

## GODFATHERISM AND KANO STATE'S RELEVANCE IN NATIONAL POLITICS

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### **Abstract**

This paper aimed to get the understanding of godfatherism in Kano in the context of Nigerian democracy. It gauged the various views and perspectives of indigenous people with adequate political awareness in Kano. The paper also tried to identify the root causes of godfatherism in Kano tracing its history and evolution in a trajectory to figure out the significance of Kano State in national politics. Content Analysis is used to analyze the views of interviewees and other primary and secondary sources of data collected for the paper. The paper found that the understanding of godfatherism in Kano State is not very different from the general understanding of the phenomenon in Nigeria but when it is in play in Kano, it is violent and confrontational with traces of bigotry. Godfatherism in Kano essentially emerged as a necessity in search for political mentorship but then turned into a strategy employed by incumbents to cover up their past inadequacies, vices and corruption in office. Also, Kano politics plays a significant role in determining or at least giving an edge to presidential aspirants in leading the country through its large votes and how politically active its inhabitants are. The paper therefore recommends adequate political sensitization by all stakeholders to educate citizens on the dangers of godfatherism and the fact that politics is a means to an end and not an end in itself. Also, institutions and agencies fighting vices and corrupt practices should professionally engage corrupt politicians no matter what their status is to curb the evils of godfatherism and promote good governance.

***Keywords:*** *Godfatherism, Kano State, Kwankwasiyya, Gandujiyya.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Godfatherism has become a scary phenomenon in Nigerian politics. Godfatherism in Nigerian Democracy particularly in its current system of administration is distributive. It is historically deeply rooted based on cultural values of Nigerian society, where it is purely socio-economic in nature and mutually productive for the beneficiaries. Its politicization would appear to have contributed to the criminalization of politics. For instance, Yoruba have a well-institutionalized and centralized system where the godfather is well known and respected (chiefs and Obas). Godfathers reign across all spheres of the society: academics, legal, and religious environment (Abdullahi & Tunde, 2013).

The menace of political godfather in Nigeria could be perceived as a political battle which the elite class has been wagging against democracy, the masses and the entire nation in order to fulfill their economic self-interests. In ensuring this evil desire, the reward systems are highly skewed in favour of the political class compare to salaries and allowances workers in other sectors of the economy. Nigerian politicians have turned democratic elections into ventures and battle fields where money, private armies and thugs are employed to create enabling environments that guarantee returns on investments and accelerated access to primitive accumulation of wealth (Agba, Achimugu, Chukwurah and Agboni, 2012).

Godfatherism has history in Kano; we could say it emanated from the history of the political struggle for independence when the NEPU was born, even though there were some activisms against the colonial government before. People at that time were looking for a personality to rally around especially because they were fighting two strong forces; the colonial administration and the oligarchy- the traditional institution that were the government instrument then, there was a serious case of clashing, so people were looking for a figure to rally around to struggle against the system and that was what brought people like Malam Aminu Kano to the fore he led the cause and the struggle rather than become an institution ended up becoming personified around his figure that is how it emanated(M. Inuwa, personal communication, April 25, 2020).

## **2. GODFATHERISM AND NIGERIAN DEMOCRACY**

Political patronage is one of the factors that embedded democratic setting in Nigeria since first republic (Oshodi, 2011).Despite the vast human and natural resources and the undisputed progress made in the last decade towards the establishment of governing systems and

democratic culture (Albert-Makyur & Yoroms, 2020) Regrettably in the face of dilapidation or non-sufficient existence of social infrastructures especially in states and local governments, public resources are used for political patronage. In Nigeria's fourth republic, the emergence of godfatherism " posed great threat not only to good governance but also the socio-economic stability of democratic governance (Chukwuemeka, 2012). Perhaps one of the most disturbing and damaging influence of political patronage in Nigeria's fourth republic was in domain of making nonsense of a truly free, fair and credible electoral process in which the electorates by right are expected to freely elect people of their choice into public office to represent their interests.

