

**GODFATHERISM AND POLITICAL CONFLICT IN NIGERIA AND OPINION  
SURVEY OF VOTERS IN OREDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EDO STATE**

**BY**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this work was carried out and compiled by Enoma Loveth with Matriculation Number **SSC2003970** of the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to God Almighty my creator, who has shown me mercy and favour and to my beloved parant for their love and support.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I give God Almighty All the Glory for everything he has done still sing and will continue to do in my life. I thanks him for the gift of life, good health joy guidance, direction, courage, hope, faith, protections and love over my life all through this years. I cannot thank you enough BABA GOD, AGAIN FOR EVERY THING YOU HAVE DONE FOR ME ALL THIS YEARS.

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## ABSTRACT

Godfatherism has emerged as a dominant feature of Nigerian politics, with significant implications for political conflict and governance at the state level. This study examines the role of godfatherism in the persistent political conflicts that have plagued Edo State in recent years.

The research explores how powerful political godfathers, who often wield significant influence over political parties and electoral processes, contribute to the breakdown of democratic norms and institutions in the state. It analyzes how the struggle for political power between godfathers and their political "godsons" leads to electoral malpractices, violence, and the undermining of the will of the electorate. Drawing on primary data from interviews with key stakeholders, as well as secondary sources, the research provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics of godfatherism and its implications for political conflict in the state.

The problems were observed and it shows that there is high degree of political apathyism among the Nigerian people who felt that their vote does not count. Even those with political interest now conclude that it is who the Godfather wants that actually gets into office. This has gradually affected political participation. The findings of this study contribute to the broader understanding of the challenges of democratization in Nigeria and offer recommendations for addressing the corrosive effects of godfatherism on the political process. From the study, it is recommended that the evils of Godfatherism need to be greatly tackled by all and sundry, particularly the government and civil society in order to ensure adequate political participation by Nigerians.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

In recent years, the phenomenon of godfatherism has gained prominence in Nigerian politics, particularly in the context of political conflicts and power dynamics. Godfatherism refers to the influence exerted by powerful political figures often referred to as godfathers over the political landscape, including the election of candidates and the governance of local and state affairs.

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

However, from the above brief overview of the concept of politics, some key factors include the values of resources available to be shared amongst members which is scarce and cannot sufficiently satisfy the needs of every member of the group. This is why there is need for an authority which will decide on the allocation of these scarce resources supposedly in

accordance with priority of importance. Another factor to be printed out is that since the decision of 'what' anyone would get from the system resides at the points of who makes up the thirty of allocatio, there is therefore clashes and disagreements at these decisions points. If the two above factors are aggregated, it would become clear that the political process is one that can be figuratively termed, WAR. And if all these conflicts cannot be amicably resolved by way of resolutions, then the system is at a point of crisis.

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

In the Nigeria fourth republic dispensation (1999 till date) in question, Anenih-Igbinedion, the Sariki-Lawal faceoff, Nwobodo-Nnamani quagmire, Adebibu-Ladoja crisis, Uba-Ngige sage and all other godfather-protege crisis in Nigeria do not only portend great danger to our democratic experiment, but also on the very essence and validity of our existence as a nation. The billions of naira expended by Nigerian godfathers for bankrolling

the elections of their godsons, have totally monetized elections in Nigeria, which automatically disqualifies men of honour, character and integrity from holding elected public positions. Without doubt, the phenomenon has assumed this bizarre form since the enthronement of Nigeria's civil rule on May 29, 1999. It started with the acrimony that existed between Chief Anthony Anenih (godfather) and Lucky Igbinedion (protege), the governor of Edo State between May 1999, to May 2003. Chief A. Anenih was purported to have endorsed the candidate of Lucky Igbinedion against other contenders as the governor of the state and also bankrolled his campaign expenses. But Lucky Igbinedion failed to reciprocate the gesture of Anenih by not giving him adequate government patronage and by acting in ways as loyal 'godson'. The episode unfolded itself between Dr. Jim Nwobodo (godfather) and Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani (protege), of Enugu State. Though the godson eventually subdued the godfather after a fierce struggle for the soul of the state. (Essence Library, Godfatherism in Nigeria politics, 2004, p. 64)

However, during the second term of President Olusegun Obasanjo, the phenomenon of godfatherism becomes more alarming and dangerous to the survival of Nigeria's fledgling democracy. In Oyo State, South-west Nigeria, Adebiju (godfather) and Ladoja (protege) battle for the soul of Oyo, has affected governance in the State and has reenacted political violence which it was famous for. At the long run, Ladoja won the State gubernatorial election defeating the incumbent governor, Alhaji Lam Adeshina of the Alliance for Democracy (AD). He was eventually sworn in on 29th May, 2003. When Adebiju decided to nominate 80 percent of the new commissioners and special advisers, Ladoja decided to act fast. He tricked

Adebidu to go on a much-needed rest abroad and he made sure the speaker Moroof Olawale Atilola-led House of Assembly immediately approved his list of commissioners that was the end of the pact between between Adedibu and ladoja. The animosity between Adedibu and Ladoja was put into display during the electioneering campaign for the march 27, 2004 Local Government Elections. Ladoja was left to his devices until he was consumed through "impeachment" by the tiger he mounted in 2003. (celetine okafor, The Ladoja impeachment, January 14, 2006).

Another important episode that unfolded was that of Chris Una (godfather) and Chris Ngige (protege) of Anambra State. After the Oath-taking at the okija shrine by the godson, he refused to play ball as arranged. Looking, blood letting, gubernatorial abduction and judicial ambushes has become common place activities in Anambra State. Until the 16th March, 2006, the Godson (Ngige) was finally removed from office. (Essence Library Godfatherism in Nigeria politics, 2004, p. 65).

The political relationship between Adams Oshiomhole, the former Governor of Edo State, and his successor, Godwin Obaseki, is a compelling case study of godfatherism in Nigeria. This relationship illustrates the complexities of political loyalty, power dynamics, and the eventual fallout between a godfather and his protégé. Adams Oshiomhole served as the Governor of Edo State from 2008 to 2016. In 2016, Oshiomhole (godfather) endorsed Godwin Obaseki (godson) who had been his economic adviser and a key player in his administration, as his successor. Godwin Obaseki emerged as the APC candidate for the 2016 governorship

election, buoyed by Oshiomhole's support. As Obaseki settled into his role, tensions began to surface. Obaseki increasingly sought to assert his independence as governor, which clashed with Oshiomhole's expectations of loyalty and adherence to his political agenda. This desire for autonomy became a point of contention. The conflict reached a boiling point during the lead-up to the 2020 governorship election. Oshiomhole attempted to leverage his influence to ensure that the APC would nominate a candidate who would challenge Obaseki, leading to a highly divisive primary election. In response to being denied the APC ticket, Obaseki defected to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), marking a significant turn in his political journey. This move was emblematic of the breakdown of loyalty typically associated with godfatherism, as Obaseki sought to distance himself from Oshiomhole's influence.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Haven looked at the forms of manifestation of the concept, it is proper that we attempt to state the problems that created a sustaining environment for these crisis to blow and thrive.

