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## Godfatherism and Internal Democracy in Political Parties in Nigeria: PDP and APC in Focus

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### Abstract

*The aim of this paper was to discuss the extent to which the character of godfatherism practised by elites of PDP and APC has hampered internal democracy of political parties in Nigeria's electoral process. It has been argued that one aspect of political culture that has taken centre stage in party structure in Nigeria is godfatherism. Due to the actions of godfathers, there is a crisis of confidence among elected officials in Nigeria. Additionally, there is a loss of faith in democratic governance, rising disenchantment with the government, and rising annoyance stemming from the perception that individual voters have no significance in the political process. The survey research method was employed to gather data, while the elite theory was found useful in explaining the study. For the purpose of analysis, the Simple Linear Regression was executed with the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for the testing of the hypothesis at 0.5 significance level. The finding of the study revealed that godfatherism as practised by PDP and APC elites has a detrimental effect on the degree of internal party democracy in Nigeria's election process. It was suggested amongst others that the current political parties are required by the Independent National Electoral Commission-INEC to disclose their unique ideology and philosophical underpinnings. Accordingly, the idea of democracy within a party and creating equitable opportunities for every member should be ingrained in political parties.*

**Keywords:** Election; Godfatherism; Internal democracy; Political Culture; Political Parties

### Introduction

The political culture of a civilization is comprised of the political attitude, beliefs, emotions, knowledge, and skills held by its citizens. As a result, it is reflected in a country's philosophy, perspectives on political figures, obligations as a citizen, manner and style of political activity, and what is and is not referred to be political. In today's democracies, political parties have played a significant role in educating the populace about politics since party politics has evolved into a defining feature and the foundation from which leaders are born and politics is pragmatized.

The culture of godfatherism is one that has permeated Nigerian politics deeply. The politics of godfatherism became more prevalent in Nigerian campaigns by politicians in the sixties and the early post-independence, as politicians assumed godfather roles (Ahmed and Ali, 2019). Bernard (2009) compares Nigeria's electoral politics to the godfatherism that existed in Chicago, Illinois, in the years leading up to World War II, when gang leaders paid for politicians to run in elections, rigged the outcomes to get them chosen, and then got assurance and deals from their political godsons. In light of this, it wouldn't be inappropriate to claim that the politics of

godfatherism have integrated into the political environment that allows many rivals in Nigeria to fulfill their political ambitions.

It is bad that we do not have the opportunity to vote based on party philosophy; instead, we vote for certain persons. This is due to the fact that, in the lack of a party doctrine, the most they could do was look for the candidate of their choice. This is what keeps the godfatherism tradition alive in Nigerian politics. When the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Action party (AG) was in power, for example, political parties were social democrats, and if you supported AG, you would be certain of receiving free education if the party won the election. Parties that emphasise the needs of the people are rare nowadays. The conflict amongst the All Progressives Congress-APC and the Peoples Democratic Party-PDP serves as a sobering reminder of our nation's political climate. Since the beginning of the Fourth Republic, Nigeria has seen a cyclonic expansion of the poverty of ideas. The concept of party ideology disappears in Nigeria because those who comprise parties are not motivated by any political philosophy. Politicians almost switch parties every day because they are eager to advance their political goals at the expense of philosophy (Olanrewaju, 2015).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The values, character, behaviours, and attitudes expressed and demonstrated by Nigeria's two major political parties (PDP and APC) from 2014 to the present tend to reflect the dominant political culture of Nigerian society as a whole, according to Kroeber and Kluckhohn's definition of "culture" (1952:78–105). In order to underscore their argument, the authors characterized culture as encompassing "the entirety of historically developed life strategies, whether evident or inferred, logical, illogical, and beyond logic, which are present at any specific moment as potential frameworks for human behavior" (Kroeber and Kluckkohn, 1952:78-105). In addition to the two major political parties, even smaller political organisations now try to appeal to the public by showing a patron-client relationship with the two major parties.

