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Religion in the Political Economy of Democratization in the South Eastern Nigeria: The Anambra State Experience

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I. INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, there is coexistence between animistic religions, ancestor worship, Islam and Christianity. These religions have been dominant in particular areas of different regions in the country and have been a veritable instrument for political struggle among various Nigerians in the never ending intra class struggle among the elites for political domination that operates within the propaganda machine of tribalism [Kalu, 2003:6]. Of all, Islam through the Emirate system of administration has been a spectacular unifying religio-political force among the Hausa/Fulani, which stimulated limited Christian unity in political matters. Down in the South Eastern Nigeria, Christians are characteristically disunited politically to their own disadvantage due to

denominational antagonism that exists in a tripartite form between the Catholics, Anglicans and Pentecostal churches. On the other hand, many Nigerians retain their indigenous religions though their level of political consciousness is inconsequential.

The intertwined connection between religion and politics in the history of Nigeria since independence was described by Kalu [2003] in the following manner;

Religion is intricately woven into the fabric of politics and provides the compelling touchstone of legitimacy or the love of the ruler by the ruled; the motive for exercising power; reason to be obeyed; the determinant of the moral standards and style of power and the engine that moves governance. In such contexts, the structure of governance had tremendous impact on the modes of religious expression and religion could not be conjured out of politics.

Corroborating this, Obianyo (2008) notes;

One of the intriguing aspects of Nigerian politics is the ease with which the political class capitalise on any form of identity to capture state power or public office. At one time ethnicity is used, where the ethnic card is not catching on, the religious card is flown.

This precisely seems to be the case in Anambra state. It is widely held that the struggle for the acquisition of state power has being predominantly between the Anglican Church (AC) and Roman Catholic Church (RCC). In addition, politicians have not only employed the religious and individual godfather powers in their struggle for state power but have also resorted to spiritualism as an instrument to seek victory both in the primaries and the general election. The controversial cases of Okija Shrine oaths and agreements between Chief Chris Uba and Dr. Chris Ngige, Chief Emeka Offor and Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju, are only examples. Prior to 1998 party primaries; and 1999 general elections, Chief Emeka Offor took Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju to the popular but dreaded Okjija shrine in Ihiala Local Government of Anambra state to take oath of allegiance to him if he becomes the governor. Haven secured this spiritual agreement; Chief Emeka Offor [who controlled both party and electoral structures in the state then] manipulated the system to install him as governor. In

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2002 and 2003, Chief Chris Uba did the same thing for Dr. Chris Ngige. All these power backups for victory are achieved under special arrangements that have high level financial implications for democratization.

It is important to state that religion as a factor in Anambra state politics has been silent in political discuss before 1999 general elections. However, between 1999 and 2003, the use of spiritualism to gain electoral victory became public knowledge and pervasive in political discuss. From 2003, the scenario of religious institutions playing the role of godfathers, and the struggle between such institutions and individual godfathers who have always employed spiriticism on their political sons on whose candidate shall emerge victorious characterised political contest in the state.

This paper therefore studies the phenomenon, with a view to explicate the economic connections and dynamics of religious institutional godfatherism in the politics of the state and to evaluate the mechanism of its vctory over the individual godfathers.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

To effectively carry out this inquiry, this paper explored the history and practice of party primaries in Anambra State since 1999, which was the first period that the newly created state experienced electoral competition. The paper investigated the role of both the church and the acclaimed godfathers in the emergence of party candidates during party primaries and in the general elections. This was done by review of various publications in texts, journals, conference papers, workshops, government publications both international and local, civil society and human rights publications, newspapers and magazines.

This study, which was conducted in Nigeria beginning in the later part of 2009 and concluded in January 2011, also used questionnaires to find out the precise influence which religious organisations had on voter choice of candidates during elections, choice of candidates for political appointments after elections, and the role played by these religious bodies in the management of political conflicts in Anambra state particularly during the various attempts to remove incumbent Governors between 1999 and 2007.