The first problem could be spotted from the analysis of the above listed political conflict saga, and this include widespread corruption which has a partner in unpatriotism. Quite consistently, Nigeria has been considered to be among the first five most corrupt countries fueled by greed for the concept of patriotism, that has resulted in the average Nigeria seeing governance and government as a vehicle for exploitation and self aggrandizement. So while the people crave for a leadership of lift maintain mercantilism as their watchword and do

everything in the hope of monetary gains and kickback. Anambra, Oyo, Enugu, Edo, etc. are still a classic example of this situation.

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

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

### **1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

1. To attempt a disclosure of Godfatherism and effects of political conflicts by examining the various identifiable causes and effects of Edo State conflict in Nigeria fourth republic.
2. To firmly establish the fact that political conflicts had become Nigeria's consistent bedfellow, with a vivid examination of Edo state Government crisis.

3.To evaluate the impact of godfatherism on voter behavior and electoral outcomes in the region.

4.To profer a panacea to the identified causes of these political conflicts in order to prevent a continuance of its sporadic frequency in Nigeria.

#### **1.4 RESARCH QUESTION**

1.What is the nature of godfatherism in Edo State politics,particularly in Oredo local government area?

2.How do voters perceive the influence of godfatherism on electoral outcomes?

3.What are the implications of godfatherism for political conflicts and stability in the region?

4.How can the democratic process be strengthened in the face of godfatherism?

#### **1.5 HYPOTHESIS**

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

1.The more monetized the political system is,the more the strength of the godfather.

2.The more prominent the activities of the godfathers,the higher the possibility of political instability.

3.The more elected officers depend on godfathers,the more impoverished the masses would be.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

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

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

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

## **1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

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

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

## **1.8 METHODOLOGY**

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

## 1.8 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

**1. Godfatherism:** Godfatherism is a male godparent, a sponsor, one who pays the bill. It refers to the influence exerted by powerful political figures over political landscape.

**2. Politics:** The struggle for power which itself is the authority to determine or formulate and execute decisions and policies, which must be accepted by the society. It is the struggle for power of governance, especially executive authority.

**3. Elites:** These are limited number of people who believed that they possessed the qualities necessary for accession to full social and political powers.

**4. Crisis:** Means an unstable situation, a sudden attack of pain or stress. Violent struggle between two parties over an idea or possession.

**5. Conflict:** Means the disagreement in ideas or over a thing between groups of persons or one person and another

**6. Bargaining:** Means the presentation of proposals and counter -proposals by two disagreeing parties, with the hope of attaining an agreement or an equilibrium.

**7. Godson:** Godson is a male godchild who is put under the supervision of his godfather.

**8. Saga:** Long story of brave deeds

**9.Clog:** a small figure of a person that can be made to move or a group or person whose actions are controlled by another.

**10.Elastic:** This is something that can be altered,not fixed

**11.Chameleonic:** A person who changes his or her behavior, opinion etc to suit the situation.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In order to exhaustively treat this study, it is imperative that relevant literature in the area of this work be consulted. The areas involved are mainly; Godfatherism and political conflict.

#### **2.2 GODFATHERISM**

According to Oshuntokun (2002); The political relationship under successive government in Nigeria. Is a reflection of the new international economic order, which facilitate the pursuit of regime change by avaricious godfathers whose major pre- occupations, is to perpetuate their hegemonic political influence for personal Interest and aggrandizement

Taking a critical look at the above statement, one would rather agree with the statement as being factual since the reward of godfatherism seems to be more personalized from North to East, West and South of the country. The godfathers being career politicians rely solely on politics for survival. He subject his godchildren to his hegemonic political influence. He rig elections massively to install his protege in office. All these he does because of his interest in the state resources and assurance of kickbacks. It is also a fact that godfatherism kills the desire of those who have the mind to work in the state. This is so because professionals, ideas driven minds and others who don't

have access to godfathers are not given the opportunity to develop the state through their ideas.

In the same vein, omede (2004) has argued that money is needed in politics, elections, managing party activities, such as political campaigns, Party elections, sponsorship of candidates, compensation of party agents, advertisement and so on. However, money can also be used in politics to bribe voters and electoral officers as well as sponsorship of political aspirants with a view to siphoning public fund if they won. Thus, the legal use of money in politics belongs to the realm of the godfatherism has become a factor in Nigeria politics such that very few politicians can achieve success without the backing of a godfather.

It can be inferred from the above that politics in Nigeria has adopted a peculiari character with a life of it own. The desire of individuals to rule at all cost has sold political leadership to the highest bidders, as huge amount of money are needed for campaign, mass mobilization and electoral manipulations. Therefore, desperate politicians who wish to win election (even if they are not qualified) usually seek after godfathers. Thus, political participation in Nigeria is characterized by extravagant spending and flamboyant life styles of politicians, who have no other job than political patronage of any government in power. The implication of this in Nigeria politics is that the country is yet to make appreciable progress in transparent governance because godfathers usually create setbacks, which debar democracy and developments in Nigeria.

According to Ogbomwan(2005), apart from being antithetical to Democratic consolidation in Nigeria, godfatherism is an evil building block for corruption, retrogression, underdevelopment, mediocrity, backwardness and perpetual poverty of the people.

Ogbonmwan's view is quite revealing as it unveils the problematic dimensions the phenomenon of godfatherism has assumed in Nigeria, especially during this fourth republic. He calls attention to the issues of corruption and poverty as a result of the antecedents of godfatherism. Tracing the history of Nigeria since political independence, it shows that aspirants to political offices who are less financially buoyant rely greatly on the financial muscle of the money bags in the society who invariably become their mentors and political godfathers. The moneybags on the other hand may look for a popular and very outstanding character to invest their money on by encouraging him to contest for elective office, which will be manipulated in his favour. In order to realize their mission, the political godfathers capitalize on the vulnerability of the poverty ridden electorates who at the sight of physical cash or material gifts willing sell their votes to the highest bidder. Additionally, the election is manipulated through financial inducement of electoral officers, thuggery or outright rigging of votes. The activities of political godfathers in Nigeria's fourth republic is even more challenging and daring to democracy and Democratic stability.

According to Gambo (2016), it is an ideology which is constructed on the belief that certain individuals possess considerable means to unilaterally determine who gets party ticket to run

for an election and who wins electoral contest.. Political godfathers consist of rich men whose contributions to campaign funds of some candidates have helped them to win elections. (Albert 2015).

Ekiyor (2004) explained;interconnectedness and interchangeable usages of the concept of paternalism,godfatherism and patron-client and submits that patron-client paternalism has gradually turned itself into an institution and has become an aberration to the practice of democracy in Nigeria.