Indeed, the privilege of electing people of their choice into public office was denied given the situation in which godfathers foisted candidates of their preference on the generality of the people. This is to say the least very inimical to the tenets of democratic rule, when public office holders would not be accountable to the people, who at any rate did not count in their elections into public office. Invariably, the loyalty of such public office holders would be tilted towards their godfathers and this in itself negates one of the critical attributes of democracy which is responsive and transparent government. This scenario is also inimical to good governance and political stability which are predicated on the rule of law, due process, accountability and transparency in the management of public business. The emergence of political patronage has also robbed the citizens of the privilege of enjoying the dividends of democratic governance in the sense that the-would be government became reluctant to initiate and implement policies that would advance the wellbeing of the generality of the citizens. This was as a result of the fact that political patronage in Nigeria was basically predatory in nature. The primary motive of venturing into politics was borne out of the need to acquire money from the coffers of government to which their godsons held sway. Therefore, the lean financial resource accruable to the state from the federation account which was meant for the improvement of living standard of the citizens was paramount interest to them. In instances where the godsons upon reflection refused to settle their godfathers as agreed upon before securing public office, hell was let loose. The experiences recorded in Enugu State in 1999 between Jim Nwobodo and Governor Chimaroke Nnamani. Also in 2007 between Governor Sullivan Chime and Chimaroke Nnamani were awful.

Another far reaching effects of political patronage on the entrenchment of good governance, which in turn would engender democratic growth and stability, according to Uduji (2009), is

godfatherism, the complete erosion of the normative elements of democracy of which trust is a sinequa-non attribute between the government and the governed. In a polity where prescribed rules guiding the electoral process are frequently disobeyed with impunity, the basis of citizen's trust in government was compromised. If the situation is not decisively addressed with the urgency it deserves, the resultant effect is that trust as a vital social capital is lost, and when there is no trust between the government and the governed, interaction would only take place on the basis of mutual suspicion and this does not augur well for the healthy development of democratic governance. However, political patronage has become a scary phenomenon in Nigerian politics.

As observed by Omotola (2007), political patronage in Nigeria, particularly in its current form and character, is distributive. Though it is a longstanding and deeply rooted feature of the cultural values of Nigerian society, where it is purely socio-economic in nature and mutually productive for both parties, its politicization would appear to have contributed to the criminalization of politics. Political patrons reign across all spheres of the society: academics, legal, and religion environment. Therefore, the clamour for democracy in Nigeria is to improve both political and socioeconomic situation of the country through massive involvement in the policy making, but reverse is the case as those that attained political power in both legislative and executive arms of government got to the seat of powers through the support of some political godfathers in various states cum the center, however, the desire of political godfathers is to hold political and socio-economic powers both at the center cum the component units as mechanisms to politically influence the activities of political office holders, that is, the Governors and some Legislators in terms of appointing people into various positions, such as Ministers/Commissioners, Chairmen of the boards, Secretaries to the various Institutions, and Treasurers of Local Governments as well as allocation of some developmental projects into various localities within the state or center as well (Alabi and Sakariyau, 2013).

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

The recent activities of some Nigerian political patrons could be likened to attributes of mafianism; however, some still see the existence of political patrons as the balancer of power in a democracy. Akinola (2009) believes in the need to have a good-hearted individual (people's hero) at the sole realm of absolute power, a political patron distributes power as he deems, and anoints who rules. But, political patronage has taken a strange dimension in Nigeria's political environment. It has become a menace pulling down the foundations of masses-driven governance, thereby denying Nigerians the much-deserved dividends of democracy. Ademola (2004) added that since 1999, when Nigeria joined the comity of democratically governed countries, it has continued to experience an unprecedented rise in political violence ranging from increased crime wave, armed robbery, political assassination, and religious riots as a result of crises loomed between godfathers and some godsons.

Indeed, Nigeria has joined the comity of democratic nations with the hope that the ideals of democracy will be upheld and sustained. However, the signals political events in Nigeria are showing that what we actually have is a democratic system sustained by political patrons. It is not one primarily aimed at improving the welfare of the people. Rather it is system the political class craves for in order to gain access to state resources to finance patronage, patrimonialism and for personal gains (Omobowale, 2007). This is why violence has to be used to silence the opposition and actualize primitive and exploitative acquisition. Thus, what the present democratic dispensation have brought forth for Nigeria in general is a system sustained by hoodlums for the sake of the political class and not the electorate.

