

Godfatherism, Clientelism and Violence: A Chronology of Gubernatorial Elections in Oyo State Nigeria, 1999-2015

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Abstract

Electoral politics in new democracies of Africa have been largely defined by the phenomena of godfatherism, clientelism and violence. The right bestowed on the people by democracy to choose who represents them in free and fair elections has been eroded by godfather politics which usually manifests through clientelism and often enforced by violence. While studies have shown that these phenomena have far reaching implications on the electoral and democratisation processes of African nations, most of the studies approached the phenomena from the national perspective, paying little attention to how they manifest at the sub-national or state levels. This article is an empirical exploration of the manifestations of these phenomena in gubernatorial elections in Oyo state from 1999 to 2015. The research design is qualitative. Data were derived from primary and secondary sources. Through the purposive sampling technique, primary data were collected using Key Informant and in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions. Secondary data were derived from extant relevant literature. Data were analysed using content analysis. Findings revealed that the violent nature of gubernatorial elections in the state in the period of study was largely due to Chief Lamidi Adedibu's clientelist and patronage politics branded by violence and political thuggery. The study concludes that the implications include: bad leadership, corruption, impunity and increased criminal activities which have impacted negatively on government policies in the state.

Keywords: Elections; Godfatherism; Clientelism; Violence; Oyo state

INTRODUCTION

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Since their emergence as sovereign nations, electoral politics in new democracies of Africa have been largely defined by the hydra-headed phenomena of godfatherism, clientelism and violence (Albert, 2005; Lindberg, 2003; Omotola, 2010). The theory of liberal democracy which guides multi-party democratic electoral contests, presupposes that the ultimate power to decide who governs resides with the people. The reality of contemporary African politics is such that, the right bestowed on the people by democracy to choose who governs them in free and fair elections has been eroded by godfather politics which usually manifests through clientelism and often enforced by violence. These phenomena have permeated the political spaces of Africa's new democracies. Young (2009) noted that despite the embrace of democracy by African

countries, the political elite rather than the electorate determines who gets which political or electoral office and at what time. Van de Walle (2001) contended that attainment of political authority in Africa is conditioned by involvement in clientele networks and relationships which permeates the entire gamut of its states. Omotola (2010) argued that the persistence of violence in elections in Africa is as a result of the clientelist and neo-patrimonial character of African states.

Godfather politics, clientelism and violence have indeed become peculiar trademarks of African political systems (Albert, 2005; Lindberg, 2003; Omotola, 2010; van de Walle 2007; Young, 2009). Section 131 of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria prohibits “threatening use of force, violence or restraint on a voter, inflicting or threatening to inflict injury on a voter to induce, compel him to vote or refrain from voting, preventing the exercise of the right to vote through abduction, duress, or fraud and other forms of threats to political aspirants and or voters”. It further states that any person or group of persons who contravenes the section of the Electoral Act is liable to 3 years imprisonment with an option of fine of 1,000,000.00 naira (Electoral Act, 2010) (as amended). Despite the above provisions of the Electoral Act, it suffices to argue that the nature of elections in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic has been that of monumental electoral violence. Electoral violence has become a recurring decimal in the country’s electoral process such that it has turned out to be a quadrennial threat to the nation’s democracy. Even though the country is currently enjoying the longest stable period of democracy since 1999, its electoral process has been tainted with killings, maiming, kidnapping and abduction and destruction of properties largely fuelled by godfatherism and clientelism.

These attributes emerged from the idea of neopatrimonialism which took the centre stage in discourses pertaining to post-colonial epoch in Africa, particularly from early 1960s to the 1990s (Young, 2009). During this period new leaders of Africa took charge of access to political power, dictating the pace of public policy and most essentially creating a system in which politicians were allotted political offices in exchange for loyalty and services to the leaders (Young and Turner, 1985). This situation has been described as the basis of the system on which African politics operates and thrives (Francisco, 2010). Scholars have presented varying views as regards the implications of this system on the African continent. While some perceive it as an indicator of underdevelopment or better still a phenomenon which retards growth and development (Lindberg, 2003; van de Walle, 2007; Berman, 1998) others view it as

a system that is naturally compatible to the social systems of Africa (Ward & Edward, 2019; Cammack, 2007).

Whichever way it is perceived, studies have shown that the phenomena of godfatherism, clientelism and violence have far reaching implications on the electoral and democratisation processes of African nations (Albert, 2005; Lindberg, 2003; Omotola, 2010; van de Walle 2007; Young, 2009 Ward & Edward, 2019; Cammack, 2007). Thus, there is certainly no paucity of literature on the phenomena as they relate to African democracies. Most of these studies however, approached the phenomena from the national perspective, paying little attention to how they manifest at the sub-national or state levels. Since the creation of Oyo state in 1976, gubernatorial elections in the state have always been violence-ridden. Electoral violence in the state has always been accompanied by high human and material losses. The experiences of violent electoral contests in the state precipitated this study.