One aspect of political culture that has taken centre stage in party structure in Nigeria is godfatherism. Due to the actions of godfathers, there is a crisis of confidence among elected officials in Nigeria. Additionally, there is a loss of faith in democratic governance, rising disenchantment with the government, and rising annoyance stemming from the perception that individual voters have no significance in the political process. Godfathers determine who runs for office, wins elections, and is nominated and appointed to positions of authority in Nigerian politics and governance. This behaviour has been deeply ingrained in the party structure to the point that it has been passed from the national level to the unit level of the Nigerian political system. It goes without saying that this is an aberration of accepted civil culture, but between the two major political parties in Nigeria (the PDP and the APC), this practice has become entrenched in the party structure to the point where it has been transmitted from the level of the country to the level of the political unit. The ongoing transformation of internal democracy within political parties by influential figures, commonly referred to as godfathers, has played a pivotal role in influencing and reshaping this phenomenon.

Another regrettable and unsettling trend in the nature of political godfathers in Nigerian democracies today is their sway on the judiciary, particularly in relation to who flies the party's flag as their representative. In Nigeria nowadays, party primaries are decided in the courts rather than on the playing field. Furthermore, this group has pushed vote-buying to a point where it is difficult for the uninformed, particularly in rural areas, to resist.

Given the above, it is reasonable to assume that Nigeria's prevailing political culture, as represented by the two major political parties, is marked by amongst other characterization by godfatherism, which has serious implications for governance, politics, and society at large. It also enables us to assert with confidence that the circumstances in Nigeria and the stance of the two main political parties prevent our political culture from falling into any of the parochial, subject, or participant categories. Instead, it seems that Nigeria's political culture is distinct and embraces all political ideologies.

### **Research Question**

To what extent has the character of godfatherism practised by elites of PDP and APC hampered internal democracy of political parties in Nigeria's electoral process?

### **Objective of the Study**

To discuss the extent to which the character of godfatherism practised by elites of PDP and APC has hampered internal democracy of political parties in Nigeria's electoral process.

### **Research Hypothesis**

The character of godfatherism practiced by elites of PDP and APC tend to have a negative impact on the level of internal democracy of political parties in Nigeria's electoral process.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Conceptual Literature**

#### **Godfatherism**

Various scholars have provided diverse definitions of the term "godfatherism" shaped by their individual perspectives and interpretations. This phenomenon, however, has evolved into an endemic issue within Nigeria's political landscape. A discernible pattern has emerged, underscoring the necessity for aspiring candidates to establish a dependence on influential godfathers possessing both substantial wealth and authority, as a means of attaining elective positions. This paradigm shift implies that contestants no longer rely solely on their personal popularity and rapport with the electorate to secure victory at the polls. Rather, they lean heavily upon the support of their chosen godfather figures, who wield the requisite resources and clout, to navigate the path towards electoral success (Majekodunmi and Olanrewaju, 2013).

It is evident that the intricate web of godfatherism has hampered the effective functioning of democratic institutions. This entanglement has hindered these institutions from exerting the corrective measures essential for remedying the existing anomalies. As a result, godfatherism not only undermines the core essence of democratic principles but also weakens the capacity of institutions to serve as checks and balances within the democratic framework. In essence, the scourge of godfatherism underscores a larger societal deterioration within Nigeria. Its emergence as a dominant force in the political arena has dire implications for the authentic realization of democratic values and the effective functioning of governance systems. Its persistence paints a grim picture of a democratic process compromised by vested interests, detracting from the nation's aspiration for a vibrant and transparent democratic culture (Edigin, 2010).

The notion of godfatherism encompasses various aspects including intermediation, mentorship, benevolence, support, and sponsorship. Within the political context, this concept embodies an ideology rooted in the conviction that specific individuals possess the means to unilaterally influence the allocation of a party's electoral ticket and determine the outcome of electoral contests (Majekodunmi and Olanrewaju, 2013).

Another scholarly work by Edigin (2010: 175) portrays the godfather as an individual who wields a role akin to that of a deity for his constituents. This figure not only caters to their basic needs but also safeguards their interests, assisting them in attaining their objectives. Edigin further elucidates that the godfather's support can be perceived as an investment, one that he anticipates will yield returns in the future. The intricate dimensions of godfatherism, as explored through these studies, highlight the multifaceted roles that godfathers play within the political landscape. They transcend mere mentorship to wield considerable influence in shaping electoral outcomes and political trajectories. This phenomenon serves as a unique lens through which to view the interplay of power, support, and aspiration within the complex world of Nigerian politics.