Godfatherism has become a scary phenomenon in Nigerian politics. As rightly by Omotola (2007: 139), Godfatherism in Nigerian Democracy particularly in its current system of administration is distributive. It is historically deeply rooted based on cultural values of Nigerian society, where it is purely socio-economic in nature and mutually productive for the beneficiaries. Its politicization would appear to have contributed to the criminalization of politics. For instance, Yoruba have a well-institutionalized and centralized system where the godfather is well known and respected (chiefs and Obas). Godfathers reign across all spheres of the society: academics, legal, and religious environment (Abdullahi&Tunde, 2013). Therefore, the clamour for true democracy in Nigeria is to improve our political and socio-economic situation of the country through massive participation in the policy formulation, but reverse is the case as those that attained political corridor in both legislative and executive arms of government however, the desire of political godfathers is to hold political and socio-

economic powers both at the central and the component units as mechanisms to politically influence the activities of political office holders, the Governors and Legislators boards, Secretaries to the various government institutions, Local Governments as well as allocation of some developmental projects into various localities within the State and the centre (Abdullahi & Tunde, 2013). Meanwhile, the impact of the godfathers on Nigeria's general elections recently concluded in May 2015 was unprecedented. Godfathers are those who possess the power to ascertain the security connections, extended local links, and enormous financial weight to plot and determine the success of a power seeker at any level of a supposedly competitive politics.

Elitism, as Welsh (1979:10) argues, is a system 'in which the exercise of political control by a small number of persons is institutionalized in the structure of government and political activity'. The structure in Nigeria today ensures a typical political godfather to manipulate state officials, institutions and resources to the detriment of the common man. Without manipulations, the godfathers will not be able to realize the money he spent in ensuring victory for the godson during the electioneering campaign. When the manipulation becomes too much, the godson often reacts and the end product of such reaction, more often than not is violent conflicts. Conflicts occur only when the godson refuses to be manipulated further.

In other words, the contest for supremacy between godfathers and their godsons, leads to conflict, which result destruction of private and government properties. In most cases lives of innocent people are terminated. According to Edigin, (2010) conflict arising from godfatherism has become one of the greatest problems facing the Nigerian political system. The holder of the political position becomes a stooge to his godfather because he that pays the piper also dictates the tune. Anytime the godson refuses to meet the godfather's demand, he is eventually impeached from office. In the current political dispensation, several cases of such include Saraki-Lawal face off, Nwobodo-Nnamani quagmire, Adedibu-Ladoja crisis, Uba-Ngige saga etc (Okafor, 2006; Ojo, 2006; Obey, 2009). In other words, godfather's protégé crises in Nigeria do not only portray great danger to our democratic experiments, but also on the very essence and validity of our existence as a nation (Edigin, 2010).

It clearly undermines the process of development in an underdeveloped society like Nigeria. It is therefore a well-known fact that no meaningful development can be achieved in an atmosphere of wars of attrition, crisis and people who are perpetually and diametrically opposed to one another (Edigin, 2010). In the course of conflict between the godson and

godfather, Nigeria has recorded unnecessary breakdown of law and order, which should have been avoided if the problem of godfatherism had not been instituted. Whenever the nation witnesses such breakdown of law and order, some hooligans usually exploit the opportunity to unleash terror on citizens. A cogent example is the outlawed Islamic sect Boko Haram, Niger Delta militants and some isolated cases like the “*Yan daba*” of Kano, “*Yan sara-suka*” of Bauchi and the *Yan kalari* of Gombe State (Vanguard, 2014).