One thousand eight hundred questionnaires were distributed [Six hundred questionnaires in each of the three senatorial districts that make up the state] to the staff at the ecclesiastical quarters of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church in the state. It was also distributed at the secretariat of the major political parties operating in the state most importantly, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Action Congress (AC), All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP), All Progressive Party Alliance (APGA), and Labour Party (LP). Thirty copies each were distributed at each of these places while

1560 copies were distributed in major churches in the three geopolitical zones of the state (372 questionnaires in each zone]. The remaining 90 copies of the questionnaire were distributed at the secretariats of RCC, AC, Grace of God, Christ Embassy, and Methodist church, Assemblies of God, ECWA, Winners Chapel and Redeemed Church of God.

The administration of the research instrument was carried out by research field assistants. They collected back the questionnaire on the spot without any missing. Simple percentage mechanism through a build up of mathematical tables was used in addition to content analysis to study, analyse and explain the data generated during the inquiry.

It must be acknowledged that the hostile political atmosphere in the state limited our data gathering to answers in the questionnaires as people were either sceptical of responding to questions or abhorred interview in its entirety. We are also limited to the questionnaire responses as our base for inferences as we have no other way of assessing our respondents' minds.

III. GAP IN THE LITERATURE

Many scholars like Coppedge and Reinecke (1991); and Hadenius, (1992) have made several efforts to construct scales of democracy that measure the three dimensions of democratization, which are; electoral competition, participation (universal suffrage), and essential civil liberties. Others like Sklar (1987: 686-714; and 1996: 26-27); and O'Donnell (1994: 60-62) argue that among other things that autonomous judiciary, institutionalized processes (often in a separate, autonomous agency), pluralism, rule of law, respect for human rights etc are characteristics of any democracy.

Consequently, scholars like Casanova [1994] and Epstein [1991] argue that religious institutions build democratic forces that challenge authoritarian regime particularly in Eastern Europe and Latin America. They have equally provided skills and organizational strength in civil society activism that are related to democratization (Verba et al. 1995). Thus, Zald and McCarthy (1987) and Smith (1991) argued that religion serves as instrument of resources mobilization for groups and organizations seeking to expand democratic participation or protect the interests of the marginalized.

Other scholars like Pals (1996) and Hughes (1995) noted therefore that religious institutions influences political choice or activities. For Hughes (1995:39), individuals;

Undoubtedly act on the basis of their beliefs and ideas, and the ways in which they conduct themselves follow from the religious and political conceptions to which they subscribe.

While Pals (1996: 85) argues that religion serves;

As the carrier of social sentiments, providing symbols and rituals that enable people to express the deep emotions which anchor them to their community.

Thus, Hoge and Zulueta [1985] note that the conditions that promote consensus among inhabitants of a common environment are likely to be present in formal organizations that encourage face-to-face interaction such as religious organizations. They are voluntary associations of individuals bound by strong affective ties and regular social interaction; their members are tied to particular indoctrination and maintenance of group norms (Stark, 1987). This enables such institutions to define and prescribe political agenda in the name of God and structure members' preferences for candidates, parties, and issue positions (Wald, 1987: 57-63). This political function of the church are easily undertaken through such programmes as sermons, pastoral messages, adult education classes, poster displays, announcements and church publications. In this sense, existing religious traditions/attitudes toward authority, knowledge, obedience and the need for salvation make the function very efficacious.

Walton (1985: 47-49) observed that the churches provide many avenues for the reinforcement of such programmes and messages by bringing the membership together on a regular basis for formal worship and promoting informal social interaction among congregants. Secondly, deviants/truants from such programmes and directives can be punished (Walton, 1985: 50). Consequently, Welch and Legee (1998: 19) see religion as a force for order, social control, and conservative positions on public policy.

However, Cartocci (2002) argues that religious organizations which were once exceptionally strong predictors of voting have lost their influence in the modern times. In Italian politics, it has been found out that the religious cleavage, eroded by a long term process of secularization which had already depressed its influence on the vote, received the final blow by the disappearance of the Christian Democratic Party, making politically irrelevant a religious driven vote. Catholics divide now themselves between a vote for the Left or the Right according to their political, rather than religious, preferences. However, the literature exposed a different historical experience in the Nigeria political process. Political contestation in Nigeria since independence has been structured considerably by Islam and Christianity [Odey, 2003; Zartman, 1992]. This has determined voters' support for parties and candidates in Nigeria at different periods (Campbell, 1997).

