

POLITICAL CULTURE AND THE PARADOX OF POVERTY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

While Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP), it continues to exhibit economic underperformance and high unemployment rates. Available reports suggest that since the 1970s, the country has earned over US\$500 billion in oil revenue alone, yet remains mired in poverty. This study examines the relationship, if any, between political culture and high incidence of poverty in Nigeria. The study employed a stratified sampling procedure along with questionnaires for data collection. Data were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings suggest that political culture plays a critical role in the social and economic development of Nigeria. Additionally, religious and ethnic biases, as well as the political entrepreneurship of godfathers have contributed to poor electoral choices that in turn exacerbate the deteriorating standards of living, limited employment opportunities, endemic poverty, and insecurity in Nigeria. The study recommends among others that politics based on ideology should be encouraged rather than an identity-based politics on the grounds of religion or ethnicity.

Keywords: Poverty, Political Culture, Godfather.

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1. Introduction

Being ranked in a first-place position for most people living in extreme poverty in the world is not an enviable place for any country. Unfortunately, this less than enviable top spot is held by oil-rich Nigeria, Africa's most populous country and largest economy according to World Bank's estimates in 2020 (Zandt, 2021). Reports based on a projection by the World Poverty Clock and compiled by Brookings Institution in 2018, state that Nigeria overtook India in

extreme poverty ranking to take the title of the poverty capital of the world (Madu et al, 2021: 34). Reports from the World Bank and other economic data seem to arrive at the conclusion that Nigeria in 2021 has maintained the infamous position of the poverty capital with 93.9 million people currently living below the poverty line (Uzoho, 2021). This ranking and data on poverty rates have been questioned by some Nigerian politicians. However, there is no denying the prevalence of poverty and inequality in the country. Despite being the largest oil producer in Africa, successive Nigerian governments, since her independence have struggled to enhance the living standards of their citizens (Ewubare & Okpani, 2018).

Post colonial Africa continues to struggle with underdevelopment, particularly in the areas of infrastructure deficiency, poverty and hunger, and inability of the state to provide adequate security for the protection of lives and property (Alumona & Azom, 2018). Many theories have been used to explain the underdevelopment and inequality that persist in less developed countries, however, it is important to focus on the peculiarities of each society rather than utilize a generalized approach to research the causes of underdevelopment in the less developed countries. There are patterns of behaviour that result from widely held political beliefs and values which in turn influence societal and political actions of the people in a society. These patterns of behaviour, such as religiosity, ethnicity and patronage can collectively be referred to as political culture.

Nigeria, with its deep-rooted political culture is the most populous African country, and accounts for a large percentage of the socio-economic activities in Africa, yet its development is impeded by seemingly insurmountable problems. Since the 1970s, the country has earned over US\$500 billion in oil revenue alone, yet remains mired in poverty, unemployment, burgeoning domestic debt, infrastructural squalor, abysmal health and educational services, unsurprising social frustrations, political instability and underdevelopment (Shola, 2015).

Nigeria is blessed with rich human and natural resources, and given this wealth and economic potential, it is particularly disturbing and ironic that Nigeria is still rated as one of the poorest countries in the world, placed in 161st position out of 189 countries, 2 places down from the previous year on the Human Development Index (HDI) ranking in 2019 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2019). The Human Development Index, which was first published in 1990, aims to steer conversations about developmental strides away from GDP towards indicators that actually affect people's lives, for example; poverty, inequality and gender disparity, i.e., using human development as a measure of real development. This

ranking therefore supports and confirms the reality that Nigeria is lagging in the area of human development. It therefore comes as no surprise that Ewubare & Okpani (2018, p 139) state that poverty and inequality in Nigeria is a paradox. It is a paradox in sense that the poverty level in Nigeria contradicts the country's abundant wealth of both human and material resources. It is against this backdrop, that we study the political culture and paradox of poverty in Nigeria.