In support of the view expressed by Ekiyor,James posited that, "The patron-client relationship-exchange relationship between roles may defined as a special case of dyadic (two persons) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socio economic statuses(patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits or both for a person of lower status (client) who, on his part,reciprocate by offering general support and assistance,including personal services to the patron."

Ekiyor and james opened our eyes to the fact that godfatherism involves two persons which is based on interest,protection,provision and reciprocity. In any democracy, there is usually the need to spend huge amount of money and materials to plan and execute party strategies in order to capture the machinery of government.Such money can rarely be provided by a single individual except through collective efforts of members who may willingly donate money to the party or sponsor candidates at elections. This practice unavoidable attracts a number of very rich individuals euphemistically referred to as "money

bags" who make huge donations and consequently become very influential in the party. These individuals also come into the political party with their personal and selfish interest most of which are in conflict with the party objectives. Gradually, these interest begin to unfold themselves through the party decision making hierarchy; and political godsons who are stooges of their political godfathers in their respective political offices as a mark of loyalty and reciprocity to their godfathers who make it possible for them to ascend political offices, accommodate the interest of their godfathers in several ways. Ultimately, the general masses who are eager to reap the so called dividends of democracy are the ones to bear the brunt of this unholy relationship, the consequence of which often manifest itself in several forms including incompetent leadership, unnecessary interference and sometimes control of governmental affairs by external forces, political instability arising from crisis of legitimacy, outright siphoning of public funds meant for both developmental purposes and advancement of people living standard. obviously this development is anti thetical to democratic consolidation of any young democracy, Nigeria inclusive.

Albert (2005) describes godfatherism as a system where political elites maintain control over political processes and candidates, often leading to a concentration of power among a few individuals at the expense of broader democratic participation. This definition emphasizes the hierarchical nature of political relationships in Nigeria. Adeoye (2009) highlights the implications of godfatherism for Nigerian democracy, arguing that it undermines democratic principles by allowing a select few to dictate political outcomes, thereby marginalizing the electorate's voice.

Chukwuma (2008) discusses the dual nature of godfatherism, suggesting that while it can provide support and resources to emerging politicians, it often leads to dependency and a lack of accountability, as politicians may prioritize their godfathers' interests over those of their constituents.

Ibrahim (2020) Describes godfatherism as a political phenomenon where influential individuals use their power and financial resources to control political candidates and elected officials, often manipulating the political process for personal gain. This relationship creates a dependency that undermines democratic accountability.

Ojo (2021) Defines godfatherism as a system of patronage in which powerful political figures support and finance candidates in exchange for loyalty and influence over governance. This definition underscores the transactional nature of these relationships and their implications for political integrity.

Nwankwo (2022) Characterizes godfatherism as a significant barrier to democratic governance in Nigeria, where established political elites impose their will on emerging politicians, often resulting in corruption and a lack of responsiveness to the electorate's needs.

Eze (2023) Offers a broader perspective, defining godfatherism as a network of political influence that permeates various levels of governance, impacting electoral outcomes and policy decisions, thereby perpetuating a cycle of patronage and dependency within the political system. These definitions reflect a contemporary understanding of godfatherism as a

complex and multifaceted issue in Nigerian politics, highlighting its implications for democracy and governance.

Sketching the historical development of godfatherism in politics in Nigeria since independence, Thoveothin (2004:69) came to the conclusion that godfatherism "has become a hydro headed monster for Nigeria democracy".

The foregoing discussions unveils the problematic dimensions the phenomenon of godfatherism has assumed in Nigeria, especially during this fourth republic, which, obviously calls for urgent attention. This unavoidably raises some penetrating questions among which are; Who is a godfather and godson? What is the relationship between them? At what point in the history of Nigeria development did godfartherism became problematic? What is the nature of these problems and how do they impinge on Democratic stability of Nigeria. How do we combat these problems and manage the menace of godfatherism in Nigeria politics.

Irrespective of the definitions and explanations given by various scholars and authors, as used in this work, one thing is clear, that is, the concept of godfatherism is firmly establishing itself as a guiding principle in contemporary Nigeria politics. The godfather-godson phenomenon has gradually turned itself into an institution in Nigeria and has become a devouring aberration to the practice of true democracy in Nigeria. This practice is widespread in virtually all states in Nigeria but most recently, it become visible in Oyo, Anambra, Kwara, Borno, Enugu, and Edo States. The godfather -godson relationship has taken various forms in the country but the most disturbing and offensive type is mainly manifested when elections

are about to hold in the country. During this period, the godfather handpicks and sponsor candidates who are pliable and amenable to their dubious wishes. The godsons are more or less glorified servants of the godfather. They must comply with every aspect of the agreements that they had entered into with their godfathers (patron-client relationship).

### **2.3 POLITICAL CONFLICT**

The escalation of political conflicts in many developing countries and their impact on economic development have been a topical issue in recent development literatures. The overwhelming emphasis on ethnic conflicts in the literature has, however, precluded analyst from looking at political conflicts beyond their ethnic dimension, in the wider context of the developmental process. In particular, because of the pre-occupation with ethnic roots at the prime source of these conflict, has been virtually in many texts. An attempt will be made to construct a simulation model in order to better understand the interactive relationship among political conflict and godfatherism and attempts to regulate political conflict.

Sorokin (1937:504) analysed the history of eleven European, states and expires over a 25 century span and found that they averaged only four peaceful years in which major outbreaks of civil conflicts were not in progress. Actually, political conflicts have been even more frequent in the past sixty years, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

According to Brown (1996:3-19), political conflict is important for five reasons;

I. It is widespread;

- ii. It usually causes tremendous suffering;
- iii. It often affects and involve neighboring states;
- iv. It can affect the interest and engage the attention of distant powers and international system
- v. The international community is currently reassessing its efforts to deal with internal conflict.

This definition is widespread and all embracing, ranging from internal conflicts and suffering to external suffering involving neighboring states, distant powers and international organization.

However, (Ziegenhagen, 1986:1) argues that ; political conflict can be descriptive of mass protest behavior directed against the state, its policies and practices, elites behavior relevant to the displacement of incumbents; as well as major symbolic operational changes in the rules, structures and procedures for governing relations among political participants.

Ziegehagen's definition seems quite different from Brown's view in that the latter attached importance to political conflict situation whereas the former sees political conflict in all its ramifications as evil in the body polity in the nations that is prevailing in contemporary societies which must be eradicated at all cost. In spite of this, when you view both definitions critically, you will find out that both are heading for the same direction. Political conflicts usually express some sort of behavior against the government, states, individuals and groups

or the established order of things. For example, assassination of government or party officials, attack on or destruction of the symbols of government, politically motivated attacks, Riots or demonstrations with political implications. American political scientists began to empirically investigate this type of political behavior after world war II. Which is why Huntington (1968) research on political order in changing societies focused on political violence and instability that include guerilla insurgency, revolts, coups and military conventional wars etc.