The historical origin of the influence of religion on electoral choice in Nigeria dates back to the introduction of Islamic state through Jihad in the Sokoto Caliphate (Enwerem, 1995: 21; Adigwe, 1968: 454). The political exploits made by the caliphate since then in

Nigeria political history awakened the political consciousness of the Christians, which led to the formation of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in the mid-1970s as a strong ecumenical movement (Enwerem, 1995: 76). Ever since then the factor of religious affiliation has become a yard stick for voters' choice during elections. For instance, many Nigerians particularly from the South could neither vote for nor sympathise with Muhammadu Buhari during the 2007 elections because of his statement that Nigeria should be Islamized. To secure the support of the North for their presidential bids, late Chief Mashood Abiola and Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu became Moslems.

On the other hand, the self acclaimed godfather of Anambra politics, Chief Chris Uba employed the instrument of African Traditional Religion [ATR] to determine whom to impose both as a party candidate and governor of the state [Ngige, 2005]. This practice was a repetition of the deal between Chief Emeka Offor and Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju during the 1999 general election.

The literature reveals that back in the 55 BC Roman Empire; godfatherism existed because a wealthy candidate would quietly arrange for his election to the desired office with a band of political "go-betweens". These professional gentlemen would proceed to mark out the Roman tribes into smaller and wider sections, arrange voters into clubs and fraternities, compound with each section for its votes, marshal the faithful henchmen to the electoral comitia, and duly pay over the stipulated honorarium upon delivery of the elections (Scott, 1973). Today, in Nigeria, elections (both primary and general) are habitually subverted/determined by political parties and political elites through the illegal use of money, physical force and governmental patronage deployed through the intermediary of "perverse brokers" (Olarinmoye, 2007: 33) known as godfathers. 'godfatherism' is therefore a prevalent phenomenon in Nigerian politics.

These godfathers disfranchise voters (Scott, 1973), serve as go-betweens for politicians in a situation of voters' alienation and distrust in return for contracts and political appointments [Agbaje, 2005]. They achieve this aim by creating political structures called parties with their resources [Weinstein, 2005: 602-603] and then invite the mass to join. After this, they rely on the massive deployment of material resources (Wang and Kurzman, 2007a) to dominate the political process. Chief Chris Uba declared;

I am the greatest godfather in Nigeria because this is the first time an individual single handedly put in position every politician in the state (Ibrahim, 2006).

The godfather has in his possession knowledge of the sort of incentives most likely to "move" potential voters to vote for a preferred candidate (Wang and Kurzman, 2007b). This knowledge enables the godfather to engage in illegal election activities such as:

- i. Compilation of fictitious names on voters' registers, illegal compilation of separate voters' list, abuse of the voter registration revision exercise, illegal printing of voters' cards, illegal possession of ballot boxes, collaboration between polling officials and agents to subvert the electoral rules, late or non-supply of election materials to opposition strongholds, delay in opening polling centres located in opposition strongholds (Pre-election voter compliance).
- ii. Stuffing of ballot boxes with ballot papers, falsification of election results, illegal thumb-printing of ballot papers, stuffing of ballot boxes, under-age voting, multiple voting, illegal printing of electoral result forms (as in the case of Form EC 8 and EC 8A used in collation and declaration of election results in 2003 and 2007 elections), deliberate refusal to supply election materials to certain areas, announcing results in places where no elections were held, unauthorized announcement of election results, harassment of candidates, agents and voters, change of list of electoral officials, box-switching and inflation of figures and long delays or manipulation of election tribunals to protect stolen verdicts, inducement of voters with food and money, threatening voters with the use of force (Kurfi, 2005; Ibrahim, 2006).

The need to protect themselves against disappointment in their relationship with their clients who become controllers of first degree resources through their brokerage activities has pushed godfathers into taking initiatives that has had the consequence of entrenching electoral corruption in Nigerian politics. Olarinmoye [2007::4) noted that;

godfather-brokers in order to face-up to the possibilities of constant re-arrangement of power configuration in their relationships with political clients and the negative impact which such has on their existence as brokers have been forced to restructure their modus operandi, that is evolve from individuals reliant on second degree resources to individuals who control first degree resources in their own right. In other words, transforms themselves from being 'godfather-broker' to becoming "godfather-patron.