This study examines godfatherism, clientelism and violence in gubernatorial elections in Oyo state, Nigeria from 1999 to 2015. The main objectives are to attempt an empirical exploration of their manifestations in Oyo state's gubernatorial electoral processes from 1999-2015 and their implications on the state's political and democratisation processes. The paper proceeds to a note on research design and methods. Thereafter, the paper attempts a conceptual and theoretical exploration of godfatherism, clientelism and violence. Afterwards, there is a discussion on the electoral history of Oyo state before 1999. The paper proceeds after that to an empirical exploration of the Oyo state experience from 1999-2015. The last part dwells on implications and conclusion.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of this study are to attempt an empirical exploration of manifestations of the phenomena of godfatherism, clientelism and violence in gubernatorial elections in Oyo state from 1999 to 2015 and their implications on the state's political process. The study sought in-depth understanding of the manifestations of the phenomena by placing emphasis on persons and an all-inclusive group empirical experience. Thus, the study was designed to be an empirically qualitative one. Data for the study were sourced from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were

collected through a combination of key informant and in-depth interviews as well as two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) using the purposive sampling method. Five Key Informant Interviews (KII) and three in-depth interviews were conducted to elicit primary data. The KII was adopted to elicit primary data from the respondents who have firsthand information and practical knowledge and experiences of the manifestations of godfatherism, clientelism and violence viv-a-vis governorship elections in Oyo state from 1999 to 2015.

The KII respondents consisted of: a former speaker of the Oyo State House of Assembly, who served from 2003 to 2007; a former Special Adviser and Chief of Staff to a former governor who served from 2011 to 2015 as special adviser and was the Chief of Staff to the governor as at the time the interview was conducted; a former Commissioner of Police who served in the state from 2006 to 2011; a former factional State Chairman of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW*) whose members were significantly used to foment violence during governorship elections from 1999 to 2015 and the Administrative Secretary of the Oyo state Headquarters of the Independent National electoral Commission (INEC). The respondents with their specific knowledge and experiences of the phenomena in the state were able to provide valuable insights and explanation into the manifestations of the phenomena within the period of the study and their implications on electoral and political processes the state.

The in-depth interview respondents consisted of prominent members of the academia from one of the prominent Universities in the country located in Ibadan the state capital. The respondents are Professors of Political Science and are scholars who have published extensively on themes relating to elections and electoral conflict in Nigeria in general and Oyo State in particular. The academics are based in the state, specifically in Ibadan and are conversant with and have a mastery of the workings of the political and electoral processes of the state. The description of the respondents explains their connection to the phenomena under examination and describes their

* The National Union of Road Transport Workers in Nigeria is a trade union that takes care of the welfare and interest of transport workers in the road transportation sector. The Union consists of men both young and old who uses several means of transportation including taxi cabs and buses for transporting passengers and goods from one place to the other.

centrality to the study. The face-to-face method of interview was used for both the KII and in-depth interview. The FGDs were conducted on two separate sessions consisting of 12 participants for each discussion. Each group of FGD consisted of electoral stakeholders in the state during the elections.

The discussants in the first FGD consisted of 3 electoral officers each from 4 Local Government Areas from each Senatorial District in the state. The second session involved 3 political party officials selected from 4 Local Government Areas from each Senatorial District in the state. Though each FGD was recorded for onward transcription note taking was used to complement the recorded discussions. Secondary data were collected from critical analysis of extant literature on the subject matter of the study such as relevant journal articles, textbooks and policy briefs. Other secondary sources include: reports of election observers that monitored the governorship elections in the state within the period of the study. Data were analysed using the content analysis method. Collection of primary data involved extensive field work which was carried out between April 2017 and March 2018.

One of the setbacks associated with the use of qualitative research techniques particularly as they relate to the use interviews is eliciting valid and precise data in terms of responses from the interviewees. The fact that the period of study - 1999 to 2015 covers a period of fifteen years is an indication that the interviewer may find it difficult to get comprehensive recollection of events as they occur from the interviewees. Practical experience of occurrence of events fades away with time and with the occurrence of new events. To surmount this limitation, individual interview responses were compared with the results of transcription of the interview contents and were subsequently triangulated from various sources. Findings from the study were compared with reports of Election Observer Missions and studies conducted by Non-governmental organizations on Oyo state electoral processes within the period under study.

The study was conducted in Oyo state. The state was selected given its centrality not only to politics in the South-west geo-political zone but the entire country in general. This is derivable from the fact that Oyo state houses Ibadan which was the capital of the old Western Region of Nigeria. Though gubernatorial elections have taken place in Oyo state prior 1999 and have also been conducted after 2015, the choice of 1999-2015 which is the time frame of the study is born out of the state's experience in

terms of godfather politics which largely orchestrated violent governorship elections in the state between 1999 and 2015. During this period the state witnessed high level electoral violence and intense godfatherism highly characterised by patron-clients relations (Bello, 2015).

Oyo State is one of the three States (Oyo, Ogun and Ondo) carved out of the former Western State of Nigeria on 3rd February, 1976 by Murtala/Obasanjo regime. The State, officially took-off with its own administration on 1st April, 1976. In 1991 the former Oyo State was split into two, resulting to the present day Oyo and Osun states in another states creation exercise by the General Babangida led Military Government (Joshua, Samuel and Godwin, 2012). At inception the state was administered by a Military Administrator, Colonel David Medaiyese Jemibewon. David Jemibewon administered the state from March 1976 to July 1978. The state was later administered from July 1978 to October 1979 by another military officer, Colonel Paul Tarfa before the commencement of the Second Republic. The state is made up of thirty-three Local Government Areas and three Senatorial districts, namely: Oyo Central, Oyo North and Oyo South.