Godfatherism stands as a formidable obstacle to the advancement of Nigerian democracy, running counter to the ideals of freedom and the well-being of the populace. As such, the challenge posed by godfatherism should not be confined merely to party affairs; rather, it necessitates active legal intervention by both the government and party stakeholders. Addressing the pervasive influence of godfatherism within the political landscape is essential to gain control over the state structure. The politics associated with godfatherism

has spurred the adoption of diverse strategies by godfathers to outmaneuver their opponents. Consequently, a variety of approaches have been utilized in Nigeria to secure electoral victories, ranging from rigging and thuggery to violence and result manipulation, all of which have become regrettably commonplace in election processes (Wenibowei, 2011: 72).

The politics of godfatherism represents a concept that holds the key to unlocking the intricate doors that determine the allocation of resources within the political landscape. Within the scope of this study, it is essential to illuminate the nuanced meanings and defining characteristics of godfathers. Conceptually, godfathers in the Nigerian context are individuals who wield personal authority to influence the selection of candidates for electoral contests as well as the eventual outcomes of those elections (Alabi and Tunde, 2013: 5).

In the quest for the establishment of a sustainable democratic framework in Nigeria, the critical objective involves expanding not only the political but also the socio-economic dimensions of the nation through the robust engagement of the public in policy formulation and decision-molding processes. Nonetheless, the current reality within Nigeria's political structure deviates from this ideal stance. In both the legislative and executive branches of the government, individuals who ascend to positions of political authority frequently owe their success to the patronage and sway of specific political "patrons" or influential figures in different states. Nevertheless, the objectives pursued by these political patrons surpass the boundaries of mere political oversight; their ultimate aim revolves around attaining and wielding significant spheres of political and socio-economic influence, both on a national level and within local spheres. This strategic orchestration endeavors to exercise administrative control over the actions of elected representatives, encompassing Governors and Legislators, with the intention of shaping the course of governance and resource allocation.

This analysis brings to light the intricate maneuvers and power dynamics within Nigeria's political landscape, underscoring how the pursuit of authority extends into various facets of governance and society. It underscores the intricate interplay between political control and socio-economic power and emphasizes the far-reaching impact of these dynamics on the governance structure and the broader well-being of the nation's populace. This sphere of influence encompasses designations to prominent roles, such as Ministers, Commissioners, Chairpersons of Boards, and administrators of diverse institutions, as well as pivotal positions like Deputy Project Managers and Local Government Treasurers. Moreover, the distribution of developmental initiatives across distinct local government entities within a state aligns with the preferences of these political patrons, significantly molding the trajectory of socio-economic advancement (Alabi and Tunde, 2013: 2-3).

This perspective aligns harmoniously with the foundational principles of Elite theory, which underscores the manner in which political power is distributed among a select group of elites, often at the cost of the broader masses. To delve deeper into this concept, the insights of Albert (2005: 81) serve as a guiding light. He highlights a pivotal aspect highlighted by both Pareto and Marx in their respective works—namely, the notion that political elites possess a proclivity to isolate themselves from the general populace and diligently perpetuate their own ranks from within their privileged circle. Their endeavors are meticulously geared towards safeguarding their elite status by tightly controlling the membership within their ranks.

A parallel perspective, presented by Sale (2018), mirrors this phenomenon, particularly evident in the case of Yobe North senatorial district. Here, the ruling party has endorsed Senator Ahmed Lawan, who holds the distinction of being the longest-serving senator in the state and concurrently serves as the Senate leader. Pertinent political observers within and beyond the state contend that Adamu Maina Waziri has exerted substantial influence in weakening the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Yobe State. Since the inception of democratic governance in 1999, Waziri has consistently monopolized the gubernatorial candidacy of the party, consistently failing to secure an electoral victory or permitting any competing contenders. Critics allege that Waziri has effectively subjugated the party to serve his personal interests, casting suspicions on his alignment with the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

This situation has fueled a formidable political confrontation between the incumbent Senator and Waziri. Drawing from the insights of political analysis, the ongoing internal strife between A. Waziri and M. Hassan carries significant implications. If not resolved amicably before the forthcoming general elections, the discord may inevitably pave the way for the PDP to forfeit the senatorial seat to the APC. In such a scenario, the



APC would undoubtedly derive satisfaction, as Zone B stands as the sole senatorial zone under the sway of PDP among the three. Furthermore, the solitary senator presenting a formidable challenge to Yobe APC and causing them considerable concern belongs to this zone (Sale, 2018).

