

ASSESSING GODFATHERISM IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA, 2016-2019

AFOLABI, A. S; Lewu, M. A. Y & AKINDAUNSI, O.O.*

Abstract

Godfatherism is one of the topical issues in the trajectory of politics in Nigeria. While there has been interests on the phenomenon among social scientists, humanists and pundits, the unfolding scenario in Edo State has not received adequate attention. Adopting a qualitative methodology, this article examined the causes and manifestations of the crisis between Governor Godwin Obaseki and his godfather, Comrade Adams Aliyu Oshiomhole in Edo State. The article found that like other developing democracies, the phenomenon occurred due to the primitive accumulative mindset of the *elite*, lack of or inadequate knowledge of political ideologies and, imbibed parochial political culture. It further established that its manifestations negatively affect governance at all levels. The article recommended, among other things, good governance, adherence to rule of law and the entrenchment of a participant political culture through civic education as well as a revamp of our electoral laws.

Keywords: Godfather, Political Parties, Edo State House of Assembly, South-south, Electoral Violence

Introduction

Godfathers usually act as a torch to guide the followers. The roles of the godfathers are germane for the development of any social or political organisation because they help to nurture the future leaders. Politically, they help to train the followers to become better political leaders or statesmen. The importance of the godfathers stems from the monetization of politics within the Nigerian polity, although its manifestations are not peculiar to the country. Across the globe, more money is required for campaign, group mobilization and voter education, campaign cyber-security, among other considerations. As an American observer puts it, "Money has been flooding into politics during the last five years, an era in which

* Department of History and International Studies, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. Corresponding author: abeafolabi@yahoo.com

corporate money seems to be dominating political activity and rendering ordinary voters irrelevant.¹

However, the kind of godfathers in most developing democracies seems to be different from what obtains in developed democracies. This is because the supposed godfather subverts the common wealth of the people for his selfish interests. This phenomenon is generally referred to as godfatherism. The Human Right Watch (HRW) in its report on the 2007 general elections in Nigeria, sees the term, 'Godfatherism', as a phenomenon in which wealthy and powerful individuals that do not hold public office but multiply corruption and violence to subvert and control the political.² The godfathers usually have remarkably dangerous ways of sapping the willpower of the vulnerable groups, diverting their aims in life and therefore causing troubles for the society. The defect of this definition is that some godfathers even hold office, and in their determination to retain power or cover their tracks, chooses a godson. Hence, we define godfatherism as the mobilization of human and capital resources by an individual (in private or public capacity) for the support of a candidate in a political process, in order to influence the socio-political and economic order with a view to dictating who gets what, when and how.

The phenomenon has a long tradition in the polity having been evident since the pre-colonial period. Albert gave instances of the *Baba Kekere* in Yorubaland and the *Maigida* in Hausa land, whom he noted, wielded huge powers as major brokers and kingmakers in their respective domains.³ The British during the colonial era in Nigeria repeated this feat in several communities or empires where they felt that the incumbent traditional rulers could not help to achieve some of their imperialistic objectives. To be sure, traditional rulers in areas such as the colony of Lagos, Benin, Ijebu-Remo, Opobo, Itshekiri, among other places, were unceremoniously deposed and some were exiled to suit the whims and caprices of the British colonial administrators.⁴ This control method continued even into the post-colonial state.⁵

There are abundant literatures on Godfatherism and its manifestations in contemporary Nigeria.⁶ While most of these studies have focused on Oyo, Ebonyi, Borno, Kwara, Enugu, Anambra, and a few other places, most of them did not acknowledge its prevalence in virtually all states in Nigeria, although management styles across states vary. However, most studies have revealed the making of a godfather, which as widely believed, starts as a result of the patron-client relationship, whereby the godfather is both the financier and mobilizer, and in order to consolidate his position, he enters into either legal or/and spiritual oaths and agreement with his godson.⁷

This article examines the manifestations and effects of the godfatherism in Edo State, focusing on the tenuous relationship between Governor Godwin Obaseki and Comrade Adams Aliyu Oshiomhole. The article is important for many reasons; first, it adds to the extant literatures on patrimonialism or neopatrimonialism on the continent. Secondly, it highlights the personality of the actors, which most studies

have not addressed, and it also underpins the fact that the present godfather, Adams Oshiomhole, also had to contend with the same phenomenon while he was the governor of the state (November 2008- November 2016). To achieve this, the article adopted the qualitative methodology, using primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary sources include archival sources, personal websites, pictures, newspapers and oral interviews. The secondary sources include theses, literature, and journals. Interviews were conducted through telephone, WhatsApp conversations as well as one-on-one discussions. National dailies as well as the Edo State *the Nigerian Observer* were consulted from the commencement of the crisis in 2016 up to 2019, while most of the interviews were conducted in November 2019.