GODFATHERISM, CLIENTELISM AND VIOLENCE: A CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

The concepts of godfatherism, clientelism and violence suffer from lack of definitional consensus (Albert, 2005; Hicken, 2011; Sisk, 2008; Stokes, 2013). Albert (2005) noted that the term godfatherism has varying definitions to different people. Hicken (2011) also claimed that the term clientelism has been used colloquially in literature with little or no effort at given a concise definition of the term. It was further posited that while the concept has no universal definition, some certain rudiments are necessary for any attempt at its definition. These include: clientelist relationships; dyadic relationships; contingency and hierarchy (Hicken, 2011). Nevertheless, useful definitions of the terms have been put forward by scholars.

Berenschot and Aspinall (2020) defined godfatherism as a phenomenon based on a political relationship between a superior and a subordinate in which the later derives accomplishment of certain wishes and aspirations through the help of the superior. The relationship which both parties benefit from bonds the two together with

the superior largely determining what the subordinate gets. From this definition, it can be posited that godfatherism entails the existence of two parties in which the godfather is highly placed in the societal hierarchy and the other that is, the godson pledges loyalty to the godfather. Based on this, the godson gets whatever he wants from the godfather as long as he is loyal to him. A more radical definition of the term was offered by Nnamani when he posited that godfatherism involves the existence of:

An impervious guardian figure who provided the lifeline and direction to the godson, perceived to live a life of total submission, subservience and protection of the oracular personality located in the large, material frame of opulence, affluence and decisiveness, that is, if not ruthless, strictly, the godfather is simply a self seeking individual out there to use the government for his own purposes (Nnamani 2006: 57-61).

The above definition suggests that godfatherism may not be characterised by a symbiotic relationship and that godfatherism can degenerate into a parasitic relationship in which the godfather is all out to satisfy his personal desires and interests at the expense of the loyal godson who funds the parasitic relationship either from his personal purse or from state funds. This definition further shows that the godfather is a powerful individual, who can decide to punish his godson in the event that the godson becomes disloyal or reneges in funding the parasitic relationship in which the godfather is the principal beneficiary. This may have explained why Omotola (2007) sees godfathers as those individuals in a democratic polity who have the financial capability as well as political and security networks to secure victory for their loyal godsons during an election and plot the loss of a recalcitrant godson in elections. A common factor to the definitions offered above is that godfatherism has a political undertone. Onwuzuruigbo (2013) however, warned that though godfatherism in the Nigerian context is more perverse in the political realm, it should be understood that the concept has socio-cultural basis in Nigeria.

He argued that defining the concept strictly in relation to political collaboration is not only insufficient but also prevents a comprehensive understanding of the situation in which it existed as a culture or norm (Onwuzuruigbo, 2013). The socio-cultural basis of godfatherism in the Nigerian context centres on clientelism. Omotola (2007) may have captured this assertion when he posited that godfatherism has existed for long in Nigeria and has remained an integral attribute of the socio-cultural tradition of the Nigerian

state. In this context, the phenomenon was basically of socio-economic purpose in which both parties derived mutual benefits and understanding but its practise in contemporary Nigerian has turned politics to a winner-takes-all activity (Omotola, 2007). Godfatherism in contemporary Nigerian politics manifests in clientelism.

Clientelism as a concept has been defined as “as the proffering of material goods in return for electoral support, where the criterion of distribution that the patron uses is simply: did you (will you) support me? (Stokes, 2013: 605). This definition presupposes that clientelism exists on a continuum and hierarchy and is exemplified by patronage. At one end of the continuum is the patron and at the other is the client. The patron occupies a top position on the hierarchy while the client’s position is subservient. Thus, clientelism entails a dyadic relationship between the patron and the client. Such dyadic relations according to Hicken (2011) are based on practical and physical dealings between the two, hence the definition of clientelism as “instrumental friendship” (Scott, 1972:92). The term has also been perceived as “a long term relationship between two people of unequal status who have relatively regular personal interactions” and exchange of “goods and services” (Hilgers, 2011:570). The goods and services according to Hilgers may include, on the part of the patron: political protection and guarantee of political office and on the part of the client: electoral and political support (2011).

Hicken’s (2011) perspective on the definition of clientelism as entailing dyadic relationship, and hierarchy and has not gone without criticism. Berenschot and Aspinall (2020) observed that studies of clientelism in the 1960s and 1970s could not yield enough empirical observation as regards the extent the practice of clientelism varies among political systems. This, according to them was because most of the scholars largely perceived clientelism as a dyadic relationship between a patron and a client characterised by hierarchy and subservience. In this regard, such scholars viewed clientelism as basically an economic activity which dominates the relationships between landlords and tenants (Berenschot & Aspinall, 2020). Definitions of clientelism which emerged over the last decade view clientelism not necessarily as a relationship between patrons and clients but as a specific type of exchange. Clientelism therefore, connotes “the practise of exchanging a targeted, non-policy based and contingent provision of material benefits such as money, jobs, public services and government contracts for political and electoral support such as votes, campaign funding and other forms of campaign support” (Berenschot & Aspinall, 2020:4).

It is however, important to note that a concise definition of clientelism which will fit into the term as it operates in new democracies of Africa will entail the existence of a patron and a client. Thus, while the study adopts the definition of Omotola (2007) on godfatherism, the study adopts the definition offered by Berenschot and Aspinall (2020) on clientelism but with a slight variation that the exchange exists between patrons and clients. The patron does not necessarily connote a political office holder but he is a powerful individual in the society with enough political and economic connections and influence. The provision of material benefits which he doles out for electoral support are derived from his political and economic influence (Sayari, 2012) and access to public funds.