2. Conceptual Analysis and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Conceptual Analysis

The Concept of Poverty

Poverty is multi-dimensional and no single indicator can capture all aspects of poverty. It is defined based on the availability of certain basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, sanitation facilities, pipe-borne water, education, good healthcare and access to information. Statistically however, poverty is determined based on income and/or consumption, which assigns numbers to living standards and makes it easier to calculate poverty (NBS, 2020). Nigerian poverty report in 2019 shows that 40.1% of the total Nigerian population was classified as poor. In other words, an average of 4 out of 10 individuals in Nigeria has real per capita expenditure below 137,430 Naira per year (Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria 2019: Executive Summary).. This translates to over 82.9 million Nigerians who are considered poor by national standards (NBS, 2019). Oxfam International in 2021 reported that no fewer than 112 million people in Nigeria live below the benchmark of \$1.90 per day, meaning that they live in extreme poverty. According to Oxfam International (2021), more than 57 million do not have access to safe water, over 130 million lack adequate sanitation and 10 million children are out of school.

Concept of Political Culture

Almond and Verba (1963) defines political culture as the political psychology of a country or nation; and they further refer to political culture as a set of attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and sentiments that give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern actions and inactions in the political system. Ketzner (1988) confirms that it encompasses both the political ideals and operating norms of a polity. In developing countries, Diamond, Linz, & Lipset, (2014) conceive that political culture is thus the manifestation in aggregate form of the psychological and subjective dimensions of politics. While in Almond *et al* (2006), political culture is described as the product of both the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the members of the system and thus it is

rooted equally in public events and private experience. Political culture in essence, deals with citizens' attitudes and behaviors in reaction to political events. To this end, this research sees political culture to be manifested in three folds namely; religion, ethnicity and patronage.

Religion: According to Oshewolo & Borok , some scholars of religion like Imo (1986) do not agree on a single definition of the word 'religion' because religion is a combination of two things: the profane and the sacred. Some approach its definition with predisposition while some scholars of religion do not practice one, so they lack the perspective of lived experience (Oshewolo & Borok, 2015, p.2). Oshewolo & Borok went further to quote Imo as emphasizing that the study of religion should feature specificity and inclusiveness and further states that religion is the varied, symbolic expression of, and appropriate response to a phenomenon that people deliberately affirm as being of unrestricted value for them. Notwithstanding, Wali (1989) asserts that religion is about people's way of life including both tradition and social interaction, adding that it is ultimately man's integral attitude of life.

Ethnicity: defined as interactions among members of many diverse groups. These diverse groups are in this study easily understood to be ethnic groups. Consequently, ethnic groups are social formations, which are distinguished by the communal character of their boundaries (Okeke & Idike, 2016, p.69). In an explanation of the idea above, in a further study on ethnicity and development in Nigeria, Nnoli (1995) emphasized that the most important or crucial variable in ethnic identity is language.

Patronage: Patronage involves a reciprocal exchange of favors. In developing countries such as Nigeria, the politician is expected to give something in exchange for the support that he gets and this support could in fact take the form of an individual bribe. This might sound crazy to some but citizens of a poor country do not often have the luxury of worrying about policies or global issues when there are more pressing concerns like hunger, plus a lack of education prevents many from understanding either ideological positions or policies that their politicians may propose. This is the sad reality for many. Therefore, it seems the only way or one of the ways that the politicians can get people to vote is by incentivizing them. This is a depiction of a patron/client relationship as it relates to the politician-citizen relationship.

For the senior politician-lower ranking politician relationship however, godfatherism is the more familiar term for patronage in Nigerian political circles. Thus, we will be using the terms interchangeably to avoid monotony. The concept of godfatherism according to Ahmed & Ali

(2019) has been defined by several scholars based on their perception and understanding. Chukwuemaka & Chukwurah, (2013) opine that, the concept is synonymous to intermediary, mentoring, benevolence, support and sponsoring. This signifies that the elites and the politicians are political porters: they decide who is to take part in the national politics and under what situations. In the words of Jatula (2019), political culture today deals with citizen's attitudes and behaviors in relation to political development and governance in human society. It is one of the most intellectually stimulating approaches to understanding people and politics in a context, and matters because it not only shapes the political perceptions and actions in a society, but also regime outcomes.