The godfather-patron captures the party machinery for himself. With his control of the party structure he becomes the sponsor of politicians. He uses his control of party machinery to impose his clients as party candidates for elective office and ensures their electoral success through activities which have been characterized as electoral corruption. Success of the party at elections translates into direct access of the godfather-patron to public treasury and policies. That is, the godfather in his bid to secure stable access to state resources and ensure his continued existence as a

"Bigman" engages in electoral corruption to install a puppet (Ibrahim, 2006b; Ibrahim, 2007). On this lie the root of political struggle that ensued in Anambra state since 1999 between the godfathers and their victorious clients on the one hand; and the individual godfathers and the institutional godfather – the Church on the other. It is therefore interesting to note that while literature dominantly explored the role of religion and godfatherism in democratic politics, it has not evaluated the superiority of one over the other nor has it explored the financial nexus that inform their joint competition to install political office holders. This paper pursues these.

IV. FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

Public choice theory is considered the most applicable theoretical tool for this study and analysis. Public choice theory originated as a separate field of study a half century ago in the works of its founding fathers, Kenneth Arrow (1951), Anthony Downs (1957), Mancur Olson (1965), James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock (1962) among others.

The core principles of the theory are:

1. In the political sphere, people aspire to promote their common good.
2. In the pursuit of people's common good, voters, politicians and policy makers are supposed some how to rise above their own parochial concerns.
3. This implies that public choice assumes that people are guided by their self interests but their motivations in political process are not different from those of the people one is associated with. As result voters "vote their pocket books" supporting candidates and ballot propositions they think will make them personally better off.
4. Thus, the individual becomes the fundamental unit of analysis. Public choice rejects the construction of organic decision making units, such as the people, the community, or society. Groups do not make choices, only individuals do.
5. Public and private choice processes differ, not because the motivations of the actors are different, but because of stack differences in the incentives and constraints that channel the pursuit of self interest in two settings.
6. There is no mechanism for making collective choices other than dictatorship that translates the preferences of diverse individuals into a well behaved social utility function, in this case; religion, faith and its application.
7. In this order, voters in democratic elections will tend to be poorly informed about the candidates and issues on the ballot. They act on the directives of the church.

Public choice theory therefore adopts the assumption that all individuals, be they workers, politicians, or bureaucrats, are motivated more by self

interest than by public interest. However, it recognises that men are not angels and focus on institutional rules under which people pursue their objectives. Religious teachings and doctrines being the ultimate among the rules are expected to determine and/or influence the electoral choice of voters and candidates.

This theory enables the paper to investigate: a]. the reactions and contributions of religious groups to electoral processes in Anambra state; b]. The impact or role of religious affiliations and belief in the selection and voting for electoral contestants during elections in the state; c]. The impact of the input from religion on the political structure during the conduct of elections and the conversion of the inputs from the religious institutions by the political structure into output, and the role of religion in the resolution of the political conflicts that characterize Anabra state since 1999. Therefore, I consider this theory appropriate for the study.

V. DATA COLLECTION AND DISCUSSIONS PARTY PRIMARIES AND ELECTORAL CHOICE IN ANAMBRA STATE

Primary elections are one means by which a political party nominates candidates for the following general election in which other parties contest for public office. Primary elections in the South East particularly Anambra State are generally anarchical, fraudulent and a criminal experience that defies all known theories. The dominant political elites that floated political parties at the national level had their states of origin as there sphere of influence wherein they decide who occupies what position in the party and who becomes each party's flag bearer in the general elections. To legitimize this, they were mandated by their various national secretariats to organise primaries in their state during 1999 and 2003 general elections.

During the various primaries termed "indirect", party membership plays almost no role in choosing party candidates. Carl LeVan [2006] notes that;

Rather than a congress system, or open primary elections, delegates are nominated by local governments rather than by party members. Since the LGAs depend on the governors for financial and political support they are easily persuaded. This system allows the party near total control over candidate selection and returned all but one of the governors to office in 2003 (see also Kew 2004, 139-173).