Explaining Neopatrimonialism and 'Godfatherism' in Nigerian Politics

The term neo-patrimonialism is developed from Max Weber's Patrimonialism, which is an ideal type of traditional rule in which authority is based on ties of personal loyalty between a leader and his administrative staff.⁸ While it has many aspects embedded, its crux is that the system is held together by the personal distribution of material resources and perks distributed and consumed as though they were the private property of the ruler and/or his staff. Neopatrimonialism refers to a political economy in which this basic authority system is combined with, or exists behind some formal, impersonal elements of governance, like a legal system that demarcates the public and private domain, or an administrative code with formal criteria for staff hiring and promotion.⁹ Neopatrimonialism combines clientelism, strong presidents and the use of state resources for political legitimization.¹⁰

Neopatrimonialism is not different from godfatherism because the main thrust of the *elite* is to capture state resources for personal gains. Thus, the state resources as well as his preferred public space are accessed and controlled by the godfather alone. The Godfather always has godson, who does his biddings, and they are usually able to upturn popular interests and subvert the peoples will.¹¹ However, they all agree on the common factor--state resources and *elitism*. Although, in most cases, the godfather hinges his inability to grant his godson the second term ticket on the state or party's major stakeholders, but in reality, it is usually the 'unseen hand' of the godfather that is operative. For example, the recent fall-out in Lagos State, where an incumbent was denied a second term ticket was a consequence of the fall-out with his godfather.¹² Little wonder, a fellow APC stalwart, Mallam Nasir El Rufai, gave a recipe on how to dislodge godfatherism in the state.¹³ Similarly, Tom Lodge gave a situation where institutional corruption and personal loyalty rather than shared ideological beliefs have inundated the neo-patrimonial politics in the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa.¹⁴ In Nigeria, Osumah Oarhe's paper elucidates how neopatrimonialism has also hindered the fight against graft in Nigeria.¹⁵

Moreover, godfatherism has downplayed the integrity of most of our elections, revealing major weaknesses in air political institutions, particularly, the

electoral umpire. Furthermore, the activities of the godfathers have affected the political and socio-economic development of the state. As Ayoade rightly puts it: "Godfathers block the democratic process by obstructing candidate selection and even executive selection once government is installed. Their nominees are often forced down the throat of their godsons."¹⁶ Corroboratively, an eminent historian averred that godfatherism is a primordial tradition that has been taken to a criminal extent and which has had far-reaching negative consequences on democratization.¹⁷ Edigin posits that "apart from being antithetical to democratic consolidation in Nigeria, godfatherism is an evil building block for corruption, retrogression, underdevelopment, mediocrity and backwardness".¹⁸ These positions above depict the inimical damage that the phenomenon does to democracy, democratization and ultimately, development.

Be that as it may, while many scholars opine that neopatrimonialism hinders development and democracy, others aver that apart from the fact that it does not necessarily impede the survivals of democracy, it could yield and engender development if well managed.¹⁹ What does the Edo political imbroglio offer? Before we delve into the currently unfolding situation in Edo politics, we shall examine some theoretical clarifications.

Theoretical Clarification

Many theories have been adopted to substantiate power in existing organisation or democracies. Prominent among them are Power-Elite Theory, Pluralist Theory and Marxist Theory of Power. However, this article adopts the Iron Law Oligarchy Theory of Power, a theory propounded by Robert Michels, which states that rule by an *elite* or oligarchy is inevitable as an 'iron law' within any democratic organisation as part of the 'tactical and technical necessities of the organisation. It also proffered that all complex organisations, regardless of how democratic they are at the initial stage, eventually develop into oligarchies. Michels observed that since sufficiently large and complex organisation cannot function purely as a direct democracy, power within an organisation always get delegated to individuals within that group, elected or otherwise. He also noted that all organisations eventually ended up being run by a 'leadership class' who often function as paid administrators, executives, spokespersons or political strategists for the organisation. He proffered that far from working for the masses, the leadership class eventually and inevitably grow to dominate the organisation's power structures.²⁰ He argued further that attempts to hold leadership positions accountable are prone to fail since loyalty, the ability to control information about the organisation, and the ability to control what modalities the organisation follows in the decision making processes strongly influences the outcome of any decisions made democratically by members.