Clientele relationships can induce violence (in this case, electoral violence). Electoral violence is here defined as any predetermined act that is aimed at influencing an electoral process through all forms of electoral malfeasance (Fischer, 2002). It has also been described as any intense act, which in most cases is physical, directed at affecting an electoral process which occurs during elections (Sisk, 2008). Thus, electoral violence is targeted at intimidating electoral stakeholders and influencing the outcome of an electoral process and can occur before, during or after elections (Nwolise, 2007). Albert (2007) explained electoral violence as all forms of coercive acts directed at political stakeholders before, during and after electoral competitions.

The above three perspectives on electoral violence espoused by Fischer (2002), Sisk (2008) and Albert (2007) have a common point of convergence. For instance the authors see electoral violence as a tool for manipulating the electoral process in favour of a preferred candidate using some forms of crude acts. However, while Fischer (2002) and Sisk (2008) categorise “random acts” as constituting electoral violence, Albert’s conceptualization does not take into cognisance random and spontaneous acts as constituting electoral violence. It is however important to note that elections can also trigger off random or spontaneous acts of violence among various electoral stakeholders most especially after the election period.

In his own perspective, Laakso (2007) views electoral violence as acts geared towards influencing election outcomes which occur mostly in the context of stage-mismanaged electoral process and might involve physical attacks on election officials and stakeholders. This definition presupposes two methods through which election

results can be affected. They are: manipulating the electoral procedure and contesting the legitimacy of the results. The two methods constitute what he refers to as 'electoral violence'. It can however, be averred that the legitimacy of election result can be contested without necessarily using violent means. Disputes pertaining to elections can be contested in the court of law. In the case of Nigeria, there is the Elections Petitions Tribunal where disputes pertaining to elections are initially entertained.

The United Nations Development Program (2009:4) refers to election related violence as acts or threats of coercion, intimidation or physical harm perpetrated to affect an electoral process or that arises during elections. Violence may be used to manipulate an electoral process. This may include acts to delay or disrupt an election so as to influence its outcomes. Ochoche (1997) also posited that it include any act at any stage of the electoral process to determine the outcome of an election beyond what it could have been objectively, affects the electoral process (Ochoche,1997). From the foregoing, it can be observed that electoral violence is perpetrated for two distinct reasons. One, to affect the electoral process and two, to inflict harm on political opponents, probably to scare them away from contesting or to permanently incapacitate them from contesting. It is however, important to note that electoral violence can also be perpetrated by an opposing camp when it is clear that its candidate will lose an election. Summarily put therefore, electoral violence can be viewed as that aspect of political violence which occurs during electioneering periods and which is directed at winning an electoral contest at all cost. For the purpose of this study therefore, the definition offered by Albert (2007) shall be adopted, that is, "electoral violence refer to all forms of organized acts aimed at intimidating, harming or black-mailing a political stakeholder before, during and after an election with a view to delaying or influencing an electoral process" (Albert, 2007:133).

The consequences attached to electoral violence are in most cases high. Even in circumstances in which human and material loss are minimal, electoral violence has grave effects on the prospects of democratic advancement. Electoral violence can be described as being partly responsible for military incursion into politics in Nigeria. One justifiable reason adduced by the Military for intervening in politics is the inability of the civilian government to quell violence which may occur as a result of fierce electoral competition in the country. Such uncontrolled violence could result from internal party crisis and unacceptable election outcome.

The struggle for political power defined in terms of fierce contestation for elective posts defines elite politics in Nigeria. It is on this note that Mbah, Nwangwu, and Ugwu (2019) opined that the struggle for state power through elections in Nigeria can be likened to war. They opined that the elite mobilises support in a large number as if preparing for war. According to them mobilisation of support entails each region assembling its people with the aim of capturing power at all cost (Mba et.al. 2019). Therefore, the rate of violence associated with elections is high. This cannot be unconnected with the fact that electoral politics in Nigeria is seen as a zero sum game in which the winner wins all and the lose losses everything (Mbah et.al. 2019). The tendency for clientelism to degenerate into violence has been examined in literature (Boone & Krieger, 2012; Höglund 2009; Mueller, 2012; Straus & Taylor, 2012).

Boone and Krieger (2012) stated the case of Cote d'Ivoire's 2010 elections where incumbents seeking re-election manipulated land rights to mobilise patronage networks for electoral support particularly in places where such incumbents are not popular and have a high potential of losing elections. The manipulation of rights to allocate land was entrenched by the power of incumbency through the use of violence. Such clientele practice was also responsible for electoral violence in Kenya from 1992 to 2007 (Mueller, 2012). Höglund (2009) noted that the clientele nature of politics in African nations is a strong causal factor of electoral violence. In a political system where patron-client relationships are prevalence, politicians gain political power through the informal connections and relationships they control through clientelism and patronage. This situation according to Hoglund (2009) is based on an interpersonal exchange between patrons and client in an unequal relationship which have a high tendency of degeneration into violence.

Empirical experiences of godfatherism, clientelism and violence in elections are bound. In Nigeria, between June 2006 and May 2014, 915 fatal incidents relating to elections were captured. Out of these incidents a total number of 3,934 deaths were recorded (Nigeria Watch Database, 2014). Apart from Oyo state which is an isolated case, Enugu, Anambra and Kwara states have all had the experience of the phenomena where godfathers single handedly installed and removed governors at will. In Anambra state, Chief Emeka Offor who was the godfather of the then governor of state, Chinwoke Mbadinuju ensured that Chinwoke Mbadinuju did not get the PDP ticket to contest for re-election in the 2003 general elections. The godfather cited disloyalty on the part of the godson for refusing to grant him re-election. Chief Chris Uba who

sponsored the election of his godson, Dr. Chris Ngige also ensured that he was removed as governor in a violent manner when the godson reneged on his promise. This was similar to the case of Anambra state where Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani fell out of favour with Chief Jim Nwobodo, his godfather. Also In kwara state, Dr. Olusola Saraki ensured the victory of the Muhammed Lawal in the 1999 governorship election in the state. By 2003, the relationship between the two got sour. Saraki however, ensured that Muhammed Lawal did not secure the ticket for re-election. This led to violent confrontations between supporters of the two political bigwigs in the state (Omotola, 2007).