The notion of godfatherism encompasses a spectrum of concepts including intermediation, mentorship, benevolence, support, and sponsorship. Within the realm of politics, this concept embodies an ideology rooted in the belief that certain individuals wield substantial influence, enabling them to unilaterally shape the allocation of party tickets for electoral participation and determine the victor in electoral contests (Chukwuemeka, Oji and Chukwurah, 2013). Godfathers are individuals who possess the "power" and authority to orchestrate both the nomination of candidates for elections and their subsequent triumph in the electoral arena. In essence, godfatherism denotes a practice where aspirants seeking office establish affiliations with individuals presumed capable of delivering desired outcomes in electoral battles. It has become customary for those with political aspirations to seek the guidance and support of a political patron to advance their political ambitions.

Bassey and Enetak (2008) have articulated a conceptualization of godfatherism that encapsulates the potency and sway wielded by individuals of political significance in determining the selection of candidates for electoral contests and influencing the eventual election outcomes. Godfathers, as they describe, exhibit remarkable political mobility and possess the capacity to steer political backing toward specific political parties or candidates for whom they lend their influential endorsement. Those who participate in this practice of godfatherism are recognized as godfathers, while individuals who reap the benefits of their patronage are referred to as godsons. This dynamic illustrates the intricate interplay between influential figures and those who benefit from their patronage within the political landscape.

As outlined by Chukwuemeka, Oji, and Chukwurah (2013), godfathers represent a coalition of potent socio-economic and political elites united by a shared value system operating within an organized framework. Frequently, these coalitions feature godfathers who wield authority over the operations of this collective entity, akin to a well-structured mafia. These godfathers, characterized by their formidable influence, hold the reins of power, determining who, what, when, and how of political and bureaucratic appointments. In contemporary Nigeria, many godfathers have adopted strategies reminiscent of the tactics employed by the mafia employing violent scheming, aggressive politicking, and manipulative strategies to secure their interests. In this pursuit, they often subscribe to Machiavelli's famous adage, "the end justifies the means."

To consolidate the diverse perspectives presented above, godfatherism can be distilled into the act of facilitating financial backing for political parties through a compact group of select elite individuals who have positioned themselves as influential power brokers and kingmakers. This backing is not without its reciprocal expectations, entailing a form of indirect power control and a pursuit of material gains. In essence, godfatherism is akin to a substantial investment undertaken with the expectation of significant returns. From the comprehensive explanations provided above, it becomes evident that godfatherism is characterized by a dynamic interplay between two essential parties: the godfather and the godson.

This relationship is inherently symbiotic, with each party reliant upon the other for their survival and the attainment of their respective goals. Crucially, both entities require the collaboration to achieve their aims effectively. The godfather assumes the role of the financial backbone for the godson's electoral campaign, investing substantial resources to ensure the godson's success. In return, the godson reciprocates by offering substantial interest payments and the allocation of lucrative contracts to the godfather, thereby cementing the reciprocal nature of this relationship (Albert, 2005; Adeoye, 2009; Majekodunmi and Olanrewaju, 2013).

### **Consequences of Godfatherism to Nigeria's Government and Democratic Rule**

Over the course of both military rule and Nigeria's fourth republic (1999-2013), the emergence of godfatherism has proven to be a substantial threat, not only to effective governance but also to the overall socio-economic development and stability of democratic governance within the country. This influence has had particularly concerning and detrimental effects on the integrity of a genuinely free, fair, and credible electoral

process, where citizens are rightfully expected to elect their chosen representatives to public offices. Regrettably, one of the most alarming consequences of godfatherism within Nigeria's fourth republic has been its ability to undermine the authenticity of elections, as godfathers have imposed their favored candidates onto the populace. This practice significantly undermines the fundamental principles of democratic governance (Chukwumeka, 2012).