Empirical review of the Inter-play between Politics of Religiosity, Ethnicity, patronage and poverty challenges in Nigeria.

The trends of politics in post-colonial African States have been fueled by the complexities of ethnicity, religiosity and patronage, which are some of the most dangerous threats to its attainment and sustenance of development (Tamuno and Udom, 2012). According to Katznelson & Jones (2010) many independent African states emerging at the end of colonial rule faced similar challenges arising from their ethnic and religious differences and intense struggle for power. We discuss in details some of the interrelatedness between these differences as the potential bane of Nigeria's poverty state.

Politics and Religion

The relationship between politics and religion is close because there is always a point of convergence (Oshewolo & Borok 2015, p.1). It is also complicated because of the complexities inherent in the politicization of religion. In Nigeria today, there are two main religious groups; Islam and Christianity. According to Oshewolo & Maren (2015), despite efforts to keep religion and politics separate, history offers many occasions when the two have often been very closely intertwined, there is almost always a point of convergence as oftentimes a religion endorses or supports a particular leader or system.

Familusi (2012) believes that it will amount to an error of contradiction to claim that secularity in Nigeria is absolute, the legal provision notwithstanding. Without mincing words, religion has been a potent factor in Nigerian politics since independence, thereby threatening her secularity (Familusi 2012, p.159). Familusi goes on to declare that there are some fundamental principles underlying religious factors in the electoral process in Nigeria. One of such is how

religion often determines the choice of flag bearer/running mate for the positions of the president, state governors and their deputies in general elections. Religion is also often a determining factor for political positions at the local government levels, this practice is done to ensure that the interests of all groups in those communities are protected. Where this principle is adopted, there is usually a dual faith ticket i.e. Muslim/Christian or Christian/Muslim pairing. Fox & Sander (2003) gave six major reasons as to why religion seems to take center stage in politics, these reasons are as follows: (i) religious organizations have strong international links and enjoy global solidarity, (ii) religious organizations have the capability to easily unite differential social groupings in the society;(iii) religious organizations are often strong in weak states;(iv) the restriction of religious activities is often difficult for state regimes;(v) religious organizations often enjoy good patronage in the media and (vi) religious organizations have the ‘ready-made’ platform for political meetings. This leaves us with rhetoric, could this political attitude towards religion be a right path to successful development in Nigeria?

Politics and Ethnicity

According to Babatola (2015), since the independence of Nigeria in 1960, the country, from all indications still has not attained her set targets of unifying the diverse ethnic groups in virtually all facets; socially, economically and politically. A major contributing factor to this reality could be attributed to an apparent lack of unity occasioned by ethnic politics which started during the colonial era and it has had cumulative effects on the third and fourth republics. For instance, in the first Republic, the Action Group (AG) as a party metamorphosed from a Yoruba Cultural Association i.e. Egbe Omo Oduduwa; the National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) intimately linked with the Igbo Union, and Northern Peoples’ Congress (NPC) was an offshoot of Jamiyyar Arewa. The leadership of these parties was drawn along ethnic cleavages. The Action Congress (AG) as rightly mentioned by Babatola (2015), was led by late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a Yoruba and a Christian; the NCNC was headed by late Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe; an Igbo, also a Christian while the NPC was coordinated and led by Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sark of Sokoto, a Fulani and a Muslim. All these factions were results of the colonial administrative arrangement that propelled ethnic politics in that it divided Nigeria into three regions for effective administration (and for conflict some might argue); that is, West – Yoruba, North – Hausa/Fulani and East – Igbo. This division reflected the three major ethnic groups in the country.