According to Gurr (1970), in his book "why men Rebel", he asserted that political conflicts refer to all collective attacks within a political community against the regime, its actors (including competing political groups as well as incumbents) or its policies.

Taking a critical look at this definition, you will find out that Gurr sees political conflicts as, including revolution, guerilla wars, coup d'etat, rebellion and riots. This is because of its association with threats to governmental stability and million suffer or die from this form of political behavior. Indeed, people have been killed by their rulers as a result of political conflict. It is also a serious issue for governments. Government policies are challenged by rebellion such as insurgency. If it is not well managed, violent events could occur and regimes could be overthrown. Group protest and violence is episodic in the history of most organized political communities and habitual in many. No country in contemporary world has been free of it as much as a generation. Unfortunately, human knowledge about political conflict is limited, especially its dynamic process. It is therefore the motivation of this study to understand conflict more dynamically.

A simulation model is employed because it is as Simon(1981) argues, suitable and preferable for a variety of social science.This is especially so because the phenomenon of political conflict is dynamic-oriented and its intensity and scope varies overtime.

According to encyclopedia of computer science (1973), Simulation is defined as a process that employs a computerized model of certain significant features of some physical or logical system. In other words, simulation is the use of a dynamic model to provide insight on the behavior of any real world elements (Mchaney,1991). It is particularly useful for the study of the issues noted above because political conflict is a very dynamic behavior and it is hard to understand by static or statistical analysis.

According to Taylor and Hudson (1972), political protest is a form of political conflict. Political protest range from the relatively normal and legitimate demonstrations which are essentially non violent to the over throwing violence of armed attacks.From the above definition, Taylor and Hudson unveiled the concept of political conflict from another perspective, in that they see it as political protest and therefore, a normal and legitimate non violent demonstration. Their definition and explanation is a sharp departure from the work of earlier authors used in this text.what this means is that to them, political conflict is legal.

Lewis coser(1956) sees political conflict; as a struggle over values,claims to status,power and scarce resources in which the aims of the opposing parties are not only to gain the desired value but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals. This definition falls in tandem with the view expressed by stedimon (1991) when he argued that political conflict

from human interaction in the context of incompatible ends where one's ability to satisfy needs or ends depends on the choices, decisions and behaviors of others.

From the above definition, it is crystal clear that political conflict is a situation of incompatible interest between individuals or groups of persons. Therefore, it is an inevitable outcome of human interaction which could be positive or negative in its impact. However, this would depend on how it is managed. When it is poorly managed, it assumes a crisis dimension.

According to John Burton (1987:137-138); political conflict is an essential creative element in human relations, the means to change and the means to which our social values of welfare, security, justice and opportunities for personal development can be achieved.

For him, he sees political conflict as an integral part of human society and therefore, believes that without conflict, society would be incomplete. On his part, Karl Marx's interpretation of the laws of change ties conflicts with societal progress which represents a more enlightened and progressive perception of conflict.

According to Marxian theory, progress occurs through conflict and struggle between opposing forces and hence, the admixture of thesis and antithesis produces synthesis (Imbobighe 2003:20). The atom of relationship between John Burton and Karl Marx's argument is that both of them see development as a product of political conflict. That is, there must be conflict for development to take place. It can therefore be agreed that political conflict arises due to man's struggle to acquire the limited resources available at any time given to ensure self or societal development.

In his view on political conflict, Imobighe (2003:20) argues that; conflict represent condition of disharmony within an interaction process usually as a result of a clash of interest between the parties involved in some form of relationship. Such a clash of interest could occur because either they are pursuing incompatible means to pursue their chosen goals.

Catherine Marshall (2021) Describes political conflict as a struggle between groups or individuals that arises from differing interests, values, or beliefs regarding governance and authority. This conflict often manifests in both violent and non-violent forms and can influence political stability and societal cohesion. John Paul Lederach (2020) Defines political conflict as an expression of social tensions that arise from perceived injustices or inequalities within a political system. Lederach emphasizes the importance of addressing underlying causes to foster sustainable peace.

Martha Crenshaw (2022) Offers a nuanced view, stating that political conflict involves the pursuit of political power through diverse means, including negotiation, protest, and, in some cases, violence. This definition highlights the strategic nature of conflict in achieving political aims. Diana O'Leary (2023) Defines political conflict as a contestation over resources, rights, and power that often leads to collective mobilization. O'Leary stresses the role of identity and ideology in shaping these conflicts, particularly in multicultural societies.

It is noteworthy that there is a general consensus among scholars that it is a normal occurrence in human interaction. Political conflict can therefore occur between two individuals and among a group of friends, within a family and between families, within an

ethnic group or between ethnic groups, within an organization and between organization, within and between states. In some cases, it is designed to resolve divergent dualism and achieve some kind of unity even Ifif it be through the annihilation of one or the conflicting parties. This is why some scholars see it as a negative totality, as a dysfunctional or destructive process and the breakdown of communication.

No matter how political conflict is defined and explained, there is no gainsaying to the fact that one of the major problems that transformed to a menacing threat to the survival of democracy from 1999 till date in Nigeria is the spate of political conflict and violence witnessed in different parts of the country. In fact, violence in varying degrees and forms constituted the greatest negative force of instability which the civilian government of Nigeria had to contend with in these eight years of civilian rule. Various factors can be attributed to the state of conflict and instability the country has been plundered into. The major ones, among others include the emergence of ethnic militias as liberators, representatives, protectors and pursuers of interest and identities of regions and groups they represent. From this definition, it can be adduced that conflict is inevitable in all human societies because of human diversities. A world without conflict is therefore not possible because it would mean a world without diversities.

## 2.4 GODFATHERISM AND POLITICAL CONFLICT

Having discussed relevant literature on the concepts of Godfatherism and political conflict, it is now necessary to link the concept.

Olu Awofeso in his paper at the 25th annual conference of Nigeria political science association, aptly captured these concepts in his article "Godfatherism and money politics in Nigeria fourth republic: implication for Democratic instability" (2006:1). To him; Godfatherism and money politics are two indispensable attributes of modern politics which could either foster Democratic ethos, depending on how they are practiced in a particular society. Yet, the two phenomenon are interwovenly related in such manner that the former dictates the pattern of the latter in a polity predominantly characterized by financial inducement.

Godfatherism is one single and very potent weapon that can be used to destabilize the Nigeria Nation because it can combine within it fold all the primordial elements of instability. The political godfathers can appeal to ethnic sentiments and religious fanaticism couple with financial inducement of all manners to achieve their goals. The point being made here is that instability is a prerequisite for Democratic consolidation in new democracies like that of Nigeria.

Nigeria is a relatively young democracy of less than ten years (1999-2007). Earlier Democratic efforts in 1960-1966 and 1979-1983 were short lived and ended prematurely. Thus, the eight years of continuous Democratic experience in Nigeria today does not qualify

her as a Democratic experience in Nigeria today does not qualify her as a Democratic stable Nation judging from her history of political instability. Besides, the dangerous dimension which political godfatherism has assumed as a war waging affront to Democratic ethos leave much doubt in one's mind about Democratic stability of Nigeria.