When public officials are no longer answerable to the citizens who, essentially, had no say in their selection for public offices due to the dominance of godfathers, their loyalty tends to sway towards these influential figures. This distortion ultimately contradicts a crucial tenet of governance and democracy: the establishment of a responsive and transparent government. This situation also erodes the foundations of good governance and political stability, which are inherently dependent on principles like the rule of law, due process, accountability, and transparency in public administration. The rise of godfatherism has deprived citizens of the advantages that democratic governance is supposed to bring, as the government becomes disinclined to initiate and implement policies that would enhance the welfare of the general populace. This is because godfatherism in Nigeria often carries a predatory nature, with political participation being driven by the pursuit of personal wealth from government coffers that their godsons hold influence over (Chukwumeka, 2012).

Consequently, the meager financial resources allocated to the state from the national treasury, which should ideally be directed towards enhancing the living standards of citizens, becomes the primary focus of these godfathers. Instances of godsons (such as governors and chairpersons) failing to fulfill pre-election agreements with their godfathers, leading to ensuing conflicts, further exemplify this trend. Noteworthy examples include the experiences in Abakaliki Local Government Area, Ebonyi state, between the former chairman, Hon. Emma Uguru, and Mr. Mathew Uguru (incumbent) from 2007 to 2011; Senator Rashidi Ladoja of Oyo state and Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu between 2003 and 2007; Alhaji Olusola Saraki and Rtd Navy Commodore Mohammed Lawal between 2003 and 2007; and Chief Chris Uba and Dr. Chris Ngige between 2003 and 2006. These instances of godfatherism have led to severe and far-reaching consequences, including the disruption of economic activities, particularly in sectors like education, healthcare, security (due to political conflicts), agriculture, housing, and infrastructural development.

### **Empirical Literature**

The political realm of godfatherism and its impact on Nigeria's socioeconomic and political growth were researched by Ahmed and Ali in 2019. The writers pointed out that the politics of the godfather mentality have become a global problem in modern democracies in the political growth of many nations, including Nigeria. Data were gathered from secondary sources using a qualitative methodology, where a large number of papers, publications, journals, research papers, and repositories were meticulously examined. The researchers employed elite theory to clarify the subject at hand. According to the report, godfather politics, which concentrate authority in the control of a small number of elites at the cost of the voters, have a detrimental effect on the socioeconomic and political growth of the country. This has impacted the nation's socioeconomic and political growth and, as a result, has caused disagreements, defections, and decampments within and between parties. Direct primary elections should be used to choose candidates for elective posts, according to the report. Additionally, INEC should enact legislation that forbids money-driven politics and should penalise anybody found guilty of engaging in such unlawful political activity.

Igbini and Okolie (2020), in a piece on godfatherism and its danger to Nigeria's developing democracy, said that it is one of the biggest flaws in the country's political structure. The nature, origins, and effects of godfatherism on Nigeria's developing democracy are discussed in this essay. The authors asserted that the politics of godfatherism undermine peaceful cohabitation, law and order, and constitute a danger to Nigeria's fledgling democracy by basing their study on several fundamental assumptions derived from the elite theory. This theoretical work mostly used secondary data, such as research papers, instructional materials, and online sources, to support its claims.

This study demonstrated how godfather politics hinder Nigeria's developing democracy. It has grown in importance and taken on a defining characteristic of political elections and national administration. As a result, it fosters political instability, exasperated unemployment, electoral fraud, and extreme poverty. The patron-client relationship constituted a serious danger to democratic governance's stability as well as to its socio-economic and political progress. Making a mockery of a genuine open, equitable, and trustworthy democratic procedure by which voters is by right anticipated to be able to put applicants of their choosing into positions of power for representing what is important to them was one of the most troubling and harming effects of the godfather mentality in Nigeria's fourth republic.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Research on the culture of politics; have been used as a tool to explain a variety of beliefs. The theory of the elite had been found to be useful in this research for describing the dominant the culture of politics in Nigeria as it is practised by party elites. In addition to being developed by Gaetano Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto, the elite theory has been popularised by a number of academics, including Wright Mills, Raymond Aron, Roberto Michels, and Floyd Hunter. However, these many forms are merged in an effort to act as an analytical framework. This idea was first created by two sociologists from Italy, Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca. The theory's previous iterations focused on the traits that helped leaders maintain or exert control in positions of power. Later iterations focused more on the social institutions (Haralambos and Heald, 1999: 107).