Nigerian party politics has been characterized by ethnic chauvinism and this has been one of the major challenges confronting the advancement of liberal democracy in Nigeria since independence, to the extent that ethnic sentiments are rife in virtually all areas of the Nigerian political system. Indeed, some would argue that the low productivity and inefficiencies currently experienced in the country leading to poverty, poor development can be attributed to ethnic sentiments. The major focus of this section is to examine ethnic politics and its effects on development post-independence. Nigeria is said to have about 250 ethnic groups based on linguistic diversity. A federal government demographic survey in 1976 identified 394 language groups; another survey put it as high as 400, with the highest density of languages in Taraba and Adamawa States (Babatola, 2015).

It is observed that ethnic politics has become a formidable force in the political life of Nigeria, so much so that ethnic sentiments are used in place of merit and skills, for instance, in the case of appointments, tribe often takes precedence over qualification. Sadly, ethnic bias has been one of the major factors that have seriously dampened the image and glory of Nigerian party politics (Babatola, 2015). The first evidence to justify this is the apparent struggle to satisfactorily adopt and practice the conditions of the federal character principle. The federal character principle, which has been enshrined in Nigeria constitution since 1979, seeks to ensure that appointments to public service institutions fairly reflect the linguistic, ethnic, religious and geographic diversity of the country. (Adamolekun, et.al, 1991).

According to Okeke & Idike (2016), there is obviously an absence of national development in a nation state of various ethnic nationalities where ethnic harmony is invariably absent and where some minority groups feel marginalized. National development cannot be equated to the prosperity of the individual members of some of the component nationalities while citizens of the given state who hail from other ethnic backgrounds are evidently disadvantaged with regards to access to national opportunities. National development therefore entails inter-ethnic harmony in such societies.

Politics and Godfatherism (Patronage)

Politics of godfatherism has become an issue in the political trend of Nigeria (Ali et al 2019). Indeed, the politics of godfatherism has penetrated every nook and cranny of the nation and has affected the political structure and development of the country. The problems arising from godfatherism are diverse, and the phenomenon is arguably one of the biggest impairments

currently facing the Nigerian political system. The problem is such that the politician oftentimes is a stooge of a political godfather, and he that pays the piper dictates the tune (Edigin, 2010).

Politics of godfatherism became widespread in Nigerian political movements in 1960s while Nigeria was a fledgling democracy, and some leaders became political puppeteers (Mamah, 2004). A study by Alabi & Tunde (2013), pointed out that the political godfather phenomenon is not new in Nigerian politics, this practice started during the First Republic when some of the leading supporters and advocates of the Nigerian independence ; Azikiwe, Awolowo, Tafawa-Balewa, etc. were rumoured to have had powerful men behind them to whom they were accountable. However, there are lots of changes between the philosophical godfatherism of the First Republic and the rent seeking forms obtainable today. (Famulisi, 2013).

The conflicts arising from godfatherism are some of the major problems affecting the political arrangement of Nigeria, for instance, politics of blatant godfatherism became widespread in the Nigerian political system from 1999, when those in power became the political godfathers in states politics (Ali et al 2019)..

Ali, Bukar & Babagana further declared that while godfathers in some nations are inspired by their resolution to regulate public policies, plans for self-interests, and maybe some concern for the wellbeing of the citizens, their Nigerian counterparts seem to be primarily motivated by the desire in to control the treasury of the state. The godfathers in Nigerian politics are primarily concerned with appropriation of government contracts, political/public appointments and plundering the coffers of the state. They are in advantaged positions to decide the political confidence of candidates to political offices, and as such those that are not only seen but confirmed to be “loyal” are furnished with the ticket to be the flag bearer of their parties. This is to ensure that the subject will be answerable to them when they are eventually elected into power (Ali et al 2019). Due to these conditions, some contenders defect to other parties where they do not have such influential figures that would frustrate them out of their political ambitions (Okolie, 2006).

From the above expression, it is understood that democracy is a competition among the elite for access to and control of state power. However, it is contended here that in Nigeria the disaster of democracy can be traced to the failure of the political elite (Ali et al 2019). Since 1954, there has been a fusion of the elite class such that political elite encapsulates both the

economic and social elite. The political elites that came into being in the 1950s have continued to dominate the political territory to the narrow inclusion of new candidates. The old elites have to control the political passage such that where they are not vying for political positions; they desire to constitute themselves as the power behind the scenes, thereby leading to the phenomenon of 'godfatherism' (Ahmed & Ali, 2019).