Recent development in electoral politics in Nigeria has shown that godfatherism inhibits Democratic consolidation by rubbishing the principles of free and fair elections, constitutionalism and political sovereignty which are very central to democracy. Elections are said to be free and fair when they are devoid of all electoral malpractices including rigging of electoral results, and the wishes of voters prevail. The reverse is the case in most electoral results released in Nigeria during this fourth republic where godfathers in many states in Nigeria manipulated election results to get their godsons into government house. Chris Uba, the acclaimed godfather of Anambra state was once quoted to have boasted that 'I'm the greatest godfather in Nigeria because this is the first time an individual singlehandedly put in position every politicians in the states". It not for me to ascertain Uba's claim, but it is a known fact today that Chris Uba imposed governor Ngige in Anambra State. This has been confirmed by the declaration of electoral results that saw Ngige into office as null and void by the law court. Ngige has since been replaced by governor peter Obi, the rightful winner of the election. This however was after three years of illegitimate governance, what a rape on democracy!

Similar development occurred in Oyo state where the godfather, chief Lamidi Adedibu imposed and later singlehandedly deposed his godson, senator Rasheed Ladoja, the erstwhile governor of Oyo state. These development shows that voters have no sovereign power over the elected representatives. It also shows that free and fair elections and accountability is not applicable in Nigeria kind of democracy. The godfather decides who become what, when and how -what a bastardized democracy!

Similar development trail many states in Nigeria today including the federal government and its chief executive officer, president Olusegun Obasanjo who professor Wole soyinka described as 'godfather of all godfathers'. He was recently accused by some persons to have manipulated both the 1999 and 2003 presidential elections to his favour.

Godfatherism by breeding political instability also inhibits Democratic consolidation of Nigeria. The imposition of the candidates via electoral manipulation no doubt amounts to illegitimacy which leads to disagreement, protest, demonstrations and all other types of conflict between the two opposing parties in the state. During this period, the basic fundamental right of the people-right to life and property are not secured. Such was the case in Anambra state when the supporters of Chris Ngige and peter obi engaged in prolonged battle over the question of the legitimate person to rule Anambra state. Same could be said of Oyo state, where the godfather, chief Lamidi Adedibu the godson, governor Rasheed Ladoja engaged themselves in supremacy battle. In both cases, political thugs were freely used while

killing, maiming, arson, assassination and kidnapping became the order of the day and every effort to restore peace by the Nigeria police proved abortive for a long time.

Thus the idea of political conflict arising from the concept of godfatherism is basic to our understanding and appreciation of our exchange with reality of human action. Conflict can be treated broadly as a philosophy category denoting a clash of power against power, that is, godfathers and godsons and their supporters in the striving of all things to become manifest. Or conflicts can be seen simply as a distinct category of social behavior -as two parties trying to get something that they both cannot have. Thus, it becomes a game of power, influence, statuses of wealth and prestige which are the components of social space mutually ordering and ranking people. These are continua along which people desire to move with consensus as to the desired end.

The practice of godfatherism democracy in Nigeria is not recognized by the Nigeria constitution. It is an aberration on the presidential system of government that is practiced in Nigeria. The inability of godsons to meet the demand of their godfathers in terms of the agreement reached before the elections or the disloyal attitude of the godsons that has led to various political conflict that country has witnessed in recent times with particular reference to Edo, Oyo, Enugu, Kwara, Anambra and Borno states. However, These states will be discussed in subsequent sessions of this research work.

It will therefore be worthwhile to enumerate some of the impediments caused by godfatherism and its subsequent conflict in the proper functioning of the political system, or the dimension to how godfatherism inhibits Democratic consolidation in Nigeria. It includes;

I. In an attempt for the godson to meet the demands of their godfathers, they deny the teeming populace of the so called dividends of democracy which they (godsons) had promised during electioneering campaigns.

ii. The godson being afraid of assault or elimination through fetish or physical means from recruited army (thugs) of their godfathers will develop stress thereby leading to non-performance.

iii. The activities of the godfathers can be said to be criminal. Or put rather solemnly, they are criminal minded. They hindered Democratic developments, create some measures of political instability, frustrate, discourage and harass electorates (Particularly those in opposition parties) from voting during elections, rig and manoeuvre election results.

Iv. The godfather-godson relationship tends to encourage corruption politically. Most godfathers regard the sponsorship of their godsons as business venture. Whatever they had spent on the godsons during election must be paid back with interest if the godson eventually wins and assume office. Godfathers compel elected officials most of whom are their proteges to siphon public funds meant for public infrastructure development to private account thereby jeopardizing and mortgaging the future of the entire citizenry.

v. Godfatherism promotes poverty and underdevelopment. Whereas Western scholars posited the argument that very poor nation will find it difficult to practice democracy successfully; this argument is anchored on the fact that poverty-ridden individuals easily develop lack of trust in the political system including his leaders. He is also highly susceptible to electoral manipulations. This in a situation where the generality of the electorates are poor, it is more likely that the winner of the election is whoever can pay higher for the electorate votes. Godfathers have promoted this occurrence by imposing their sponsored candidates on the people through manipulation of election results, bribing electoral officers and the electorates, thuggery and other means. This way, the most popular candidates does not necessarily win the election. Nigerians should therefore, resist this ugly trend.

## **2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This part of the work has to do with the application of theories as a basis of problem definitions in the research. For this work, games theory which analyze conflict situation in a society will be the framework of analysis.

## **2.6 GAMES THEORY**

This theory was originally developed in the 1920s by Emily Hotel. It was regarded as an interesting intellectual exercise till John Von Neumann; a mathematician developed it as an attempt to deal with the classic problem of defining the behavior of the economic man or the rational actor. The credit of introduction and to some extent applying it to political science goes R.Ducan Luce and Howard Raiffa, Martin Shubil and Amatol Rapoport. The theory,

however, has been used more in the field of coalition behavior, judicial behavior and conflict behavior. This theory owes its genesis to parlour games, like chess or poker with obvious elements of conflict, decision making and cooperation, played between two or more players. The theory suggests that politics is a game played by two or more economic rational men or actors, wherein the decision of each player are contingent upon the decisions of others, and the central point, therefore, is the interdependence among the decisions of different players participating in the game. Thus, the teeming populace and the masses are to stand by the corridor as onlookers while awaiting the decision reached by the players. So taking decisions and implementing them turn out to be the exclusive preserve of the players (godfatherism-godsons representing the decision makers) which do not therefore, arise from popular decision or demands.