In addition to this, the People's Democratic Party [PDP] constitution (Article 13) for instance provided that political appointees such as ambassadors, ministers and advisors are to become "automatic delegates" at the party convention (Dan-Musa, 2004). Under this circumstance, all the special advisers, assistants, and commissioners at the state level are automatic delegates. But where the party is not

in good terms with the governor, or where the governor belongs to another party, the national Secretariat makes use of the individual "godfathers," who bankroll and use patronage networks to carry out much of the fieldwork for candidates.

In Anambra state however, the godfathers are used to making a list of preferred candidates who have paid for those positions in millions of naira and with the approval of the national secretariat of their political parties impose such on the state structure and party. In addition to paying handsomely for such positions, they equally enter into agreement under oath in any chosen Traditional religious shrine that guarantee the godfathers' access to and control of the state's financial policies, development programmes and appointments after the general elections. It is my argument that the euphoria of the transition from military to civilian regime in 1999 did not allow politician, religious leaders and even researchers to monitor the role of religion in Anambra politics. However, the crisis between Chief Emeka Offor [godfather] and Governor Chinwoke Mbadinuju [whom he installed] between 1999 and 2002 exposed the role played by African Traditional religion [ATR] in the emergence of party candidates. After Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju took oath of allegiance to Chief Emeka Offor, the later manipulated the electoral process to ensure the emergence of the former both as the PDP party flag bearer in the primaries and the governor of the state between 1999 and 2003.

This practice continued into 2003 but with a wider and more sophisticated dimension both along the party and religious lines. Ochereome (2005) exposed the role played by African Traditional Religion (ATR) in the selection or choice of Dr. Chris Nwabueze Ngige as the PDP flag bearer during the 2003 general elections in Anambra state while other candidates sought for the blessings and support of all the major religious bodies. Obianyo (2008:17) concurred to this point in the following manner;

There were other candidates who sought the blessings of the various religious leaders in the state, like Dr Chris Ngige, but never received the endorsement of any major denomination. Dr Chris Ngige is a Catholic who campaigned on a subject very dear to the Catholic Church – that is return of schools to the missions or churches, yet the church never endorsed him.

The point to be made here is that political office seekers particularly aspirants to the office of the governor appreciated the important role played by religious groups in the emergence of candidates.

Following the problem between the incumbent Governor with his godfather and by extension the PDP, Chief Chris Uba who by virtue of presidential connection and party financing – another acclaimed godfather - was given the mandate to deliver the state for PDP as the Governor has cross-carpeted to Alliance for Democracy

[AD]. Earlier Dr. Chris Ngige – a member of RCC – was said to have approached the church hierarchy for blessing and support but was asked to wait for another period because Mr. Peter Obi who was an aspirant under the All progressive People's Alliance [APGA] had already been chosen as an RCC consensus candidate. He was taken to the famous Okija shrine by Chief Uba for oath of allegiance. Obi emerged as APGA flag bearer without challenges while Chief Uba manipulated the PDP primaries and imposed Ngige as PDP candidate. On the day of the PDP convention, Chief Uba came to the convention venue with buses full of rented people that were perceived to be non-Anambra residents. He stood at the entrance of the convention ground, and handed over the PDP delegate cards to these rented boys. These cards were meant to be given to Local Governments and political appointee delegates as entrance permit to the conventon ground. In the end, Ngige was declared winner, whilst other aspirants either fruitlessly went to the court or decamped to other parties.

The stage was set for a show of electoral power between the individual godfather – Chief Uba, Dr Ngige's sponsor and the institutional godfather – the hierarchy of RCC, Mr. Obi's sponsor. Denominational politics joined forces here as Chief Uba – A member of the Anglican Communion - won the support of the former Bishop of the Niger and Dean of the Anglican Communion, Dr. Anakwenwa. Chief Uba using presidential connection [Ochereome, 2005] got the Independent National Electoral Commission [INEC] to declare Ngige winner while the RCC mobilised its vast majority of popular support that posses documentaries about the elections and filed a suit in the court against the INEC verdict. Through court litigations, the RCC vacated INEC verdict through the presentation of original results from the polls and recovered Mr Obi mandate. Mr. Obi was finally swon in as the governor of the state.