Gubernatorial Elections in Oyo State Prior to 1999

Following its creation in 1976, the first gubernatorial election in Oyo state was conducted in 1979. The election which was scheduled to hold on the 28th of July, 1979 was contested by five political parties - the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN); National Party of Nigeria (NPN); Peoples Redemption Party (PRP); Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP) and the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP). Out of these five parties, two were the most prominent. These were the UPN and the NPN. The UPN fielded Chief Bola Ige as its candidate while the NPN had Chief Richard Akinjide as its flag bearer. The 1979 Governorship election was a tough contest between UPN's Bola Ige and NPN's Richard Akinjide. The pre-election period was characterised by intense political campaign largely characterised by hate speech and violence (Adeoti, 2009). In the election, Bola Ige defeated Richard Akinjide to become the first Executive Governor of Oyo.

Politics of acrimony, godfatherism and patronage which characterised electoral politics in the Western Region of the First Republic and which gave the region the appellation of the 'Wild Wild West' played out during the 1979 governorship election in the state. The nomination process of the parties were characterised by intense intra-party crisis and violence particularly in the UPN. Godfathers of the First Republic politics in the then Western Region such as Alhaji Busari Adelakun, also known as 'Eruobodo' engaged in intra-party politicking to ensure that their anointed godson clinched the party's ticket. Chief Bola Ige through the support of Alhaji Busari Adelakun defeated Emmanuel Alayande in the primary election to clinch the party's ticket despite Emmanuel Alayande being the anointed candidate of the leader of the party, Chief Obafemi Awolowo (Adeoti, 2009).

After spending a term in office, Bola Ige decided to seek re-election in the 1983 gubernatorial election under his party, the UPN. Unlike in 1979 when Bola Ige had to contest with Chief Richard Akinjide, he had to contest the 1983 gubernatorial election with Chief Victor Omololu Olunloyo who is also an indigene of Ibadan and who was the candidate of NPN (Adeoti, 2009). Bola Ige through the use of power of incumbency secured his party's ticket to contest the election. Though other political parties fielded candidates for the election they were not as popular and formidable as the candidates of the UPN and the NPN. Thus, the 1983 gubernatorial election in Oyo state was also a contest between Bola Ige, the then incumbent Governor and Omololu Olunloyo a first time contestant. Unlike in 1979 when Bola Ige had the support of the party's godfathers, political bigwigs in the state before the 1983 elections withdrew their support for Bola Ige accusing him of disloyalty. This almost led to his expulsion from the party (Adeoti, 2009).

Many political elites for example: Chiefs Adisa Akinloye, Richard Akinjide, Busari Adelakun and Lamidi Adedibu threw their support for Omololu Olunloyo for victory in the election. With this, Bola Ige appeared to have lost the election but vowed to secure victory even without his godfathers. Resultantly, the stage was set for a violent governorship election. The period leading to the 1983 gubernatorial election in Oyo state was particularly tense. Many political analysts and supporters of different political parties envisaged an outbreak of election violence. The Election Day was marred by low voter turnout. Fewer people had interest in voting during the Governorship election. This could not be unconnected with the fact that many people had concluded that violence would make the whole process a charade (Hart, 1993). In the rising tension, they saw no need in getting involved in an election which has high potentialities of generating exacerbated electoral violence. To avoid this, some people had sent their families far away from the city to a perceived safer place till the election would be concluded. Polling stations were very sparse as there were few voters. It was also observed that some of them closed before the official time as the election was characterised by low turnout of voters as a result of which there were few voters at polling stations (Hart, 1993).

The result of the election showed that the N.P.N gubernatorial candidate defeated the incumbent, Bola Ige who was the flag-bearer of U.P.N. Having won the election Dr. Victor Omololu Olunloyo became the second executive Governor of Oyo

state. The Election Day in Ibadan was however, bloody in few places. A close associate of the N.P.N. gubernatorial candidate, Olunloyo, Mr. Akinola Amuwo was burned to ashes at Oke-Ado area of Ibadan (Adeoti, 2009). The aftermath of the declaration of results by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) was turbulent. Violence broke out in most parts of the state as had been envisaged and predicted. This was ostensibly as a result of popular reaction against perceived rigged gubernatorial elections which favoured the N.P.N. candidate in a staunch U.P.N. State (Apter, 1987). After series of electoral litigations, Dr. Victor Omololu Olunloyo became the substantive Governor of Oyo state. However, barely three months in office, the military coup of 31st December, 1983 terminated his administration.

As part of plans to relinquish power to a democratically elected government, the then General Babangida regime established two political parties. These political parties were the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). Based on this, governorship elections were held across the country (Ojo, 2014). The 1991 governorship election was a contest between Chief Kolapo Ishola of SDP and Alhaji Yekini Adejo of NRC. With the support of notable political elites in the state, notably: Chief Lamidi Adedibu and Chief Rashidi Adewolu Ladoja. Chief Kolapo Ishola emerged as the winner of the 1991 election in the state (Ojo, 2014). The administration of Kolapo Ishola as the third Governor of Oyo state was short-lived. It lasted barely 22 months due to the palace coup led by General Sani Abacha in November, 1993 which led to the abortion of the Third Republic.