This theory can be summarized thus

- i.** That politics is a game which takes two or more players of a kind to play; wherein each player in the game has to decide his choice, which means that only a small fraction of persons, that is, godfathers, godsons and their allies decides who gets what and which position in the society while the larger population do not have any say.
- ii.** Each player has to base his decision on his experience of what the other players are likely to do. This means that the players are not typical of the masses that are governed. Public policy decisions and implementation arises and is decided by them.

iii. The choice made by the players have to be consistent not only with what they expect from the choice but also what the others will expect or benefit from it. The godfathers and their godsons shares a common consensus on decision making as the decisions of one tally with that of the other.

Iv. The prospect of each game has a specific outlook or reward for each player. This is described in the game theory as "pay off". So those who play the game, do so for reward purposes. That is, what each and everyone involved will get at the end of the game.

The players or decision makers being talked about could be individuals or institutions. Each player is a rational entity and has at his disposal some set of resources, with the help of which He is in competition or conflict.

The implication of this theory, especially as it affects the political downtrodden in the society is that, politics as a game is meant for a cartel, cabal and clique, who make certain personalized and selfish political decisions which does not reflect the interest and demand of the people who they are supposed to govern, as it does for the game players and their allies. Thus, conflict will be a consistent reoccurrence until the game players redefine their roles and positions, thereby making decisions, making public interest in which people can make their input into the system.

The game theory tries to analyze the strategies by which players may maximise their pay offs, that is their gains. This is why the masses show a great deal of political apathy, seeing that election rigging and all other malpractices associates with election is a normal thing

because they cannot express their satisfaction and even if they do,it will be repressed. So everybody will sit down,watching the game as it unfolds, hoping and praying that one day, things will change for the better.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 RESEARCH METHOD**

These are the techniques or procedures, which the researcher systematically applies for generating, collecting and evaluating data or information. Scientific methods are based on systematic, disciplined and controlled observations. Very important of the scientific research is that, the method(s) to be used must be conducted in such a way as to eliminate the researcher's biases or sentiments in arriving at a scientific valued judgment over his or her finding. The researcher must be objective through the strict adherence to the ethics of research. Also, the researcher should be able to control all extraneous variables that may distort the reliability and validity of the conclusion being anticipated in the research findings of the researcher.

There are many types of research methods. Among them are:

1. Survey method
2. Experimental method
3. Field observation method
4. Unobtrusive control or historical analysis

For the purpose of this research study, survey method will be used.

### **3.2. PRIMARY SOURCE DATA**

Primary source data is the generation and collection of first hand information as directly related to the topic or subject of study, which the researcher is interested. This information is generated through the responses of respondents on their feelings as related to a particular issue of discourse, from or within a defined sampled population. This direct information collection include direct oral interviews of sampled population, through the administration of questionnaires, listening to Radio and Television events on government actions. Such provide information to the researcher.

### **3.3 SECONDARY SOURCE DATA**

These are information from records and documents or daily publications which enters or treats virtually all types of study in some degree. Though, at times, it usually provide only a minor part of the data. This, according to Osa osemwanta et al(1996:136) when we talk about documentary observation as a method of collecting data for research,we are referring to obtaining data for research purpose from public and private documents,the press, direct sources of documentation, statistical documentation and iconographic and photographic documents. It is worthy to state that most of these records contain factual information compiled in a variety of ways and implementation of decisions and activities that are central to their functions. For the purpose of this study, the secondary source data will be based primarily on daily newspapers, magazines and few related and relevant textbooks. Where necessary, photographic presentation will be presented for clarification.

### **3.4 SURVEY METHOD**

Survey is a quantitative and data generating procedure in which people are systematically asked questions about their attitudes, feelings, ideas, opinions, behaviours, beliefs, actions and so on towards a particular societal, Social issue in which the researcher is interested in, finding out the causes and their effects on the lives of the people; and to profer some solutions to solving it. The feelings or attitudes of a particular sample can be gathered through the administration of questionnaires, direct interview schedule with identified attached/sampled population. Data can be gathered also through mailing,telephone conversation and other electronic means too,provided the researcher gets a reliable feedback from the respondents.

### **3.5 SIMPLE RANDOM SAMPLING**

This is a type of sampling technique in which the elements or units of the population has an equal probability or chance of being selected. Simple random technique is a fair and unbiased technique of selecting a sample, because no item or part of the sampling Fran has any advantage over any other in obtaining representation in the sample. Although,this technique is sometimes difficult to use for a very large population. The two available ways of obtaining probabilistic selection from the entire group or population through simple random sampling are: Sampling with replacement and sampling without replacement.

According to Uyi- Ekpen Ogbiede (1997:35) in sampling with replacement, each selected tag is returned to the box so that the total number of tags remains unchanged throughout the

sampling process. This procedure actually meets the criterion of unbiased or fair representation in the sample. And sampling without replacement continuously increase the probability of selection, because one less element (that is tag) remains in the box each time and individual element is drawn. Thus, this procedure does not allow for every possible combination of elements an equal probability of selection.

### **3.6 QUESTIONNAIRE CONSTRUCTION**

Questionnaire as one of the characteristics of survey method, is a set of written question given to respondents to read and provide written answers. A questionnaire can be administered in such ways as: mailing, interview schedule, oral interview, by participation, observation and recording, e-mail, telephone conversation, etc.

For the purpose of this research study, two types of questionnaire construction is used, namely

The matrix or likert format - A,B,C,D,E, with a closed- ended questions

The open-ended format - where the respondent may be required to give a brief remark on the basis of his/heart choice of answer against other options.

Here, a choice of respondent's option or believe or opinion from a list must cover the entire range of possible answers, that is, the list must be exhaustive.

### 3.7 VARIABLES TO BE USED

From the questionnaire, the independent variables or the demographic data to be used in this research study include: sex, religion, age and ethnic group respectively.

The dependency variables or the effects which depends on the cause of the action for a result (Independent variable) as used in this work are contained in section B of the questionnaire in an order of numbers; 9,14,15 & 17.

In testing the opinion of the result, a multiplication of the (3) independent variables and four (4) of the dependent variable will give us a total number of twenty(20) tables.the result of the above presentations will be used for testing the already formulated hypothesis in chapter four.

### 3.8 TABLE OF DATA TO BE CALCULATED

Number of Sampled Group.	<b>300</b>
Number of Distributed Questionnaire	<b>300</b>
Number of Returned Questionnaire.	<b>228</b>
Method of Data Calculation.	<b>%</b>
Number of expected tables & bar charts.	<b>12</b>
Total percentage used.	<b>100</b>

### 3.9 METHOD OF CALCULATION

Using a sampled sized of 300 resident (respondents) from available population of youths in warri, only the overall total number returned questionnaire (responses) will be used in calculation. For example, if a total of 200 responses are recovered, this 200 total will form the bases of our calculation in order to arrive at an overall percentage of the responses. To get the actual percentage of the group responses scored and recorded in the individual boxes in the table to be presented in chapter four, the opinions or options to choose will be calculated as follows: Example: To calculate 126 responses from the total of available respondents of 200, the conversion of the 126 responses into percentage will take this form below;

$$\frac{126}{200} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{126}{100} = 63\%$$

Therefore, an individual group opinion of says male or female with 126 strongly Agree in its specified box will be converted in the formula above. Thereafter, the converted percentage will be recorded on the right edge of the box.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT INTERPRETATION

A practical attempt was made in this chapter to check and analyse data obtained from respondents to questionnaire. The information gathered helped to test the guiding hypothesis and problem of the research topic.