According to Pareto, the term "elite" refers to the few people who have achieved success and risen to a superior echelon in their respective fields of endeavour. The ruling elite was the subject of Pareto's investigation because he thought it to be governed by a combination of force and cunning (Varma, 2006). He further separates the wealthy and powerful into ruling elite and non-governing elite. The traits of certain Nigerian politicians are exposed by this position, especially those who have entered politics as high government officials and former military generals. This is an example of Roberto Michels' "Iron Rule of Oligarchy," where individuals use their position in the Party and as a "General" to intimidate others while being at the top of their professions and showing no signs of slowing down. Here, it is said that political parties no longer function as intended since only a select few make decisions and allocate resources. Additionally, this has hampered the growth of the nation's democratic system.

According to Roberto Michels (quoted in Varma, 2006), every organisation is ultimately converted to "oligarchy," which is the law of the few selected, regardless of its initial purposes. The majority of people, according to Michels, are indifferent, lazy, and servile. They cannot exercise self-government. They must thus depend on individuals to help them accomplish their social objectives. Forums for such representation include political parties, trade unions, and other groups. Elite theorists contend that since the elites are better organised and knowledgeable of class, they are able to use such coercive tactics against the bourgeoisie.

Additionally, as a movement or party expands, more and more responsibilities tend to be given to an inner group of leaders. As a result, over time, the organization's members become incapable of leading and managing them, giving officers more freedom and a greater sense of ownership over their positions. They become almost irremovable as they tenaciously hold on to their existing positions of authority and privilege. If laws are enacted to restrain a leader's power, it is the laws—not the leader—that progressively erode (Obah-Akpowoghaha, 2013). In the sense that an elite might belong to more than one class, it is important to underline that elitist categories are not mutually exclusive. Additionally, this grouping might vary at times. For instance, under a military rule, the armed forces class may also be considered political elite, especially if they are in charge of allocating state funds (Varma, 2006).

In Nigeria, the influence of the elite is so strong that voting outcomes are determined before the end of a hiring process or election, and if the results turn out differently than expected, the elites try to manipulate them by economic and political methods. At both the state and national levels, this was highly prevalent throughout the elections of 1999, 2003, and 2007. One instance that comes to mind is the political disagreement that led to Chief Audu Ogbah's forcible removal as Party Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the past as a consequence of him and Olusegun Obasanjo, the previous president of Nigeria (quoted in Aleyomi, 2013). This

shows up as factional executives and party cross-competing that eventually leads to dual or numerous managers inside a single political party. The implication is that the ruling class will use their influence to either accomplish out to the public or to manipulate elections in order acquire political power. This explains the way political parties prioritise the wealthy in terms of interest accumulation and articulation at the expense of the general populace. The link among political parties and the establishment of democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic has been explained using the Elite theory, which has been shown to be relevant by the theoretical exposition shown above.

**METHODOLOGY**

The survey research method was used for this work. To this end, the data were obtained through a structured questionnaire. The population of the study was drawn from registered voters in Akwa Ibom State, regardless of their party affiliations, as the study's focus was on the country's emerging political culture as demonstrated by the attitudes of the two political parties (PDP and APC). The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) reports that as of August 1st, 2022, there were 2,447,438 registered voters in Akwa Ibom State. The population of the research was subjected to the sample size calculation procedure developed by Krejcie and Morgan in 1970. To this end, the sample of the study was 384.

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

After administering 384 copies of questionnaire, 377 copies were successfully retrieved and used for the purpose of analysis and testing of hypothesis.

**Table 1: Responses on godfatherism**

S/N	Statement	SA	AG	DA	SD	Total
1.	Godfatherism breeds mediocrity and instability in the governance and public service.	178	141	42	16	377
2.	The prevalence of Godfatherism erodes political parties of internal democracy.	142	167	32	36	377
3.	Godfatherism robs electorates of legitimate leaders.	119	184	49	25	377
4.	Imposition of candidates on the people leads to the emergence of poor choice of leaders.	154	158	50	15	377

**Key:** SA: Strongly Agree; AG: Agree; DA: Disagree; SD: Strongly Disagree.

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023.