Godfatherism, Clientelism and Violence: The Oyo State Experience, 1999-2015

Oyo state began to witness intense godfather politics operated largely through clientelist and patronage networks often fostered by violence at the commencement of the Fourth Republic in 1999. In this period, godfatherism, clientelism and violence revolved around Chief Lamidi Adedibu. Chief Lamidi Adedibu who in the 1950s started as a political messenger to First Republic politicians such as: Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Chief Augustus Adisa Akinloye was an organiser of political thugs for politicians (Human Rights Watch, 2007). By the end of the 1980s, Chief Adedibu had developed into a strong political figure whose powers manifested, particularly in the Fourth Republic in Oyo state through clientelism and violence. While Adedibu's style of politics was deeply embedded in thuggery and violence such that he was described as notorious and a threat to political stability in Oyo state (Bello, 2015) his political

pro prowess was derived from his ability to mobilise violence and support for any candidate he pulls his weight behind in an election, hence his perception as the “strongman of Ibadan politics” (In-depth Interview, 2018).

The emergence of Lam Adesina as the governor of Oyo state in 1999 without the support of Chief Lamidi Adedibu did not come to many as a surprise. This is because as at the time the election was held the All Peoples Party (APP) which Adedibu belonged to was not popular, not only in Oyo state, but the entire South West. Lam Adesina’s victory came as a result of the tremendous support for the Alliance for Democracy (AD) in the entire South-West. The party was viewed as a reincarnate of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) which was predominantly a South-West party (Animaswun, 2013). After the 1999 governorship election Adedibu left the APP to join the PDP. This coupled with his cordial relationship with the then President Olusegun Obasanjo turned him into a political king marker in the state (Animaswun, 2013).

In 2003 Adedibu single-handedly ensured the emergence of his political godson Senator Rashidi Ladoja as the governor of the state at the expense of Lam Adesina who was seeking a second term in an election that was tainted with all sorts of electoral malfeasance. A key Informant in an interview claimed that the process by which Ladoja emerged as the PDP flag bearer was largely undemocratic (Key Informant Interview, 2018). He lamented that the emergence of Ladoja as the PDP candidate was the outcome of internal party manipulations spearheaded by Lamidi Adedibu In essence, it was alleged that Ladoja’s emergence as the party’s candidate was not based on democratic ethos and popular consent of the members of the PDP (Key Informant Interview, 2018).

The gubernatorial election was marred by serious irregularities, manipulation of election results, thuggery and other forms of electoral fraud. The Election Observers reported widespread electoral fraud claiming that the election lacked credibility thereby undermining the electoral process. According to the EUEOM (2003) there were reported cases of ballot box stuffing, forgery of results sheets, falsification of election result, ballot box snatching and a variety of other means of rigging. It was claimed by Danjibo and Oladeji (2007) that Ladoja was able to emerge as winner of the election because the PDP was able to manipulate the 2003 elections at the state level with the aid of some godfathers, the most prominent being Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu who through the help of ‘federal might’, was not only able to deliver Oyo state to the PDP but was also

able to ensure that his adopted godson Ladoja, emerged triumphant at the polls (Danjibo and Oladeji, 2007). Aside the fact that the election was fraught with irregularities and fraud it was also characterised by pockets of violence around the state.

Chief Lamidid Adedibu through his thugs fomented trouble and perpetrated violent acts against those perceived to be the opponents of his preferred candidate, Senator Rashidi Ladoja. According to a key informant, most of the violent acts recorded during the 2003 Governorship election were perpetrated by the PDP supporters and thugs sponsored by Chief Adedibu (Key Informant Interview, 2018). This claim was buttressed during the FGD when some participants said that Adedibu often uses violence, intimidation and death to threaten who ever stands in the way of his anointed godsons during elections (FGD, 2018). However, the cordial relationship which existed before the 2003 governorship election between Rasheed Ladoja, the Governor and Lamidi Adedibu his political godfather soon turned sour when the former refused to dance to the tune of his sponsor. Ladoja alleged that Adedibu demanded the payment of 25% of the state's security vote to him every month which he never did. Also, Ladoja did not allow any input of Adedibu into the list of commissioners who will serve in his cabinet (Human Rights Watch, 2007).

Consequent upon the above development, Adedibu was prevented from planting his men in the government of Governor Rasheed Ladoja. This development infuriated him and he described Ladoja as an 'ingrate' (Human Rights Watch, 2007). According to Adedibu, Ladoja reneged on the agreement of the payment of the 25% of the state security votes to his personal purse. At a point during the feud, Adedibu told Ladoja that he was running the state like his personal business, questioning why Ladoja should refuse to give him his share of the security vote. Adedibu reportedly told Ladoja not to be perturbed about the issue of security in the state, that if there is anything like security threat he (Adedibu) is the only security threat (Human Rights Watch, 2007). A key informant who was the then speaker of the Oyo State House of Assembly (OSHA) during the interview said that the relationship between the two became strained because Senator Ladoja did not open the state's treasury to Chief Lamidi Adedibu (Key Informant Interview, 2018).

