THE COST OF POLITICAL POWER IN NIGERIA: GODFATHERISM AND MONETIZATION

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(Without prejudice, the world knows no polity where the cost of power is cheap)

Introduction
Nigerian politics grapples with so many problems; and it is these problems that make it dangerous, costly and uninviting; and these problems make demand on the capacity of the political system of the nation to grow. Two of these problems are (1) godfatherism which seeks an unjustifiable influence for certain members of the society and (2) monetisation which seeks a justification of godfatherism since it (godfatherism) presupposes wealth. In justification, money, from which a depressed economy has alienated many Nigerians, has peripherised the masses with the result that the small group who have it assume imperious authority. Its involvement in our politics has made the cost of power so high that it is only those who have more than ordinary or average means that can afford the privilege of coming in contact with power. This paper seeks to discuss two of the factors that are implicated in the high cost of political power in Nigeria – godfatherism and money. The paper will also discuss the interface between these two factors.

GODFATHERISM

The Schema of the Phenomenon
The word, godfather, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 6 ed, is a godparent who promises at a Christian baptism ceremony to be responsible for a child... and teach them about the Christian precepts. The inference from this definition is that the godfather is a man (an avuncular mentor) who has accepted at his mentee’s baptism the arduous challenges of a perfect christian guidance of the godson. This sacred responsibility of christian guidance obliges the godfather to invest moral resources for the dividend of the moral rectitude of the protégé. But in its perverted usage, godfather is the head