Looking at the above set-up it is understood that politics of godfatherism is fully embedded into the dynamic of Nigerian politics and this system corresponds with the opinion of Plato, Aristotle, Tacitus, and other classical philosophers who largely centered on the concentration of political power in the hands of a few in the early Greek and Roman society.

The issue of godfatherism cannot be complete without talking about the immunity clause of some political office holders. Saidu (2015) makes it clear that one of the weaknesses of Nigeria's constitution is the provision of immunity clause to political office holders so long as one is occupying political seat of power, that person is immune to prosecution until their administration is over. The current trend is that every political leader will make sure that they handpick their successor in case of any probe or investigation into the affairs of the immediate past administration or maybe just as a means of still having some relevance in the decision making mechanism of the state. This trend constitutes a serious threat to the promotion of welfare and development of the country.

However, despite Nigeria's secular constitution, religion has become progressively important in the polity. This is due to the political liberalization and autonomy that states have in a federal system of government. Religious organizations also serve as political mobilizing agents because of the influence they exert over their followers. In exchange, many religious groups, as interest groups seek to influence choice of elected officials, policy making and government. These and more are not far from the reasons why the country is still battling with such magnitude of poverty, even with the gifted human and material resources.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

We adopted 'The Social Learning Theory' of Albert Bandura (1977), which emphasizes that most human behaviors are learned through observation, modeling, and imitation. Albert Bandura is considered the leading proponent of this theory. He states that most human behaviors are learned observationally through modeling, that is, people can learn something new by observing the behavior of other people and applying rational mental behavior. Social

learning theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral and environmental influences. The theoretical standpoint is that people are more likely to imitate the behavior of others if they particularly admire and identify with them. People follow models for undesirable as well as desirable behaviors. They acquire the act of being religious bigots, showing ethnic affiliations by observing and imitating models who are mostly from the same religion or ethnicity with them. Children do what they see other people, such as their parents, siblings, family friends, and peers, do. This theory emphasizes that people adopt the standard of behavior and emotional characteristics of people whom they admire in their political and social lives.

3. Methodology

The study adopted the social survey research design where the study utilized quantitative methods of research. The main survey method utilized is the questionnaires to collect relevant data. This design was adopted because of its strength in external validity and its advantage for the generalization of findings to a wider population, and especially because of the heterogeneity of the population.

3.1 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

We draw our sample size using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) method of determining sample size for research activities. In view of this, the nearest value on the table for the general population from 1,000,000 (1million) of 20,504,349 million from the three sampled states is at $S=384$ at 5% margin of error and 95% level of confidence. This means the sample size for this research (questionnaire administration) was adopted at 384. The proportional sample sizes are based on the population size per state, i.e. the state population divided by the country population, then multiplied by the total sample size. We chose the three states randomly based on the three major regions in the country for fair representation of the entire population and for us to be able to do justice to the topic in question and ensure relevant data is derived. Kaduna-155, Oyo-147, Enugu-82. Three hundred and eighty-four (384) questionnaires were administered in three regions of the country, 155, 147 and 82 respectively for each selected state. We adopted the simple random sampling technique in choosing those members of the public who participated in the survey at our discretion.

3.2 Measurement of Variables

The study therefore measures the relationship between the independent variables Political culture on the dependent variable poverty in Nigeria. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages were used, while inferential statistics using Multiple Regression analysis was used to determine the type of relationship between the variables in the stated hypothesis.