**Interpretation of Responses on Godfatherism**

According to the table above, for item five, incompetence and instability in government and public service are fostered by godfatherism, with 47.2% very agreeing, 37.4% agreeing, 11.1% disagreeing, and 4.2% extremely disagreeing. The answers to question six showed that 37.7% strongly agreed, 44.3% agreed, 8.5% disagreed, and 9.5% strongly disagreed that political parties' internal democracy is undermined by the predominance of Godfatherism. According to the results for item seven, godfatherism deprives electorates of genuine leaders, with 31.6% strongly agreeing, 48.8% agreeing, 13.0% disagreeing, and 6.6% very disagreeing. According to the replies to question eight, 40.8% of respondents highly agreed, 41.9% agreed, 13.3% disagreed, and 4.0% strongly disagreed that forcing candidates onto the populace results in bad leadership choices.

**Table 2: Responses on governance, internal democracy, political crises and political apathy**

S/N	Statements	SA	AG	DA	SD	Total
5.	Lawmaking remains a top priority for law makers despite their decamping from one political platform to another in the national Assembly.	97	196	58	26	377
6.	The process of law making is always followed through irrespective of inter-party defections in the National Assembly.	7	25	126	219	377



7.	Internal democracy will be difficult to attain in the face of godfatherism.	237	115	12	13	377
8.	Party squabbles and crises are inevitable due to godfatherism.	119	184	49	25	377
9.	Political crisis is a major feature of intolerance of opposition party.	154	158	50	15	377
10.	Opposition parties hardly make significant contributions to governance due to political intolerance.	91	202	52	32	377
11.	The percentage of voters’ apathy has continuously increased due to the activities of political thugs during elections.	146	91	41	93	377
12.	Majority of the masses have refused to carry out their electoral obligations for fear of being attacked by political thugs working for the political elites.	88	130	69	90	377

**Key:** SA: Strongly Agree; AG: Agree; DA: Disagree; SD: Strongly Disagree.

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023.

### Interpretation of Responses on Governance, Internal Democracy, Political Crises and Political Apathy

According to the chart above, on item seventeen, 25.7% strongly agreed, 52.0% agreed, 15.4% disagreed, and 6.9% strongly disagreed, demonstrating that MPs' top priority is still passing laws despite their shifting allegiances inside the national Assembly. Despite interparty defections in the National Assembly, the results for item 18 showed that 1.9% highly agreed, 6.6% agreed, 33.4% disagreed, and 58.1% strongly disagreed that the legislative process is always carried out. According to the replies for item 19, internal democracy will be difficult to achieve in the face of godfatherism in 62.9% strongly agreed, 30.5% agreed, 3.2% disagreed, and 3.4% strongly disagreed.

According to the results for item 20, party disputes and crises are unavoidable owing to godfatherism, with 31.6% strongly agreeing, 48.8% agreeing, 13.0% disagreeing, and 6.6% severely disagreeing. According to the replies for question number twenty-one, political crisis is a significant indicator of intolerance in the opposition party for 40.8% of respondents, 41.9% of respondents agreed, 13.3% of respondents disagreed, and 4.0% of respondents strongly disagreed. Regarding question number 22, 24.1% strongly agreed, 53.6% agreed, 13.8% disagreed, and 8.5% strongly disagreed that political intolerance prevents opposition parties from making meaningful contributions to government. According to the replies to the following question, 24.7% strongly disagreed, 10.9% disagreed, 25.7% agreed, and 38.7% strongly agreed that the actions of political thugs during elections have caused an increase in the proportion of voters' indifference. 23.3% strongly agreed, 34.5% agreed, 18.3% disagreed, and 23.9% strongly disagreed with the statement that the majority of the populace has chosen not to fulfill its electoral duties out of fear of being assaulted by political thugs working for the political elites.

### Test of Hypothesis

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The impact of the character of godfatherism practised by elites of PDP and APC on the level of internal democracy of political parties in Nigeria’s electoral process is not significant.

**H<sub>A</sub>:** The impact of the character of godfatherism practised by elites of PDP and APC on the level of internal democracy of political parties in Nigeria’s electoral process is significant.

**Table 3:** Regression research to determine the effect of godfatherism by PDP and APC elites on the degree of internal party democracy in Nigeria's election process

$\beta$  = regression coefficient; Statistical Package for Social Science-SPSS- Ver. 20.0

Groups	N	B	R	R Square	Df	t calculated	t critical	P value	Decision
Godfatherism	377	.079	0.125	0.019	375	2.480	1.96	.015	H <sub>0</sub> : rejected
Internal democracy					376				

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023.

