whether the incumbency factor has a negative effect on PDP primary elections in Benue State.

Table 4.10 Negative effect of incumbency factor in PDP primaries in Benue State

Options	Number of Respondents	% Distribution
Yes	185	79.0
No	49	21.0
Total	234	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2023.

Table 4.10 has shown that 79% or 185 of the sampled respondents agreed that incumbency factor has negative effect on the PDP primary elections especially the governorship primaries in Benue state from 2018 and 2022, while 21% or 49 of the sampled respondents had a contrary view.

Respondents observed that when Samuel Ortom fallout with his godfather George Akume, he defected. In 2022 when governor Ortom's tenure expired, he successfully planned and manipulated all political structures within PDP and strategized to install Titus Uba the then Speaker, Benue State House of Assembly to succeed him as godson but unfortunately could not win at the general elections as the popularity of Rev. Dr. Hyacinth Alia consumed him.

In 2022, party caucus denied many competent candidates tickets to contest against Titus Uba. Some candidates were bribed while others alternatively decamped to the opposition parties.

PDP elections were not freely held in many local government areas of Benue State especially that of members of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Zones A, B and C Senatorial Districts were all nominated unopposed with the influence of the governor. In fact, other members were denied to purchase forms simply because they were not governor's candidates. This according to many was one of the reasons PDP failed in Benue State in 2023 general elections.

4.9 Curbing the politics of Godfatherism in Benue State

This section discussed the views of respondents regarding measures to be adopted to curb the politics of godfatherism in the state. This is shown in table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Curbing the politics of Godfatherism in Benue State

Options	Number of Respondents	% Distribution
Adoption direct primary election	100	42
Curbing Misuse of the power of Incumbency	50	21
Strengthening Democracy	50	21
Increasing Voters Education	34	16
Total	234	100

Source: Fieldwork, April 2023

Table 4.11 shows that 42% or 100 of the sampled respondents said that the problems of political godfatherism can be solved through adoption of direct primary election, while 21% or 50 of the sampled respondents were of the opinion that the politics of godfatherism can be addressed by curbing misuse of the power of incumbency. Similarly, 21% or 50 of the sampled respondents were of the view that the democratic process should be consolidated and strengthened to nip in the bud the ugly incidence of political godfatherism that is making the country dry and 16% or 34 of the sampled respondents believe that increasing voters education can help in addressing the problem of Godfatherism in Benue State.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research assessed the effects of Godfatherism on credible electoral process in Benue State, 2018 and 2022. Elections is a necessary condition for democracy because it gives citizens of any country the opportunity to freely and periodically choose their leaders devoid of coercion or intimidation. Hence, a democratic election is one that is credible – that is, open, free and fair—and not based on patronage and impositions by Godfathers.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The findings of this study herein falls in line with the stated objectives:

- i. The study uncovered that the emergence of party delegates were hand-picked by the influence of the state governor. 55.6% of the respondents agreed that the role of godfathers in the emergence of delegates and party candidates in the PDP primary elections conducted in 2018 and 2022 were visibly observed and perhaps very frightened to democracy.
- ii. The study also uncovered that godfatherism has played a great role in determining who gets what without the wishes of the electorates. The role of dominance is seen in all the PDP primary elections conducted in 2018 and 2022. 85% of the respondents were of the opinion that the role of godfatherism in the politics of Benue State cannot be overemphasized.
- iii. The outcome of the study showed that the effect of godfatherism has impacted negatively to the political and governance of Benue State. The group discussions revealed that the unholy alliance of godfathers and godsons has brought an untold

- hardship to the totality of Benue populace, political violence, decisions made by government to meet the interest of the godfathers only, and the inability to deliver quality leadership and good governance.
- iv. The study finally showed that 32% and 30% of the respondents agreed respectively that the resultant effect of godfatherism in Benue State is lopsided political appointment, inefficient employees and nepotism in the award of contracts and bad governance.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion therefore, one can deduce that, there is hardly any state, including Benue state devoid of the existence and influence of godfathers, though the level of such influence varies, In America, the political candidate wiggles around, seeking group and individual endorsements for their candidacy. Also, in other advanced societies, group influence and endorsement could be more valuable than a powerful individual. Not only that, politics of godfatherism is a threat to the Benue's nascent democracy. This makes it imperative in this study to explore the ugly phenomenon of godfatherism and its effect on democratization in Benue state and Nigeria at large.

5.3 Recommendations

In line with the objectives of this study, the following recommendations are suggested in order to curb the menace of godfatherism in the conduct of credible electoral process in Benue State and Nigeria at large:

1. A legislation is needed to aid the setting up of a regulatory body, which will be in charge of administration and enforcement of reforms in terms of participatory

democracy, against godfatherism and private money contributions to elections in Benue State.

2. Political Parties should be made to perform their functions of: (1) political recruitment, (2) interest articulation; (3) interest aggregation; (4) political socialization, and (5) political education of Nigerians in general and Benue state in particular in order to create room for democratic consolidation.
3. The social, economic, social-structural position of the populace, financial dependency or limited financial means should be urgently addressed in order to create a smooth sail for the populace to effectively participate in electioneering process without influence.
4. Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), which are presently instruments of selective justice, should be strengthened legislatively to totally eradicate and prosecute individuals indulging in corrupt practices who through these various corrupt practices enrich themselves, thereby assuming the position of godfathers, because they will now have the resources to do and un-do

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Appendix

SECTION A

Research Questionnaire:

My name is Alexander Oscar Apesough, an MEPP student with National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies/University of Benin (NILDS/UNIBEN) researching on the effects of godfatherism on credible PDP primary elections in Benue State from 2018 and 2022. The information given herein would be treated for academic purposes only.

Instructions:

Please fill in the gap and tick accordingly.

Socio-economic characteristics.

1. Age _____ Sex _____

2. Educational attainment.

- (i) No Education
- (ii) Primary Education
- (iii) Secondary Education
- (iv) Tertiary Education

3. Monthly income

- (i) ₦1,000 – ₦5,000
- (ii) ₦5,001 – ₦10,000
- (iii) ₦10,001 – ₦20,000
- (iv) ₦20,001 – ₦30,000
- (v) ₦30,001 – ₦40,000
- (vi) Greater than ₦40,000

SECTION B

Conduct of Primary Election

4. Are you a delegate? YES or NO If Yes, how did you emerge?
- (i) Elected by the party card-carrying members
 - (ii) Hand-picked by the party executives
 - (iii) Consensus among party members
 - (iv) Nominated by the delegates
 - (v) Hand-picked by the
5. Are you a contestant? YES or NO
6. How was the primary conducted?
- (i) Elected by the party card-carrying members/delegates
 - (ii) Hand-picked by party executives
 - (iii) Consensus among party members
7. Did politics of godfatherism has any negative impact on the politics of Benue State?
YES or NO
8. Did godfatherism has effect on the PDP primaries in Benue State? YES or NO
9. If yes what is the effect?
- (i) Lopsided political appointments
 - (ii) Inefficient employees and nepotism in the award of contracts
 - (iii) Bad Governance
 - (iv) Policy Reversal
 - (v) Lack of essential services

10. Does incumbency factor in PDP has negative effects on the PDP primaries in Benue State?

YES or NO

11. Suggest ways through which the politics of godfatherism could be curbed in Benue State.

- (i) Adoption of direct primary elections
- (ii) Curbing misuse of the power of incumbency
- (iii) Strengthening democracy
- (iv) Increasing voters' education.