In other words, power abhors vacuum and a leadership often emerges to steer the course of any organization. The emergence of such a powerful individual or

clique whittles down the prescriptive powers of the organization and the capacity of the oligarch increases inversely as the hold of the organization decreases.²¹ However, Oligarchy is a concentration of entrenched illegitimate authority and/or influence in the hands of a minority, such that whatever the minority wants is what comes to be or achieved, even when it goes against the wishes and aspirations of the majority. Moreover, it describes the power relationship that exists between the godfather and the godson as patron-clientele and not about the interests of the state. This theory, in spite of its having been in existence for over a century, and its anomalies/limitations well identified by some scholars,²² is apt for the study because it describes the make-up of the godfather.

Manifestations of Godfatherism: The Edo State Situation

In addressing the political situation of godfather-godson relationship in Edo State, it is pertinent to examine the background and personalities of the two actors- Comrade Adams Oshiomhole and Governor Godwin Obaseki. First, who is Adams Oshiomhole?

Adams Aliyu Oshiomhole was born on 4 April, 1952 at Iyamho, Esako West Local Government, Edo State. After his secondary education, he got a job with Arewa Textiles Company- where he rose to the peak of his career. Adams was appointed the General Secretary of the National Union of Textile Garment and Tailoring Workers of Nigeria, and while he was the Secretary of the union, he became the President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) where he presided from 1999 to 2007. During his time as the president of the NLC, he negotiated a 25 percent wage increase for public sector workers. He represented African workers for two terms on the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). He was also a member of the Executive Board of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

Oshiomhole also led series of demonstrations and protests against obnoxious government policies such as oil price increase and, on a few occasions, was arrested and imprisoned by the Nigerian government. He contested for the governorship seat of Edo State under the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) in 2007. Although he lost to the candidate of the People Democratic Party, Professor Osunbor, he challenged the outcome of the election at the Elections Tribunal and the Federal Appeal Court sitting in Benin City. The court declared him the winner of the election and insisted that he be sworn in as the governor of the state- a position he held for two terms. However, one of the challenges Oshiomhole contended with was the battle against some political godfathers. As he puts it:

If you recall where we are coming from in this state, you will appreciate how I feel. When Oshiomhole came in as governor, every Councilor in Edo State, local government chairmen, House of Assembly members, the governor and of course you have the presidency, all PDP members. Now to imagine that from ground zero we came in to challenge this

order and of course, we must not forget that when they talk about godfatherism in Nigeria politics, it is a small, powerful, unaccountable, un-elected group.²³

After the APC won the presidential elections in the state in April 2015, he went on a 'thank you visit' by staging a 10-km road show across the state. In his address, he restated that the victory of the APC candidate, General Muhammadu Buhari (Rtd) against the then incumbent, President Goodluck Jonathan, was a nail on the coffins of the godfathers.²⁴ He successfully handed over power to a member of his political party, the APC, in person of Godwin Obaseki in November 2016.

Godwin Obaseki, who became the incumbent governor after Oshiomhole, was born in Benin City to the famous and illustrious Obaseki family on 1 July 1957.²⁵ He had his education in Nigeria and the United States of America.²⁶ Having had an illustrious career in private business within and outside the shores of Nigeria, he served as the Chairman of the Edo State Government's Economic and Strategic Team (EST) from 17 March 2009 till September 2016 *pro bono publico*.²⁷

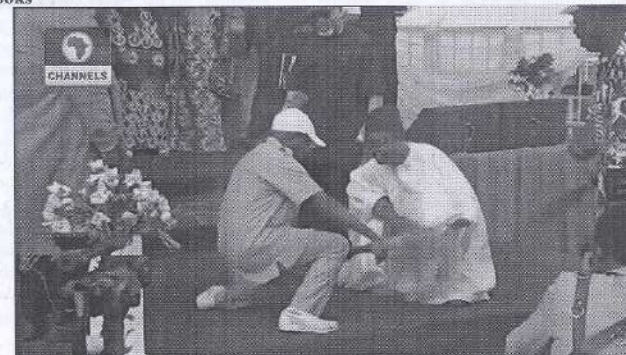
Obaseki ventured into politics amidst powerful caliber of aspirants in the APC, which included former Deputy Governor to Oshiomhole, Dr. Pius Odubu, former governor of the state, Professor Osarhiemen Osunbor, Oshiomhole's Works Commissioner and political son, Osarodion Ogie, former Minister of State, Works, Dr. Chris Ogiemwonyi. He also had to contend politically with the likes of Kenneth Imasuagbon (Rice man), General Charles Airhiavbere and Mrs. Tina Agbarha during the 2016 Governorship election.²⁸ Amongst these aspirants, Oshiomhole publicly endorsed Mr. Obaseki,²⁹ an action that triggered the displeasure of most of the other aspirants. The then Deputy Governor, Pius Odubu, puts the crux of his grievance thus:

...You would recall that the mantra of 'one man, one vote' was pioneered here in Edo State by my boss and brother, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole. Through that advocacy, the Comrade Governor was able to mobilise the people of Edo to resist and banish godfatherism which had been the bane of our development as a people and as a state. The Edo people are now fully conscientised, courtesy of the silent revolution the Comrade Governor started. The Oshiomhole I know practices what he preaches. I know that the primary will be free, fair and transparent. I don't see any godfathers lurking around the corner in Edo State APC....³⁰

While most of the other aspirants were not happy with the development, a party chieftain defended Oshiomhole's choice by stating that, "If Obaseki is the governor's choice, nobody will stop him. Oshiomhole made most of us what we are today and if he decides it is Obaseki, so be it, we will all support him. So, if anybody is threatening, it is only a waste of time."³¹ The party primary took place on 18 June

2016 and Godwin Obaseki emerged as the candidate of the APC for the gubernatorial election. During one of the gubernatorial campaigns, the governor of Kaduna State, Mallam Nasir El Rufai and Comrade Oshiomhole were seen slugging it out in a dance competition.³²

Figure 1: Governor Oshiomhole and El Rufai dancing, as Candidate Obaseki looks



Source: Snapshot taken from Channels Television video

As funny as this could appear, it shows the extent to which the godfather could stoop in order to have his godson imposed on a people. Eventually, the gubernatorial election was held between the APC candidate, Godwin Obaseki and the People's Democratic Party candidate, Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu and 18 other candidates from other political parties on 28 September 2016 (after adjournment from 10 September). The returning Officer, Professor Kayode Soremekun declared Obaseki winner, having scored 319, 483 votes to defeat 18 other candidates, including his nearest rival, Pastor Ize-Iyamu, who polled 253,173 votes.³³ The manner in which Comrade Oshiomhole worked for his godson is aptly captured by a scholar who asserts that the quality of Nigeria's election has lost its social contract nature since the last half century.³⁴

How the Crisis Started

While both actors have continued to publicly deny the existence of any rift, tantrums thrown show otherwise. The question is when did the rift start? Media sources revealed that the cold war began shortly after the state governorship election in 2016, as soon as the governor assumed office. He immediately barred many of

Oshiomhole's supporters from receiving the same privileges they used to enjoy under Oshiomhole's administration. It became aggravated during the preparations for the general elections of 2019. This was because loyalists of both men fought to get the party's tickets.

Obaseki, who nurtured a second term ticket, wanted to have his loyalists as members of his political group, especially at the State House of Assembly to help him actualise his ambition and consolidate his grip. However, Oshiomhole was not inclined to that because he also wanted his loyalists at the State House of Assembly.³⁵ While the APC lost the presidential election in the state, it was a different kettle of fish for the House of Assembly elections as its candidates swept all the 24 elective positions. The candidates who emerged were: Chris Okaeben (Oredo West), Crosby Eribo (Egor), Henry Okhuarobo (Ikpoba-Okha), Roland Asoro (Orhionmwon West), Nosayaba Okunbor (Oredo East), Osaro Obazee (Oredo East), Washington Osifo (Umunwode), Ugiagbe Dumez (Ovia North-east I), Vincent Uwadiae (Ovia North-East II), Sunday Aghedo (Ovia South West), Frank Okiye (Esan North East I), Emmanuel Okoduwa (Esan North East II), Victor Edoror (Esan Central), Sunday Ojizele (Esan South East), Marcus Onobun (Esan West), Ephraim Aluebhosele (Igueben), Ganiyu Audu (Etsako West I), Seidu Oshiomhole [Oshiomhole's younger brother] (Etsako West II), Emmanuel Agabje (Akoko Edo II), Yekini Idiaie (Akoko Edo I), Eric Okaka (Owan East), Oshoma Ahmed (Etsako Central) and Kinsley Ugabi (Etsako east). With the APC having taken all elective positions without oppositions, what followed was the inauguration of the house on the proclamation of the Executive.