**Decision Rule:** If computed  $t$  exceeds critical  $t$ , reject the null hypothesis. As a result, when the  $p$  value is less than ( $<$ ) 0.05, the independent variable significantly influences the dependent variable, and when the  $p$  value is more than ( $>$ ) 0.05, there is no significant effect.

**Interpretation:** The regression output table for the final hypothesis shows the influence of the extent of internal party democracy in Nigeria's election process on godfatherism by PDP and APC leaders. According to the coefficient of determination ( $r$ -square), the PDP and APC leaders' use of godfatherism accounted for only 1.9% of the overall variance in the degree of internal party democracy in Nigeria's election process. The regression analysis's findings also indicated that the amount of internal party democracy in Nigeria's election process is significantly influenced by the godfatherism practised by PDP and APC elites ( $= 0.079$ ,  $t$  computed  $= 2.480$ ,  $t$  tabulated  $= 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). To this purpose, the null hypothesis that the godfatherism practises of the PDP and APC elites have no major influence on the degree of internal party democracy in Nigeria's election process is rejected.

## **Discussion**

### **Godfatherism and Internal Democracy**

The result of the next hypothesis showed that godfatherism, as practised by PDP and APC elites, has a detrimental effect on the degree of internal party democracy in Nigeria's election process. This result corroborates Chukwuma's (2008) assertion that the politics of godfatherism have a detrimental effect on Nigeria's political system and its people. Given the circumstances whereby godfathers pick who will run for office or push candidates of their choosing on the general populace in society, this author believes that the right to choose a contender of their personal preference to govern them is exhausted. The political godfathers in Nigerian states are not just wealthy individuals who fund elections; rather, they are individuals whose power is derived from their ability to orchestrate acts of violence and corruption in order to influence national, state, or local political agendas in favour of the candidates they support.

This result confirms Oluloyo's (2014) observation that godfathers demand a significant amount of influence over the governing body not to support or shape government policy but rather to obtain a direct monetary benefit in the nature of public funds that have been either pillaged by their elected officials or provided to them as new chances for the implant. The rise of the privileged few to control societal political institutions and structures is characterised by the excessive concentration of political influence, money, and power. But the conflict and the ideals that emerged have had a big influence on society in many different ways. The people who are part of the upper crust are now engaged in power conflicts that have resulted in violence of various types and intensities.

## **Conclusion**

The goal of the present research was to explore the implications of godfatherism internal democracy in political parties. Gaetano Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto's Elite Theory was used to explain this research. This thesis underlined how every institution-regardless of its initial goals-is ultimately reduced to "oligarchy," or the rule of the select few. The majority of people, according to the writers, are indifferent, lazy, and servile. They cannot exercise self-government. They must thus depend on their fellow citizens to help them accomplish their social objectives. Trade unions, political parties, and other organisations serve as the forums for this representation. Elite theorists contend that the democratic elites' employment of repressive tactics against the bourgeoisie stems from their increased organisation and awareness of class. These are the tactics that the two major political parties under examination in this research use. The fact that even minor parties engage in these political games is important to note, particularly when they are courted or influenced by the major parties for support.

## **Recommendations**

According on the study's results, the following suggestions have been made:

- i. The current political parties are required by the Independent National Electoral Commission-INEC to disclose their unique ideology and philosophical underpinnings.
- ii. The idea of democracy within a party and creating equitable opportunities for every member should be ingrained in political parties. The political parties must promote internal party democracy if they want to strengthen the nation's democracy, which will eventually have an adverse impact at the national level.
- iii. The Independent National Electoral Commission-INEC should implement the use of electronic voting for all elections in the nation to decrease godfatherism in the system and to stop electoral fraud. This will lessen election cheating and motivate candidates to run for whatever office they want.
- iv. Additionally, political parties should make nomination and contesting forms more reasonably and inexpensively priced so that the general public may run for office at all levels—local, state, and federal—in their respective constituencies. To deter godfathers and politicians who run for office only out of greed, the perception that elected officials get enormous allowances and salaries has to end.

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