Given the above, Ikokwu and Epia, (2003) link the phenomenon of godfatherism in Nigerian politics with youth delinquency. In the process of godfathers trying to settle political scores with their godsons, innocent youths are being used to perpetuate all kinds of evil. Thus, godfathers more often than not, recruit youths as foot soldiers and arm them with necessary logistics, which are also being used to perpetuate kidnapping, cultism, armed robbery, human trafficking, and drug abuse in many villages, towns and cities in Nigeria. The major implication is that such youths in Nigeria today find it very difficult to realize that godfathers are destroying their destinies. The high rate of poverty that is affecting the populace has prevented many youths from accessing higher education, while those who could afford higher education are confronted with the menace of unemployment. Such youths therefore, become vulnerable to political godfathers manipulations. Instead of trying to struggle and develop their potentials, they find solace in some coins which they receive from godfathers. These youths also fail to realize that godfathers have their children abroad, schooling or working while they are risking their lives for them. Moreover, it is disheartening to realize that these youths could not observe that the money being siphoned from the state treasury by the godfathers is what the state should have used for their own education, health and employment. Youths are the young ones of today and leaders of tomorrow. When a large proportion of the youth in a country indulge this act, their future leadership roles could be jeopardized and the nation will continue to be in want of credible leaders and agents of rapid development.

Apart from the above, the problem of godfatherism has resulted in outright exclusion of credible people from the decision making process. Many political office seekers are often robbed of their independent and rational sense of judgment. When the right choice is denied during elections, wrong persons assume leadership. Such persons are not materials for leadership. This usually results in maladministration and lack of accountability. This could be used to explain the scenario in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic, when Alhaji Shehu Shagari was imposed on Nigerians as the president and the nation was robbed of the wealth of leadership experience of

the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, an agent of development. In the same manner, Olusegun Obasanjo was imposed on Nigeria in the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic by his godfather (Ibrahim Babangida) and the better candidate, a technocrat- Chief Olu Falae was rejected. Consequently, the rule of law, due process, and transparency in the management of public affairs has all been abused, because credible persons are edged out of governance.

To make the matter worse, godfathers are being protected with the state resources while the poor masses are being exposed to all sorts of danger on a daily basis, why should the Nigerian government protect notorious godfathers more than the suffering masses? It is simply because the nation is developing in a wrong direction. In fact, it is obvious that the state does not value the life of any common man. And none of them has ever been sanctioned by the court of law, whereas armed robbers and petty thieves are being sentenced to death and life imprisonment by the nation's judiciary. This must have prompted the notorious godfather of Anambra state politics (Chris Uba) to boast that *I am the greatest of all godfathers in Nigeria* Sunday Champion (2003) as cited by Familusi (2012). According to Albert (2007), Uba for the first time, single-handedly put in position every politician in a state. This includes the state governor and his deputy, the 3 senators to represent the state at the National Assembly, 10 out of 11 members of the federal house of representative and 29 members of the state house of assembly, Because of the protection he enjoyed from the discredited Obasanjo's administration, Ubaas reported by Albert, (2007) boasted of having the power to remove any of his political nominees who does not perform up to his *own expectations* anytime he likes. This could be regarded as an insult to democracy and development. Indeed, it gives a picture of a nation developing in a wrong direction as observed by (Omonijo et al., 2011).

### **3. UNDERSTANDING GODFATHERISM IN KANO STATE**

Godfatherism connotes the role some individuals play in politics, in terms of influencing who occupies what position, both elective and appointive. Normally when people exercise serious influence regarding who is nominated to contest what position; when they exercise influence on who is appointed what position; regardless of whether they are within the government or without. Sometimes they even go to the extent of removing people from political offices both elective and appointive (S. Dukawa, personal communication, April 25, 2020).



According to Malumfashi (2020), godfather or godfatherism is a common political metaphor in Nigerian politics, it connotes a mentor, who establishes a politico into a political career, somebody who is the brain behind, or who sponsors a candidate, he exposes them in politics. A godfather is a person that has tremendous political influence on a politico; this is what briefly is meant by godfather in respect to Nigerian politics (S. Malumfashi, personal communication, April 27, 2020).

To Inuwa (2020), godfatherism is playing politics under the tutelage of a personality who determines what and where the member should be or do, playing politics around a personality, seeking relevance in the political arena, be it contesting for a position or carving a niche in the political system to his own advantage or the advantage of a certain interest (M. Inuwa, personal communication, June 27, 2020).