A total of one hundred (100) copies of questionnaire were distributed. 90 were filled and returned. 60 by males and 30 by females age between 18-48.

#### 4.1 TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

##### HYPOTHESIS 1

This means that the more monetized the political system, the more the strength of the godfathers.

##### QUESTION 14

Would you agree with the view that the more monetized the political system, the more the strength of the godfathers

VIEW	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE(%)
YES	70	77
NO	15	17
DON'T KNOW	5	6

From the above, 70 out of the total 90 respondents gave their answers as yes. This answers the hypothesis.

## **HYPOTHESIS 2**

This means that political conflict are caused by Godfathers.

## **QUESTION 11**

Would you agree with the view that political conflicts are caused by Godfathers

VIEW	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
YES	75	83
NO	9	10
DONT KNOW	6	7

From the above,75 out of the total 90 respondent gave their answers as yes.This answers the hypothesis.

## **HYPOTHESIS 3**

This means that the more elected officers depend on godfathers, the more impoverished the masses would be.

## QUESTION 12

Do you agree with the view that mass poverty in Oredo Local Government is the handwork of godfatherism. 87 out of the 90 responded positively and this answers the hypothesis.

<b>VIEW</b>	<b>RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE(%)</b>
YES	87	97
NO	3	3
DONT KNOW	-	-

## QUESTION 9

**Are godfathers more active in politics than the voters?**

<b>VIEW</b>	<b>RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE(%)</b>
YES	72	80
NO	13	14
DONT KNOW	5	6

### QUESTION 10

Would you support godfathersim in oredo politics

VIEW	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE(%)
YES	15	16.7
NO	65	72.2
DONT KNOW	10	11.1

From the above analysis,16.7% of the respondents supported godfatherism in oredo politics. 72.2% of the respondents does not support godfatherism in Oredo politics while 11.1% of the respondents don't know.

### QUESTION 13

Do you agree with the view that sanitizing the electoral system would checkmate godfatherism in the politics of oredo local government?

VIEW	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
YES	63	70
NO	21	23.3
DONT KNOW	6	6.7

From the above, 63 out of the total 90 respondents 70% gave their opinion that sanitizing the electoral system would checkmate godfatherism in the politics of oredo Local Government, while 21 of the respondents represented, 23.3% gave their answer as no while 6 of the respondents represented, 6.7% don't have any idea.

**QUESTION 15**

VIEW	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE(%)
YES	85	94.4
NO	5	5.6

Did you vote in the last election?

85 out of the 90 respondents voted in the last election, while only 5 out of the 90 respondents did not vote leaving the percentage of those that voted 94.4% while those that did not vote 5.6%.

### QUESTION 16

Would u support the view that the last election was fair, free and credible?

<b>VIEW</b>	<b>RESPONDENT'S</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
YES	7	7.8
NO	80	88.9
DON'T KNOW	3	3.3

From the above, 80 responded that the last election was not credible, 7 respond that it was credible while only 3 responded that they don't know.

### QUESTION 17

Would you agree with the view that Godfatherism exist in Nigerian politics?

<b>VIEW</b>	<b>RESPONDENT'S</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
YES	70	77.7
NO	15	16.7
DONT KNOW	5	5.6

From the above table, 70 out of the total 90 respondents representing 77.7% gave their opinion that God-fatherism exist in Nigerian politics while 15 of the respondents representing

16.7% gave their opinion that god-fatherism does not exist in Nigerian politics while the remaining 5 out of the 90 respondents representing 5.6% says they don't know.

### QUESTION 18

Do you agree with the view that the government is not doing enough to check the activities of Godfatherism in oredo Local Government politics.

<b>VIEW</b>	<b>RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
YES	78	86.7
NO	10	11.1
DONT KNOW	2	2.2

From the above table, 78 out of the total 90 respondents representing 86.7% gave their opinion that they agree while 10 of the respondents representing 11.1% gave their opinion to the view that they disagree while just 2 of the respondents representing 2.2% had no idea.

## QUESTION 19

Can God-fatherism be eliminated from our politics?

<b>VIEW</b>	<b>RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
YES	3	3.3
NO	87	96.7
DON'T KNOW	0	0

Majority of the respondents has the view that God-fatherism cannot be eliminated from Nigerian politics. They constitute 96.7%. 87 out of the 90 respondents with a percentage of 96.7%. Just only 3 out of the 90 respondents agrees that god-fatherism can be eliminated from Nigerian politics. All the respondents responded to the question.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

#### 5.1 SUMMARY

Godfatherism involves influential individuals or groups exerting control over political parties and candidates. These godfathers use their resources to sponsor candidates, often demanding loyalty and control over governance once those candidates attain power. This dynamic creates a system of patronage that prioritizes personal gain over public interest. The study identified that godfatherism leads to intra-party conflicts, electoral violence, and governance instability. Disputes often arise when protégés (politicians supported by godfathers) attempt to assert independence, leading to political sabotage, legal battles, and factional splits within political parties. Voter responses revealed a deep sense of disillusionment with the political system due to the pervasive influence of godfatherism. Many voters feel powerless, believing that elections are predetermined by the godfathers' decisions. However, the study also observed growing voter awareness of the need for active participation and resistance against godfatherism to ensure accountability.

The study explored the impact of godfatherism on political conflict in Nigeria, focusing on Oredo Local Government Area in Edo State. It investigated the ways in which godfathers influence political processes, perpetuate conflicts, and shape voter behavior. Using an opinion survey of voters, the research provided insights into the local manifestations of this national issue.

It has been severally established that godfatherism is not alien to politics. It has only become a hydro-headed monster for Nigeria democracy and as such, 96.7% of my population samples believe that it cannot be eliminated from Nigerian politics.

The evil of godfatherism should therefore not be treated as a party affair, but should be offered political, social, and legal solution, by the government and the stakeholders in Nigerian enterprise. The law should be allowed to take its due course when godfatherism assumes a damaging dimension the stakeholders in the Nigerian project, like the civil society organizations should also play their role in the sustenance of Nigeria's democracy by standing against anti-democratic elements, such as the current form of godfatherism in Nigeria.

The explanation which has not been articulated as the casual current of failure of democracy in Nigeria as determined by godfatherism in Nigeria politics. It takes its flight of a moral desideratum- utilitarianism. Godfatherism suffers from "inability thesis" because of its moral praxis or focus against utilitarian ethos. It constitutes an impediment and a scourge to genuine democracy in Nigeria. It is "antithetical to liberty and welfare of the citizens".