A field investigation carried out to establish the various activities of the two blocks during and after the elections and the reasons behind church's active involvement in the electoral process reveals the followings:

VI. RELIGION IN ANAMBRA STATE POLITICAL PROCESS

One of the crucial strategies which major contenders to the governorship position in Anambra

state adopted to balance the denominational bias, which in fact authenticates that fundamental influence of religion, was that each candidate choose their deputies from another religious denomination. Obianyo (2008:17) captured it in the following way:

It is important to point out that all the gubernatorial candidates had their ticket balanced religiously. Mr Peter Obi had as his running mate, Mrs Virgy Etiaba, whom it was alleged was the candidate of the Anglican Archbishop of the Ecclesiastical Province of the Niger. Dr Chris Ngige had as his running mate Dr Okey Ude an Anglican but a relation of his political god father Chief Chris Uba.

However, the Catholic Church, which has its members as the gubernatorial candidates for the major parties, gave her mandate for Mr. Peter Obi of APGA. While Chris Ubah, an Anglican settled for Dr. Chris Ngige whom he had earlier on led to Okija shrine for oath and who has his (Ubah's) brother an Anglican as his deputy. It is therefore evident that religion played a key role in the selection or emergence of governorship candidate in Anambra state during the 2003 general elections. This fact was supported by data from the field as can be proved by the following reports. To validate or invalidate this opinion, we proceed with our field report being data collected from our respondents on the issue.

VII. FIELD SURVEY

The questionnaires were evenly distributed to the two dominant Christian denominations in the state whose support for the candidates was considered decisive and which has been competing for the control of the state and its institutions. The entire 1800 respondents are adults with universal suffrage, who may have participated in the said election. Most importantly, 24% of the respondents from the Anglican Communion [AC] and 34.8% from RCC, which constitute 58.8% of the total research sample, are within the age bracket of 45 to 75 years. They belong to the decision making organ of different organisations and wings in their various churches. It is equally from this age bracket that electoral officers, election monitors, party officials and party/candidates' representatives are recruited. They equally belong to the age group that are members of different Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). In essence, they are well informed about and or engaged in all that transpired during the election period and within the electoral system.

The following data were collected as respondents' party membership.

S/N	Question	PDP	ANPP	AC	APGA	others
1.	Which of the following party are you registered in?	34.8%	12%	24%	21.6%	7.6%
2.	Which of the parties did you vote for during the Governorship election in 2003?	9.2%	4.8%	33.2%	52.8%	

Source : field survey report, 2009.

A further inquiry reveals that these respondents numbering 750 belong to different political parties by virtue of registration and membership. The above table shows that 34.8% are card carrying members of the PDP, 12% are members of ANPP, 24% belongs to AC, 21.6% are members of APGA, while only 7.6% are registered members of other political parties. Therefore, by virtue of party membership, our respondents were drawn from major parties in Anambra state. However, they did not vote along party identity during the elections. 9.2% respondents only voted for the PDP when it is on record from the questionnaire that 34.8% were registered members of the PDP. Only 4.8% voted for ANPP when the card carrying members of the party among our respondents constitute 12%. AC was not different because 33.2% voted for AC when its card-carrying members constitute 24% of the study sample. None of the 7.6% of the respondents voted for other parties outside APGA and PDP when they registered with other parties. A total of 52.8% voted for APGA when APGA's card carrying members are only 21.6%. It is therefore clear that our respondents did not vote on the basis of their party affiliations.

An advanced inquiry into what informed their choice of candidate at the polls reveals that 8.4% of the respondents voted out of personal conviction/choice, 16% were influenced by campaign promises/gifts, church membership motivated 21.6% of them to vote for their candidates, and 54% voted for a specific candidate simply because they were instructed by their church leaders to do so. Therefore, majority of the respondents were influenced by religion to make their voting choice.

In addition, 80% of the respondents acceded to the fact that the religious factor played a role in the selection of candidates by different political parties in the state, while only 14.8% disagreed. However, the opinion of the majority was further consolidated by the fact that 98% of the 1800 respondents admitted that their churches prayed for the success of their member gubernatorial candidate for the said election and campaigned for them. Though 71.2% maintained that no threat of sanction was issued by their church leaders against voting for non-member, it is clear from the above that religion played an influential role in the selection and voting behaviour of Anambrarians during the 2003 general elections. No election was conducted in 2007 into the governorship position, therefore, further reflection on this is not possible for now

VIII. RELIGION AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENT IN ANAMBRA STATE

Researchers have proved that religious influence equally has been a major determinant in the appointment of political office holders in the state. For instance, Obianyo (2008:16-17) noted that;

..... during the administration of both Dr. Ngige and Mr Peter Obi, religious consideration also influenced the various appointments in the state. ... It was also gathered that the head of the various denominations also made input in the cabinet appointments of the incumbent governor Mr Peter Obi. The balancing measures are respected in appointments into other public institutions in the state.