Tijjani understands a godfather to be a well-established political figure whose discretion in decisions is not questioned by his fellows (Y. Tijjani, personal communication, May 25, 2020), While Ali thinks it connotes nurturing, although it entails favouritism, he maintained that the nurtured in this case is mostly favoured and may not be well qualified; lacking the requisite resume to be where he is, he is incompetent and the decision of the godfather is largely subjective. Godfather is an influential person you can use as a ladder to attain political ambition (M. Lugge, personal communication, April 27, 2020).

### **Causes of godfatherism in Kano State**

Godfatherism has history in Kano; we could say it emanated from the history of the political struggle for independence when the NEPU was born, even though there were some activisms against the colonial government before. People at that time were looking for a personality to rally around especially because they were fighting two strong forces; the colonial administration and the oligarchy- the traditional institution that were the government instrument then, there was a serious case of clashing, so people were looking for a figure to rally around to struggle against the system and that was what brought people like Malam Aminu Kano to the fore he led the cause and the struggle rather than become an institution ended up becoming personified around his figure that is how it emanated (M. Inuwa, personal communication, June 27, 2020).

There are three key political figures in Kano State that made efforts to establish a certain reputation around themselves, as a way of ensuring they takeover and dominate Kano's politics.

The three major and consistent political actors in Kano's politics since the return of civilian leadership in 1999 are, Dr. Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje and Senator Ibrahim Shekarau (Kola, 2022).

The reason behind having political godfatherism in Kano according to Malumfashi (2020) is the natural evolution of the phenomenon in the society as a factor. Since man is a political animal, he cannot exercise politics alone, that is human nature, he cannot live alone, he got to associate with people, he got to interact with people, he got to get peoples' support, ultimately, peoples' support means one has to have somebody who is well rooted politically, who is well established politically, who has the wherewithal, who is a person on whose shoulder one can politically stand otherwise he will hardly succeed, that is the essence, that is the reason for the existence and the continued existence of godfatherism with respect to Nigerian politics. There must be an individual or group of individuals on whose shoulder a politician must stand, there must be someone who will introduce him, there must be someone who will support him, there must be someone who will stand behind him, and that person too was once under the tutelage of someone else (S. Malumfashi, personal communication, April 27, 2020)..

One of the reason why politicians do that is that they feel if I allow someone who is competent to succeed me I am likely going to be investigated and prosecuted when I leave office because of the wrongdoings they have done but when you pick someone that ought not to be there he is there because of your favour he will find it very difficult to investigate you, as it is here in Kano, prominent politicians like Kawu Samaila, Ghali Na'abba approached Ganduje to investigate Kwankwaso to come out and tell the world when Kwankwaso was leaving he left behind a debt amounting to the tune of over N500billion but it has not been done, one of the reasons is that there are instances whereby Ganduje himself will end up indicting himself if he embarked on the investigation, so godfatherism comes in to cover up your misdeeds when you leave office. But regrettably, when they take office, - because power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely - in the end you will discover that the incumbent will end up going against his predecessor. It is not about developing our people it is not about building the economy; it is about covering up misdeeds. In the early days it was not like that, Awolowo took children of nobody to school and here political activist here in Kano are products of Malam Aminu Kano (A. Ali, personal communication, April 29, 2020).

Also, governors are very powerful by virtue of the provision of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, a governor is like a head of state in his own state, so in the end the governor

will employ every available machinery to suppress the opponent to the extent that nobody will be able to move an inch and for you to be there you have to come under the governor, governors are so empowered to the extent that nobody dares to do a thing. They are immune from both investigation and prosecution. When we look at the 2019 gubernatorial elections in Kano, virtually PDP was winning but the then deputy governor- Gawuna, interrupted the procession and it was rendered inconclusive. At the time of rerunning the elections the governor made use of every machinery, both conventional and unconventional security and dominated everything, they did everything they wanted to do, that is how they turned out to be victorious. The power given to governors is enormous and beyond contestation. Kwankwaso thought of his political structure on ground and undermined the incumbent but at the end not even a local government councilor is from the PDP that Kwankwaso defected to, no local government chairman, no house of Assembly member, no house of representative member (A. Ali, personal communication, April 29, 2020).