3.3 Research model:

$$Y=b_0+b_1X_1+b_2X_2+b_3X_3+U$$

Y=Dependent Variable (Poverty)

b₀= Constant of Regression (b₁, b₂, b₃)

X= Independent Variables (x₁ x₂ and x₃)

U= Random error term (Residual)

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: The resultant effect of political culture in Nigeria

S/N	Political culture of Nigerians has resulted into the following:	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total
1.	Bad leadership	6 (1.6%)	4 (1.0%)	8 (2.1%)	154 (39.8%)	214 (55.4%)	386 (100%)
2.	Political violence	4 (1.0%)	16 (4.1%)	28 (7.3%)	216 (55.9%)	122 (31.6%)	386 (100%)
3.	Religious crisis	7 (1.8%)	158 (40.9%)	72 (18.6%)	15 (3.9%)	134 (34.7%)	386 (100%)
4.	Ethnic Crisis	12 (3.1%)	36 (9.3%)	31 (8.0%)	155 (40.2%)	152 (39.4%)	386 (100%)
5.	Insecurity and insurgency	2 (0.5%)	4 (1.0%)	11 (2.8%)	194 (50.3%)	175 (45.3%)	386 (100%)
6.	Endemic Poverty	4 (1.0%)	3 (0.8%)	3 (0.8%)	190 (49.2%)	186 (48.1%)	386 (100%)

7	Corruption	1 (0.02%)	2 (0.5%)	2 (0.5%)	256 (66.3%)	125 (32.3%)	386 (100%)
8	Political thuggery	3 (0.8%)	4 (1.0%)	3 (0.8%)	140 (36.3%)	236 (61.1%)	386 (100%)
9	Poor infrastructures	7 (1.8%)	6 (1.6%)	5 (1.3%)	236 (61.1%)	132 (34.2%)	399 (100%)
10	Poor participation in politics (political apathy)	30 (7.8%)	10 (2.6%)	10 (2.6%)	238 (61.6%)	98 (25.4%)	386 (100%)
11	Low investment	12 (3.1%)	6 (1.6%)	8 (1.8%)	240 (62.2%)	120 (31.0%)	386 (100%)
12	High rate of unemployment	12 (3.1%)	16 (4.1%)	2 (0.5%)	111 (28.7%)	245 (63.4%)	386 (100%)
13	Celebrating mediocrity than merit	3 (0.8%)	14 (3.6%)	31 (8.0%)	212 (54.9%)	126 (32.6%)	386 (100%)
14	Underdevelopment of Nigeria as a whole.	3 (0.8%)	4 (1.0%)	5 (1.3%)	254 (65.8%)	120 (31.1%)	386 (100%)

Source: Researchers’ computation using SPSS (2022)

Table 1 shows the agreement of the respondents on the resultant effect of the political culture of Nigerians. From the item 1, political culture of Nigeria has led to bad leadership which everyone is suffering with, the 214 respondent representing (55.4%) strongly agreed, while 154 respondents representing (39.8%) agreed to that. In the same item 1, 8 respondents which represent (2.1%) were undecided about the statement, while 4 respondents (1.0%) disagreed and 6 respondents (1.6%) strongly disagreed. From all indications, majority have attested that the political culture in Nigeria has resulted into bad leadership. This has opened doors for so many vices among them are; insecurity, ethnic crises, banditry, kidnapping, poor infrastructure, political thuggery, poor investment and endemic poverty.

The above assertion is evident and supported in the responses of other items in the table. For example, we can see the responses rate on insecurity and insurgency (item 5), where 194 respondents (50.3%) agreed and 175 respondents representing (45.3%) strongly agreed that the political behavior of Nigerians has resulted into insurgency and insecurity at large. Also, in item 6 on poverty, we have 190 respondents (49.2%) that agreed, 186 respondents (48.1%) strongly agreed, 3 respondents (0.8%) are undecided, 3 respondents (0.8%) disagreed while 4 respondents (1.0%) strongly disagreed that political culture in Nigeria has led to poverty in Nigeria. This is not far from the truth that a country with mineral resources like oil is still

recorded significantly poor (World Bank, 2018). Data from the World Poverty Clock revealed that Nigeria has over 87 million people living in poverty, compared to 73 million in India (The Punch, 2018). This may be attributed to the misappropriation of funds or little concentration on public infrastructure for employment. Another acme here is that; the cankerworm of corruption is still characterizing Nigeria. The responses rate in the item 7 on corruption showed that 125 (32.3%) respondents strongly agreed, 256 (66.6%) respondents agreed, while 1 respondent (0.02%) strongly disagree and 2 respondents (0.05%) disagreed that political culture in Nigeria has resulted into corruption.