Contrary to this opinion and as a substantiation that religion is considered during political appointments, an aggrieved Anglican Laity Organization known as the Society for Equity, Justice and Peace [SEJP] angered by what it termed "Malicious/Lopsided appointments in Peter Obi's administration against Anglicans", tabularized all the political appointments ranging from the composition of Anambra state Executive Council, appointment of Permanent Secretaries, appointment of staff at the various state Higher Institutions of Learning, Special Advisers to Boards and Parastatals during the February 2010 governorship election in the State.

A detailed compilation of the entire appointments made by Mr. Peter Obi in virtually all the sectors of the state public service and political offices reveals that:

1. In the composition of Anambra State Executive; RCC received 16 out of the 23 post [69.6%], AC has 6 [26.1%] while the Pentecostals only occupied 1 post [4.3%].
2. Recruitment at Nwafor Orizu State College of Education; RCC captured 60 out of the 65 employments made [92.30%], AC got 3 posts [4.62%] while the Pentecostals received 2 posts [3.08%].
3. Appointment of Special Advisers; RCC secured 20 positions out of 27 [74.07%] while AC got 7 representing 25.93%.
4. Appointment of Principal Officers of Statutory Boards and Parastatals; RCC got 16 out of 19 positions available [84.2%] while the AC got 3 i.e. 15.8%.

Sources : ANIDSCOPE, December [2008]; Sunday Sun Newspaper, March 15 [2009]; The Society for Equity, Justice and Peace [Secretariat of the Diocesan Council of Laity, Diocese of the Niger Awka]

During the two years tenure of Dr Chris Ngige before he was ousted by the court a brief profile of appointments made showed that he also favoured the RCC also though with a more acceptable balance with the AC more than that of Obi's regime. It could be recalled here that AC sponsored his fraudulent victory. Those appointments are presented below as follows:

s/n	Name	Portfolio	denomination
1.	Dr. Okey Ude	First Deputy Governor	Anglican
2.	Sir Ugochukwu Nwankwo	Second Deputy Governor	Catholic
3.	Mr. Alex Chukwurah	Sec. to State Government	Anglican
4.	Emma C. J. Nwosu	Principal Sec to the Governor	Catholic
5.	Chief Nnabuenyi C. Udoka	Chief of Staff	Anglican
6.	Don I. Anyaegbu	Special Assistant (Admin.)	Anglican
7.	Chief B. L. Chiekwu	Special Assistant (security and int.)	Anglican
8.	Dr. Peter C. Ogbuka	Special Assistant (LG and Chieftaincy affairs)	Catholic
9.	Barr. (Sir) Goddy Agbasi	Chairman LG Service Commission	Catholic
10.	Chief Leo Eleanya	Executive Secretary, LG Service Commission	Catholic
11.	Chief Chris Atuegwu	Commissioner, Specail Duties	Catholic
12.	Dr. Ifeanyi Chukwuka	Special Assistant (Mass Mobilization)	Pentecostal
13.	Arch. Emeka Ejikeme	Commissioner for Works	Catholic
14.	Evang. D. S. Nwosu	Special Assistant (Road Maintenance Agency)	Pentecostal
15.	Chief Kenneth Arinze	Commissioner for Commerce and Industry	Catholic
16.	Dr. Emma Udegbumam	Commissioner for Agriculture	Anglican
17.	Professor Brian Adimma	Commissioner for Health	Catholic
18.	Chief Nnoruka Ugochukwu	AG and Commissioner for Justice	Anglican
19.	Professor Leo Muoghalu	Commissioner for Education	Anglican
20.	Comrade Charles Onyeagba	Executive Chairman, Board of Internal Revenue	Catholic
21.	Barr. Mrs. Nonye Nwangwu	Commissioner, Women Affairs	Catholic
22.	Chief Joe Ofokansi	Commissioner for Information	Anglican
23.	Sir Ikechukwu Abana	MD, ABS	Catholic
24.	Barr. Mrs. Berne Nwachukwu	SSA; Legal and General Duties	Anglican
25.	Mr. Chuks Akunna	Chief Press Sec. to the Governor	Anglican
26.	Princes Uzo Okonkwo	SA, Abuja Laison Office	Anglican
27.	Obidiozor Juliet	Special Assistant to the Governor	Anglican
28.	Sir T. M. C. Egboka	SA, Political Matters	Catholic
29.	Chief Paul Ogbogu	Special Adviser, Political and Assembly Matters	Catholic
30.	Mr. Fred Chukwuelobe	SSA, Media and Publicity	Catholic