A governor determines the posting of commissioner of police, the posting of GOC, the posting of Brigade Commander, the Comptroller of Prison, and the influence of the governor determines who is going to be the Chief Judge, who is going to be the Attorney General etc (A. Ali, personal communication, April 29, 2020).

Tijjani was philosophical about the causes of godfatherism in Kano; he argued that it is a necessity, besides Islam which influences Kano politics ordained Muslims to have a leader in all aspects of their life. He succinctly declared that every leader was once a follower and in Kano politics you hardly can scale through without a godfather (Y. Tijjani, personal communication, May 25, 2020).

Hajiya also reiterated the necessity of having a godfather in political career; she asserted that, one cannot do without him because of the resources he has that entails finance which are what is used to lubricate the political machine (H. Abubakar, personal communication, April 27, 2020).

In the same vein, Ashiru emphasized the availability of funds a godfather must have accumulated, readily available for political activities to make him a godfather. These resources make him indispensable as such he wields influence and commands the society. One other important reason he mentioned is the violent nature of the politics that involves employing thugs and touts in physical violence. Hooliganism per say, is instrumental in maintaining

political relevance. Furthermore, the records of achievements of a godfather that impacted on the masses lives' makes him relevant in having a sway in running their affairs. (A. Ashir , personal communication, May 22, 2020). Normally when they are endowed with large political followers coupled with requisite resources, when they themselves have political position this kind of variables are what makes one a political godfather (S. Dukawa, personal communication, April 25, 2020).

It is also regarded as natural in the system, you need a ladder to go up, it is a necessity in all aspects of life even in religion messengers are sent from God to be ladders for mankind, so also in business and politics. It is much needed in politics because it's more sophisticated (M. Lugge, personal communication, April 27, 2020). Godfatherism is practiced in order to cover up the wrongs and mischievous deeds of the godfather like, embezzlement, malfeasance and corruption.

Ali (2019) listed a score of factors he considered factors causing godfatherism. The incumbency factor, influence, financial wherewithal, political thuggery are among the many factors believed to cause godfatherism in Nigeria. Inadequate awareness on the part of the masses and the greediness of the politicians also facilitates the godfatherism (A. Ali, personal communication, April 29, 2020).

#### **4. RELEVANCE OF KANO IN NIGERIAN POLITICS**

Kano State is absolutely relevant, in terms of population especially. Kano votes are one of the major determining factors for political victory in Nigeria. It has cultural influence in northern part of the country and to a reasonable extent determines the politics in the neighbouring states, if you listen to the radio you will find out that the achievements of the government of Bauchi and other states will have a program here because every portion of the North is represented here in Kano (A. Ali, personal communication, April 29, 2020).

Kano has wealthy individuals and industrialists, its people are well versed in both Islamic and western education, its veteran politicians are instrumental in Nigerian politics. Generally, it has an intimidating and charismatic impression (M. Lugge, personal communication, April 27, 2020).

Inuwa (2020) affirms Kano's relevance in Nigerian politics, asserting its huge population and its being a commercial nerve centre. He pointed out that being a commercial nerve centre where

all people in the region come and when they come they not only take commerce they also take political ideology back to their locations, beside that the level of political awareness in Kano is remarkable owing to the fact that it has the largest concentration of private media beside Kaduna but because of the commercial nature of Kano people take more advantage of the existing of private media houses in Kano than in Kaduna. People in Kano will pay money to use the media but in Kaduna you hardly get that even the elites do not even use the media but in Kano the media is used extensively to influence the population in terms of commerce in terms of politics in terms of religion, so this advantage of being more aware, more mobilized and there are lot of voluntarism in Kano and that impacted seriously in mobilizing people... (M. Inuwa, personal communication, June 27, 2020).

The activism of the youth in Kano, the radical posture and of recent the role of media, there is a great utilization of media both traditional are key variables identifying political culture in Kano State (S. Dukawa, personal communication, April 25, 2020).