This is also backed by secondary data on Transparency International where Nigeria was ranked high (149/180) in the 2020 corruption ranking. Item 9 (poor infrastructure) revealed that political culture in Nigeria has resulted into poor infrastructure in the country with 132 (34.2%) respondents that strongly agreed, and 236 (61.1%) respondents agreed, 7 respondents (1.8%) strongly disagreed, and 6 respondents (1.6%) disagreed while 5 respondents (1.3%) are undecided. From the analysis, one can see the reason why unemployment in Nigeria is still rated high. The rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria as of 2016 was 13.9% (2016 est.), and in 2017 it was 16.5% (2017 est.) respectively. In 2017, Nigeria was ranked 181 out of 219 in the World for youth unemployment (CIA World Factbook, 2021). This is as a result of poor infrastructure to absorb the teeming youths in the country. It is like a vicious cycle, bad leadership leads to poor investment, which leads to poor infrastructure and then unemployment. What we are saying in essence is that until the items listed in the table are tackled to the barest, Nigeria will not experience any meaningful development, poverty will continue to be the order of the day. The attainment of eradicating poverty in the sustainable development (SDGs) in order words is undermined come 2030.

Table 2. Model Summary^a

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.505 ^a	.255	.248	.853	1.916

a. Predictors: (Constant), Patronage, Religiosity, Ethnicity

b. Dependent Variable: poverty

Source: SPSS Output (2022)

As indicated from Table 2 adjusted R square, which is the explanatory power of independent variables determine the variation on dependent variable with the coefficient of 0.248. This signifies about 24.8% of the systematic variation on the respondents. On the other hand, other

factors that have not been captured in the study explain the remaining 75.2%. The Durbin-Watson value reported in the regression table above indicates whether or not there is presence of autocorrelation in the error term of the estimated model. According to Norusis, (1999), Durbin- Watson value between “1.50 - 2.50” indicates absence of autocorrelation. Since the Durbin –Watson value reported in the regression result table is 1.916, it can be concluded that there is absence of autocorrelation in the error term of the model, signifying that the model can be used for predicting the characteristics of the respondents in terms of poverty in Nigeria as it relates to political culture.

Table. 3 ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	98.949	4	24.737	33.977	.000 ^b
Residual	289.041	397	.728		
Total	387.990	401			

a. Dependent Variable Poverty

b. Predictors: (Constant), Patronage, Religiosity, Ethnicity

Source: SPSS OUTPUT (2022)

The F-Statistics value presented in the results above allow an evaluation of the statistical significance of the estimated model. On the basis of the F- statistics criterion and its associated sig. value, using this statistics, (F=33.497, Sig=.000 (P<0.01)), the estimated model significantly explained variation in political culture. This implies that the model has a good fit.

Table 4: Regression Result

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.031	.183		11.097	.000
	Political Culture	-.097	.034	-.128	-2.867	.004
	Religiosity	-.171	.036	-.220	-4.712	.000
	Ethnicity	-.210	.037	-.272	-5.612	.000
	Patronage	-.115	.030	-.175	-3.832	.000

Source: SPSS OUTPUT (2022)

The regression results table above, reports the multiple coefficient (β), the coefficients of determination and the probability value. From the regression result table above political culture has a negative, significant effect on poverty status in Nigeria ($\beta = -0.097$, Sig= .000). It implies that a negative change in political culture preference leads to negative influence in the level of poverty of Nigeria. Furthermore, religiosity equally has negative and significant effect on