Barely two years into his administration as the Governor of Oyo state Ladoja was impeached on the 12th of January, 2006 (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Participants in the FGD, and the key informant and in-depth interviews claimed that the

impeachment was carried out in the most unlawful manner claiming that apart from the fact that it did not take place in the premises of the OSHA, the process was not supported by the constitutional requirement of two-thirds of the members of the Assembly. The process was also marred by violent confrontations (Key Informant Interview, 2018; In-depth interview; FGD, 2018). Chief Lamidi Adedibu in connivance with 18 lawmakers illegitimately impeached Ladoja from office through violence. His thugs were always armed with dangerous weapons and were alleged to be acting in collaboration with the police to forcefully drive the loyalist of Rashidi Ladoja out of office. This resulted to fierce brawl between pro Ladoja group and the supporters of Lamidi Adedibu in which two people were killed while many were injured (Shaapera, Obadahun, Simon & Alibaba, 2014).

With the impeachment of Ladoja, his deputy, Adebayo Aalo-Akala became the Governor of the state. Nonetheless, the relentless effort of Ladoja to appeal against his impeachment became fruitful when the Supreme Court ruled in his favour in September 2006. The Supreme Court reversed the impeachment describing it as unconstitutional because it was not supported by the constitutional requirement of at least two-thirds majority of the members of the state House of Assembly. Therefore, the court ordered the immediate re-instatement of Ladoja. On the 1st of December, 2006 Ladoja regained office as the Governor of Oyo state (Animasawun, 2013).

Adedibu made the remaining period of the administration of Ladoja a turbulent one by instigating violent confrontations between his supporters and those of Ladoja. Consequently, there was a re-occurrence of the feud between the two political gladiators. This time the battle was fought on the streets through regular and fierce clashes between proxy groups of thugs armed with all sorts of weapons and sponsored principally by Chief Lamidi Adedibu (Human Rights Watch, 2007). In separate interviews, it was reported that the remaining period for the expiration of the tenure of Ladoja was turned into a period of violent clashes between the supporters of Rashidi Ladoja and Lamidi Adedibu largely orchestrated by factions of the State Chapter of the National Union of Road Transport Workers [NURTW] (Key Informant Interview, 2018; In-depth Interview, 2018).

As fallout of the political battle between Ladoja and Adedibu, the former, lost his bid to contest the 2007 gubernatorial election in the state. Ladoja's hopes of securing the ticket were dashed in Akure venue of the PDP Gubernatorial Convention

when Adebayo Alao-Akala through the help of Lamidi Adedibu was adopted as the PDP gubernatorial flag bearer for the 2007 Oyo state governorship. In a gubernatorial poll that was characterised by massive rigging, fraud, ballot box snatching and violence, Lamidi Adedibu ensured that his new political godson, Alao-Akala emerged as the governor of the state (Oyekanmi, 2011). With this, Adedibu once again displayed is crude political dexterity and firm grip on the state's political process. Alao-Akala shortly before the election provided justification for Adedibu's style of politics when he stated in an interview with Human Rights Watch:

For God's sake, this man is an old man, you cannot reform him you can only manage him. This man has been in politics since politics began in Nigeria. Can you just wish him away like that? If you go to his house you will see pictures of all the past leaders he has worked with. Chief Adedibu has sponsored everybody, everybody who is who and who in Oyo state politics has passed through that place. This man belongs to an old school of thought. If, for example, he asked me, Mr. Governor, I want you to kill this one tomorrow I would say, "Yes, sir." Then I would go back the following day and say, "Why do you want us to kill that man?" Then I will provide another solution, we will not kill him, let us bring him to order. If he asked me for N100, I will say, "Yes, sir." But then the next day, I will say, "Baba, I am sorry, I don't have the N100, here is N20 for you to manage (Human Rights Watch, 2007: 62)

The above statement by Alao-Akala, the then governor-elect, indicated that unlike Ladoja who failed to fulfil his promises to his then godfather, Alao-Akala was ready to do the bidding of his godfather who orchestrated his victory at the polls. After his victory at the elections petitions tribunal, Alao Akala on the instructions of Lamidi Adedibu went after notable indigenes of Ibadan including the paramount ruler, the Olubadan of Ibadan for their failure to give him the needed support during the election. In addition, Adedibu lobbied the then governor Alao-Akala that the salaries, allowances and subventions meant for Olubadan and his Council of Chiefs in the local government areas were not paid during his lifetime (Oyekanmi, 2011). This was done by Alao-Akala and it lasted till the time Adedibu died in 2008. This and the foregoing scenarios set the stage for the 2011 gubernatorial election in the state. With the death of Adedibu on 11th June 2008, anti-Adedibu political gladiators were set for a showdown with his political godson, Alao-Akala (In-depth Interview, 2018).

Following the infamous and unconstitutional impeachment of Rashidi Ladoja in January, 2006, notable political elites who were indigenes of Ibadan stood against the re-emergence of Alao-Akala as the governor of Oyo state in the 2011 governorship election. Alao-Akala who hails from Ogbomoso, one of the major towns in Oyo state was interested in retaining his position as the Governor of the state (FGD, 2018). This however, did not go down well with notable political elites in the state including the members of the traditional ruling council because of the perceived betrayal role Akala played during the impeachment saga of Senator Rashidi Ladoja who is an indigene of Ibadan (FGD, 2018).