All said and done, Nigerian politics cannot move without Kano, Malumfashi, opined Kano to be the breathing ground for Nigerian politics, it is the pendulum, wherever it oscillates the Nigerian politics will go to that direction. Besides, people in Kano are highly politically conscious people if they go for you, the North will definitely go for you and if the North goes for you, Nigeria will be yours (S. Malumfashi, personal communication, April 27, 2020)..

### **Kwankwasiyya**

Kwankwasiyya, a political movement led by His Excellency Dr. Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, which is popularly associated with red caps. The movement has achieved a lot in Kano but also has its drawbacks. Kwankwasiyya has helped a significant number of needy people. It has also played a big role in providing political education and awareness for the people of Kano and also in the mobilization of the population. It can be stated that Kwankwasiyya has successfully increased the degree of political participation among the people of Kano State (Samuel, 2022). However, on the other hand, Kwankwasiyya has also created factionalism within Kano politics, as its members often find themselves in opposition to those who are part of a different faction, and vice versa.

The foundation of the Kwankwasiyya movement took root in the fertile ground of Malam Aminu Kano's *talakawa* ideology. This unfolded on May 29, 2011, with the return of Senator Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso to power after being out of office as governor for eight

years. His previous attempt to be re-elected for his second tenure in 2003 was stopped by Ibrahim Shekarau, a retired school principal with a more socialist outlook who won the gubernatorial election in Kano. For a period of four years, Kwankwasiyya became the rallying cry to gather support from the people, especially those who were members of the ruling party, People's Democratic Party (PDP) and later the All Progressives Congress (APC), after Kwankwaso defected along with four other sitting governors. This move ultimately gave way for the unusual loss of power by a ruling party at the key point (Niyi, 2017). Kwankwasiyya as believed by its followers- incorporates various principles such as dedication, trust in governance, fairness, justice, equity, objection to corruption and mismanagement of resources, non-acceptance of deception and cowardice, job creation, and the development of education and entrepreneurship for all, especially for the young population. The main goal of this movement is to create a society free from corruption, where even young people will have equal opportunities to engage in the decision-making process. It empowers people to shape their own destinies in an organized manner, creating more accountability and self-determination (Nadir, 2022).

Emerging under the leadership of Mallam Aminu Kano, who promoted the principles of popular socialism that were influential in shaping African politics then, the *talakawa* ideology was supported by thousands of citizens. Its main objective was to alleviate the social burdens faced by the poor citizens within the near-feudal system that prevailed across the extensive territory spreading from Sokoto to Maiduguri. It is an ideology-driven movement that doesn't offer money to attract members or apply its ideas and principles in governance. The system does not let individuals nominate themselves for political positions as it happens behind their backs. However, individuals who possess trust, readiness, and personal conviction are able to contest for political offices without bias or favoritism. It was within this set-up that Kwankwaso conducted his elections and emerged victorious in 2011.

Associated with this movement is the Kwankwasiyya Development Foundation, a philanthropic initiative that continues the work initiated by Kwankwaso during his time in power (Niyi, 2017). However, the question of whether that ideology got through its euphoric phase and lived up to its presumed improvement of the socio-economic development of ordinary people through initiatives such as free and compulsory education, standard healthcare, and overall improvement in the state of living of the common man, remains a subject that requires empirical analysis with true results (Niyi, 2017).

## **Gandujiyya**

This political movement has its origin in Kano State, and was championed by the followers and supporters of Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje. The name of the movement was derived from the governor's hometown, Ganduje. The movement's slogan, *Gandujiyya Halacci*, literally translates to "Gandujiyya integrity." Gandujiyya emerged following the political conflict that happened between Ganduje and his predecessor, Senator Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso. The main goal of the movement is the advancement of Governor Ganduje's political ideologies (Yusha'u 2016).