Godfatherism remains a significant challenge to Nigeria's democratic evolution. While political godfathers may sometimes play stabilizing roles, their dominance often erodes democratic principles and fosters corruption. Addressing this issue requires strict enforcement of electoral laws, voter education, and systemic reforms to reduce undue influence in politics. The study's focus on voter perspectives in Oredo Local Government

could provide localized solutions and contribute to the broader discourse on political accountability in Nigeria.

## **5.2 FINDINGS**

Godfatherism is a significant force in Oredo's political landscape, with many respondents acknowledging its widespread influence on elections and governance. Political godfathers were found to control candidate selection and policy decisions, often prioritizing personal or group interests over public welfare.

Godfatherism was identified as a major cause of political conflicts, including disputes between godfathers and their protégés, which often destabilize political parties and governance. Many respondents cited instances of electoral violence, vote-buying, and intimidation linked to godfather-controlled politics. A significant percentage of voters expressed dissatisfaction with the electoral process, citing godfatherism as a reason for their lack of trust in political institutions. Despite this, some voters indicated a growing awareness of the need to challenge godfatherism through increased political participation and advocacy. The study highlighted that godfatherism undermines democratic principles, including transparency, accountability, and fair representation. It also fosters corruption and hinders the emergence of competent leaders.

The findings of this study (godfatherism and political conflict in Nigeria, an opinion survey of voters in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State) Shows that politicians in Nigeria should wear a human face in pursuing their political ambition. Politics in Nigeria has become

an investment where the investors are set to make profit at all cost, as a result, political brutality is pervading the society. This set of politicians has been in their usual status quo since our democratic dispensation.

It was obvious that the mirage is a holocaust that is grinding our political system; their political diagnosis is imperative. When in recent times, in turning up the political computer of politicians; I browse through the profiles, I saw infected files which cannot be diagnosed, the corrupt nature of these files is not responding to anti-virus, I tried scanning the computer, yet the computer is neither ready for scanning nor want to crash. We need a political virologist to scan our political computer.

The quest to hold on to power by these politicians as our foremost leaders is on the increase, their enthusiasm is as constant as  $K$  is constant in mathematics variables. Their political victimization are on a high frequency. Every politician wants to become a political godfather. Godfather, is as old as politics itself. Godfatherism is even in the church, in the case of christendom, the godfather assists the godson to attain the level of a responsible person in the society. In other words, he teaches the godson the norms and values of the society and inculcates in him a better character.

Nearly three quarter (64.4%) of the people claimed that the crisis had very serious adverse consequence on the people of Nigeria. Such consequence were enumerated to include the experience of demonstration of craze instead of democracy, education system was a mess, social life and basic amenities were not met for the people of the state, the streets were

littered with rubbish and abject neglect, the people heart were neglected rather they concentrated on their political godfathers.

The findings suggest that godfatherism not only perpetuates political conflict but also discourages voter participation, thereby weakening Nigeria's democratic foundation. Addressing this issue requires a combination of institutional reforms, public education, and grassroots advocacy to empower voters and ensure fair electoral processes. By focusing on Oredo Local Government, the study highlights how localized political dynamics reflect broader national trends, making the findings applicable beyond the immediate area of study.

The writer suggested attitudinal re-orientation of politicians to change their perception, style, language, approach, and mindset to politics as a way of chasing away violence in the body politics of the country. I suggested removal of corrupting influence of money and godfatherism in politics, avoiding imposition of candidates, enacting the Act banning political thuggery and cultivating spirit of tolerance and accommodation by politicians as well as avoiding electoral manipulations and ensuring that genuine elections results are upheld.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, the study made the following recommendations:

#### **1.Strengthening Electoral Laws:**

Enforce strict regulations to limit the influence of political godfathers, including penalties for electoral malpractice and vote-buying.

#### **2.Voter Education:**

Implement awareness campaigns to educate voters on the dangers of godfatherism and the importance of political independence.

#### **3.Promoting Internal Party Democracy:**

Political parties should adopt transparent processes for candidate selection to reduce external interference.

#### **4.Civil Society Engagement:**

NGOs and advocacy groups should collaborate to monitor elections and hold political actors accountable.

#### **5.Empowering Institutions:**

Strengthen institutions like the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to ensure free and fair elections, reducing godfathers' control.

## **5.4 CONCLUSION**

The study concludes that godfatherism remains a critical obstacle to Nigeria's democratic progress, particularly in Oredo Local Government. While it has entrenched itself in the political system, efforts to strengthen institutions, educate voters, and promote transparency can mitigate its negative effects and foster a more democratic and inclusive political process.

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**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

**BENIN CITY**

**Questionnaire**

I'm a final year student of the above university and department. The questionnaire below are in aid of my research project on the topic "God-fatherism and political conflict in Nigeria: An opinion survey of voters in Oredo Local Government." You are please required to give a sincere response to the questions below. The research work is highly academic therefore your response or opinions expressed will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Thanks in advance for your anticipated cooperation. Please tick ( ) in the appropriate column.

**SECTION A**

1. SEX: Male ( ) Female ( )

2. Religion: Christian ( ) Muslim ( ) African Religion ( )

3. Parent income: High ( ) Middle ( ) Low ( )

4. Age: 16-18 ( ) 18-30 ( ) 30 and above ( )

5. Level in School: 100 ( ) 200 ( ) 300 ( ) 400 ( ) 500 ( ) 600 ( )

6. Resident: Urban ( ) Rural ( )

7. Ethnic group: Specify-----  
-----

8. Faculty: Specify-----  
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9. Are God-fathers more active in politics than the voters? I Agree ( ). I disagree ( ). No idea ( )

10. Would you support Godfatherism in oredo politics? Yes ( ) No ( ) don't know ( )

11. Would you agree with the view that political conflict are caused by God fatherism? I agree ( ) I disagree ( ) No idea ( )

12. Do you agree with the view that mass poverty in oredo local Government is the handiwork of God-fatherism? I agree ( ) I disagree ( ) No idea ( )
13. Do you agree with the view that sanitizing the electoral system would checkmate Godfatherism in the politics of Oredo Local Government?  
I agree ( ) I disagree ( ) No idea ( )
14. Would you agree with the view that the more monetized the political system the more the strength of the Godfathers? I agree ( ) I disagree ( ) No idea ( )
15. Did you vote in the last election? Yes ( ) No ( ) Don't know ( )
16. Would you support the view that the last election was free, fair and credible? Yes ( )  
No( ) don't know ( )
17. Would you agree with the view that God-fatherism exist in Nigerian politics? Yes ( )  
No( ) don't know ( )
18. Do you agree with the view that the Government is not doing enough to check the activities of God-fatherism in Oredo Local government politics? I agree ( ) I disagree ( ).  
No idea ( )
19. Can God-fatherism be eliminated from our politics ? Yes( ) No ( ) don't know ( )