The antecedents of Alao-Akala as the then sitting governor did not go down well with the political chieftains in the state and even within his party, the Peoples Democratic Party. Throughout his tenure, Alao-Akala and Chief Lamidi Adedibu were known for violence, and corruption. During his tenure as the Governor, Alao-Akala was accused of gross mismanagement of state's funds (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Aside that he was also seen as the instigator of political violence in Oyo state. It was alleged that during Alao-Akala's 11 months tenure he and his supporters in the legislature squandered more than forty-five million every month for their own personal use (Human Rights Watch, 2007). The funds according to a key informant were used to service the existing clientele networks of Lamidi Adedibu (Key Informant Interview, 2018).

The Alao-Akala period of rule was also characterised by a culture of political violence. Political violence was so much entrenched in all the axis of the state. Findings of this study revealed that Alao-Akala instigated violence through a faction of the state's branch of the NURTW (In-depth Interview, 2018). During the period leading to the 2007 elections, violence became the order of the day in Ibadan and most part of the state. Coupled with the culture of impunity and political violence which characterised Oyo state during the administration of Governor Adebayo Alao-Akala, as well as the feud with some traditional rulers in the state for example the Alaafin of Oyo, some notable Ibadan indigenes and politicians such as Senator Teslim Folarin, Chief Yekeen Adejo and Senator Lekan Balogun resolved to work against the victory of Akala in the 2011 gubernatorial election (Amusat, 2015).

With the death of Lamidi Adedibu, the clientelist and patronage networks he established as the political godfather in the state became dormant. Consequently, Alao-Akala lost the election to APC's Senator Isiaka Abiola Ajimobi (FGD, 2018). The 2011 gubernatorial election in Oyo State was largely described as credible by the respondents. Majority of the respondents and the discussants in the FGD shared a consensual view about the credibility of the election. One of the respondents noted that the elections of 2011 signified the time when the state started getting things right in terms of the conduct of democratic governorship elections (In-depth Interview, 2018). Another respondent buttressed this position by observing that the conduct of the 2011 gubernatorial election in the state was far better than what was obtained in the past. According to him, the outcome of the governorship election in Oyo state was more people oriented and that it reflected to a reasonable extent the wishes and aspirations of the people (In-depth Interview, 2018).

A key informant noted during an interview with him that during the election, there was a reduction in the level of electoral malpractices compared to previous elections when elections were rigged for the highest bidder. The interviewee also claimed that the fact that the incumbent governor lost the election and did not contest the outcome indicated that the election was credible (Key Informant Interview, 2018). While the 2011 governorship election was adjudged credible, the election, like the 2007 governorship election was characterised by pre-election violence (EUEOM, 2011). Even though the death of Lamidi Adedibu reduced the influence of godfatherism on the election his legacy of violence played out during the election (FGD, 2018).

Shortly before the election rival gangs of the NURTW engaged each other in a violent clash at Iwo road, Ibadan. Many people lost their lives including a final year medical student of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (EUEOM, 2015). Similarly, a respondent who was a former factional Chairman of the NURTW stated how he and his family were attacked by thugs in his house before the election. According to him, hoodlums armed with all sorts of weapons stormed his house early in the morning, vandalised his rooms and his wife's shops and used dangerous weapons to attack his children. He said the hoodlums fired gunshots at random scaring residents of his area away before gaining entrance into his house. The respondent claimed that no life was lost but some of his children sustained varying degrees of injury (Key Informant Interview, 2018).

With the emergence of Senator Isiaka Abiola Ajimobi as the governor of the state, the state was to an extent cleansed of political godfatherism and the attendant clientelist relationships and violence which have shaped the state's electoral politics. On assumption of office, Abiola Ajimobi proscribed the NURTW whose members were greatly mobilised for violence. The relative peace which reigned during the first tenure of Abiola Ajimobi as the governor in the state may partly explain his re-election in 2015 for a second term in office - a feat that has never been achieved by any governor in the political history of the state in the sense that no governor has ever ruled the state twice. Thus, Senator Isiaka Ajimobi was referred to as the governor who broke the 'jinx'.

Godfatherism, clientelism and violence which defined electoral politics and governance in Oyo state prior to the emergence of Senator Isiaka Abiola Ajimobi as governor left indelible mark on the governance process in the state. The implications include bad leadership, corruption and impunity as well as increase in criminal activities which impacted negatively on government policies of provision of social amenities such as portable water, quality healthcare services and improved education system to the people of the state (In-depth interview, 2018). As Omobowale (2008) noted, patrons and clients interact for mutual benefit. They do this for personal interest and benefit and not for the benefit of the society at large. This form of clientelist relationship is predominant in Nigeria's socio-political and economic setting. The patrons use state funds to grease and preserve clientelist networks to their own advantage and that of their adherents at the expense of the impoverished masses who are left with little or no infrastructural facilities to improve their welfare (Omobowale, 2008).

CONCLUSION

In the First Republic, Western Region was prominent in Nigeria's political space because of its vibrant political activities. Ibadan, the capital of the then Western Region still serves as the Capital of Oyo state. However, the state has a history of tense gubernatorial electoral contests. Gubernatorial elections are usually keenly contested and are mostly characterised by intense politicking which revolves around godfatherism, clientelist and patronage networks which breeds violence. While these are not strange to the state's political terrain, they assumed unprecedented dimensions in the Forth Republic, particularly between 1999 and 2015. In this period, the state's electoral and political processes were driven by Chief Lamidi Adedibu, the acclaimed

strong man of Oyo state politics. In essence, the occurrence of godfather politics tainted with clientelism and incessant violence during governorship elections in the state is seen as an extension of what was obtained in the Old Western Region when that part of the country used to live up to its appellation “Wild Wide West.”

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