poverty status of Nigeria ($\beta=-0.171$, Sig= 0.004). It implies religiosity has adverse effect on poverty status of Nigerians. More so, ethnicity has negative significant effect on poverty status of Nigerians ($\beta=-0.210$, Sig= 0.000). It implies that increase in ethnicity discrimination will adversely affect poverty status of Nigerians. Finally, patronage has negative significant effect on poverty status of Nigerians ($\beta=-0.115$, Sig= 0.000). It implies that increase in patronage (God-fatherism) will adversely affect poverty situation of Nigerians. The effect of the independent variables was to be investigated at 5%. Incidentally, all of the independent variables (political culture: religiosity, ethnicity and patronage) exacted statistically significant influence on the dependent variable at 1% (sig<0.01). This finding is in consonance with the *a priori* expectation set for this study. From the regression results table above, the coefficients (Beta) indicate the relative effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The larger the value estimated for an independent variable, the more important is the variable in predicting the dependent variable (Odama, 2013 in Rong, & Bao-Wen, 2018).

4.1 Test of Hypotheses

This study has put up 3 hypotheses in null form as stated in earlier. The hypotheses were used to examine the consequences of political culture on poverty in Nigeria. The hypotheses of the study were tested using the t- test (t-statistics) and p-value at 0.05 levels of significance. The null hypotheses are accepted if the t-statistics is less than 1.96 and the p-value greater than 5% (0.05) otherwise rejected.

Hypothesis 1 (Religiosity and poverty status in Nigeria) state that:

H₀₁: Religiosity has no significant influence on poverty in Nigeria. The regression coefficient linking religiosity and poverty in Nigeria was significant ($\beta= -0.171$, t-statistics= -4.712, p-value= 0.000). Thus, null hypothesis was rejected, which says religiosity has no significant influence on poverty in Nigeria and we accept the alternative hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2 (Ethnicity and poverty status in Nigeria) state that:

H₀₂: Ethnicity does not significantly affect Nigeria's poverty situation.

The regression coefficient linking ethnicity and poverty situation in Nigeria was significant ($\beta= -0.210$, t-statistics= -5.612, p-value= 0.000). Thus, we reject the null hypothesis, which

states that ethnicity does not significantly affect poverty in Nigeria and accept the alternative hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3 (patronage and poverty situation in Nigeria) stated that:

H₀₃: Patronage does not significantly influence poverty situation in Nigeria.

The regression coefficient linking patronage and poverty situation in Nigeria was significant ($\beta = -0.115$, t -statistics = -3.832 , p -value = 0.000). Thus, we reject the null hypothesis, which states that patronage does not significantly impacts on the poverty situation in Nigeria and accept the alternative hypothesis, which says it does.

5. Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Political culture plays a critical role as a factor in the socio-economic status and wealth distribution in Nigeria. Ethnicity, religiosity and patronage have been some of the staples of Nigerian politics since the colonial rule. The colonizing powers politicized and exploited the diversity of the peoples of Nigeria to protect their administration. The system of indirect rule at the time promoted a minimal or limited political participation among the natives, like the parochial political culture. The divide and rule tactic of the British government exploited ethnic and religious loyalties and fostered hostilities which have persisted till now. The patron-client relationships also remain, only with different players.

Political culture plays a critical role in the social and economic development of every country. Religious and ethnic biases, as well as the political entrepreneurship of godfathers have contributed to poor electoral choices that in turn exacerbate the deteriorating standards of living, poor employment opportunities, endemic poverty, and insecurity in Nigeria. There is a dire need for reorientation of our collective values and a better understanding of some of the dynamics of our differences, and how to manage them for us to tackle the menace of the endemic poverty bedeviling us as a country.

Recommendations

- i. There should be a national consensus for an all-encompassing policy to address the cost of governance as well as that of the electoral processes. The struggle to attain these political positions promotes the use of divisive identity politics.

- ii. Ideology based politics should be encouraged rather than the politicisation of religion or ethnicity. This will foster issue based policy making and enhance human and capital development.
- iii. The causes of poverty should be explored and addressed in order to mitigate the damage of ethnic and religious conflict. Investment in human capital and infrastructure development should be encouraged.
- iv. Education should be a priority and we should strive to promote the principles of meritocracy in nation building.

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