Source : Government Printers, Awka.

Those who benefited from these appointments often make financial donations to their church, and do establish connections between their and relevant government institutions and parastatals in terms of requests for specific aids, programmes and events. Through the participation of these government institutions and parastatals, donations are made to these churches, though in most cases unannounced. An interview granted to a senior members of the clergy under pledge of anonymity on December 15, 2010 at Awka reveals this. These increase the financial power of the churches concerned and solidify their dominance over other churches in terms of socio-political relevance.

The result of the field survey conducted to find out the relationship between political interests and donations or the major reason for donations for church projects reveals the following:

Question: Which of the following reasons informs major donations in your church?

Believe in church creeds	Identifying with your church	Appreciation of church support for political ambition	Expectation of church support for political ambition
343	129	983	345
19.06%	7.17%	54.61%	19.17%

Source : field survey report, 2009.

From the above table, 54.61% admitted that many major donations in their churches outside dues and levies for project were done by politicians in appreciation for the support given to them by the church. While 19.17% agreed that some of the donations were made by those that are anticipating church support for their political ambitions. Put together, 73.78% of our respondents agree that church support for political aspirants of politicians in general attracts project funds.

Certain reliable information has it that most of the Cathedral churches and even mini-cathedrals built in Anambra State between 2006 and 2010 were either partially funded by the governor of the state and other political office holders or completely built by them. Some of the godfathers and political aspirants to highly positioned office have equally built such projects for certain churches and publicly celebrated their completion. For instance, Sir Emeka Offor, a prominent Anambra politician and the political godfather of Dr Chinwoke Mbadinuju [a former governor of the state], has through his foundation built many churches. In addition to these, there is evidence that these political office holders distribute expensive cars like Hummer Sand Jeeps to leaders of these churches. One of the leaders was alleged to have been given a duplex during the 2007 gubernatorial election. On these lies the

desperate and unhindered efficacious political mobilization of their members in support of political aspirants from their denominations during elections. The hostile political environment in the state and the active penal instruments existing in the various churches against deviant members limit our ability to document these pieces of information. However, the political character of this philanthropism lies in the fact that such gifts are really given during election years, and these politicians cease to attend these local churches within their constituencies after the elections.

IX. CONCLUSION

Religion has been identified as a strong force that influence people's way of life, association and decision. Nigerians like the vast majority of Africans are spiritualists whose tacit belief in the supernatural superiority over man's affairs and in the life after has made them highly amenable to the political choice of their religious leaders. This has however clashed with the ultimate demand of the acclaimed godfathers who by virtue of their wealth distribute money and materials to the masses. This force is considered important and strong due to the increasing level of poverty Nigerians are experiencing. On this note, it must be mentioned here that the leaders of the various religious groups in Anambra state provided the opportunity and ground for the various political aspirants to distribute money and materials to members of their churches as a neutralising factor to the challenge posed by poverty to their control of their members. This together with the power of religious belief neutralized and subdued the individual godfathers in the competition for the election of political office holders in the state.

In essence the political economy of this involvement of the religious leaders is characteristically defined by the financial gains associated with their member emerging victorious in the political contest. It is also associated with the various policy preferences such denomination enjoys in such administration and to the personal gains such leaders enjoy from their member politician. Thus, the major source of support for each political regime in Anambra state determines the nature of political appointments made after elections. Consequently, using the over bearing power of belief system, the religious institutional godfathers became dominant in the democratization processes of the state for purposes of financial benefits.

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