During the previous year, the Special Adviser to Governor Ganduje on Print Media made the following statement "soon enough, Kwankwasiyya will not be a topic in Kano anymore and even the symbolic red cap associated with it would be discarded. It would all be dumped due to its zero political advantage. The Kwankwasiyya era, according to the adviser is permanently over. Instead, the focus would now be on promoting the Gandujiyya ideology, which we are establishing". The special adviser went on to explain that this new creed embodied an unwavering belief in certain principles that would benefit the common people and the residents of Kano State. Gandujiyya is a political ideology whose mission is directed at the needs and aspirations of the citizens as far as governance and fair distribution of democratic benefits are concerned (Niyi, 2017).

Governor Ganduje's aide blamed Kwankwaso for exerting overpowering influence on Ganduje saying "Governor Ganduje and his political supporters had made the decision to follow their own path. Enough is enough. There is no way you can have two captains in a ship without the ship sinking. So, as far as we are concerned, we don't want to be under the influence of anybody again" (Niyi, 2017).

Shortly afterwards, support was shown when 34 out of the 38 lawmakers in the House of Assembly took a symbolic action that displayed their complete disassociation from Kwankwaso and his followers. They appeared in the legislative chamber without wearing red caps and publicly declared their intention to embrace the new ideology. This act served as an indication of their allegiance to the Gandujiyya movement. Following this display, numerous supporters of Governor Ganduje, including local council chairmen, commissioners, and political office holders, also moved to wearing blue caps as a means of identifying with the

new trend. However, it is worth noting that the governor himself, for reasons he would later clarify, did not adopt the new cap style (Niyi, 2017).

In addition, the structures of Kwankwasiyya were gradually crippled by removing its members from various positions in the All Progressives Congress (APC). It was gathered that 19 members of the Kwankwasiyya, who held various positions in the party, have been dismissed. They include the APC woman leader Kano State, HajiyaHabibaGarbaYandalla, the party's woman leader in Sumaila Local Government Area, Hajiya Rabi NasiruSumaila, as well as the vice chairman, assistant secretary, treasurer, assistance woman leader in Rano Local Government Area; AlhajiNuhuDoka; Alhaji Muhammad Chanji; AlhajiSanusiLifur and HajiyaUwaBature respectively. Others are the APC chairmen in Nassarawa, Gwazo, Dambatta, Madobi, Tarauni and Gwale local governments, Alhaji Umar Musa Gama, AlhajiRabi'uSarkin Fulani, AlhajiJamiluAbubakarDambatta, Alhaji Muhammad Namadi Gora, Alhaji Muhammad IdrisHotoro and AlhajiFarukGwadabeMaitasa. The chief whip of the Kano State House of Assembly, MamudaZubairuMadobi and the speaker of Rogo Local Government were all sacked from their positions (Yusha'u, 2016). Others are the party's secretary in Sumaila Local Government, AlhajiNasiruMatoSumaila, the special adviser, women affairs in Fagge Local Government, HajiyaA'inJafaru; the secretary, Rano Central Ward, Yakubu Muhammad; the secretary RurumTsohun-Gari ward, Alhaji Musa Riro and the secretary, RanoDwaki ward, Alhaji Sani Maigida (Yusha'u, 2016).

It is important to note that both the Kwankwasiyya and Gandujiyya movements have played big roles in raising political awareness and mobilizing supporters in Kano state, thereby promoting political engagement, the two movements also further deteriorated the already problematic security situation in Kano. This, in turn, has escalated the risk of electoral violence within the state which leads to voter apathy.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Godfatherism in Kano State is not very different from the general understanding of the phenomenon in Nigeria but when it is in play in Kano it is violent, confrontational with traces of bigotry. Godfatherism in Kano essentially emerged as a necessity in search for political mentorship but then turned into a strategy employed by incumbents to cover up their past inadequacies, vices and corruption in office. Also, Kano politics plays a significant role in determining or at least giving an edge to presidential aspirants in leading the country through



its large votes and how politically active its inhabitants are. The paper therefore recommends adequate political sensitization by all stakeholders to educate citizens on the dangers of godfatherism and the fact that politics is a means to an end and not an end in itself. Also, institutions fighting corruption and political vices should professionally engage corrupt politicians no matter what their status is to curb the evils of godfatherism and promote good governance.

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