Governor Obaseki knew full well that most of the members elected were loyal to the national chairperson of the Party and former governor of the state, Adams Oshiomhole, he quickly inaugurated nine members-elect alleged to be his loyalists on Monday 17 June, 2019.³⁶ The Clerk of the Edo House of Assembly, Alhaji Audu Yahaya Omogbai, ushered the members-elect into the chamber and read out the letter of proclamation transmitted to the office of the clerk by Governor Obaseki. Rt. Hon Frank Okiye was elected speaker, while Hon. Yekini Idiaie was elected Deputy Speaker. After the election, the speaker urged the members-elect who were not at the inauguration to fulfil all constitutional requirements and join their colleagues in order to move the machinery of state forward.³⁷ On the evening of the inauguration, thugs suspected to be in support of the governor attacked the remaining (yet to be inaugurated) 15 lawmakers-elect (which included Seidu Oshiomhole) while holding a meeting in a hotel in downtown Benin City.³⁸ Little wonder then why pundits and some citizens expressed fear that the crisis could degenerate into a full blown physical violence.³⁹

To further force the impetuous godfather, Comrade Oshiomhole, to change his position, Godwin Obaseki sacked eight commissioners alleged to be loyalists of Comrade Oshiomhole. They included the Commissioner for Energy and Water Resources, Joseph Ughéoke; Women Affairs and Social Development, Magdalene

Ohonhen; Infrastructure, Osahon Amiolemen; Health, Dr. David Osifo; Youth and Special Duties, Mika Amanokha; Budget, Mariam Abubakar; Wealth Creation, cooperatives and Employment, Emmanuel Usoh; and Science and Technology, Christopher Adesotu.⁴⁰

Nbeit the development, the Edo State Council of Elders, headed by the chairman of the Council and *Oba* of Benin, Omo N'Oba N' Edo, Ewuare II, sought the intervention of the President in the unfolding crisis between the state governor, Godwin Obaseki and Mr. Adams Oshiomhole. The *Oba* noted that failure to address the issue immediately was bound to jeopardise the progress of the state.⁴¹ With the unhealthy situation at home, three members representing Edo State on the platform of the APC (loyalists of Comrade Oshiomhole) at the House of Representative, Messrs. Julius Ihonvbere, Peter Akpatason and Johnson Oghuma moved a motion for the House of Representative to take over the affairs of the Edo State House of Assembly. They prayed that the National Assembly, in line with the provisions of Section 11 (4) of the Constitution, take over the affairs of Edo State House of Assembly through the assistance of all internal security agents and secret service,⁴² Ihonvbere, while moving the motion said:

The House notes with concern the improper, clandestine and nocturnal inauguration of the 7th of June 2019, wherein nine out of 24 members-elect were purportedly sworn in without the knowledge of the other 15 members-elect.⁴³

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon Femi Gbajabiamila, set up a probe panel headed by Mr. Abdulrazak Nandas to investigate the Edo Assembly crisis and report to the House on the next line of action.⁴⁴ It is significant to note that the battle for the House is crucial for any political godfather and godson. This is because aside from the legislative duties of the House of Assembly, its oversight functions such as appropriation of state budget, approval/disapproval of Executive nominees, among others, could mar or make the tenure of the Executive. In fact, the House could halt any meaningful development in the state by approving or disapproving certain bills and ultimately, may even threaten the governor with impeachment. Hence, when the House of Representative ad hoc committee set up to look into the crisis visited the state, the Deputy Governor, Philip Shaibu, speaking on behalf of his boss said, "What we have here is somebody trying to use the House to control the Executive. We feel that we have fought godfather. Oshiomhole led us to a strong fight to rescue the state from the hands of godfathers in 2006."⁴⁵ He went on to say that the executive had joined the crusade Oshiomhole started in 2007 and there was no going back.⁴⁶ He concluded that, the money earmarked for godfathers now went to the citizenry and that this was as a result of the benchmark set by Comrade Oshiomhole himself while he was Governor of the state.⁴⁷ But while Comrade Oshiomhole seemed to be quiet about the issue of finance, his younger brother who was also one of the aggrieved members-elect, Seidu Oshiomhole, was

caught in a leaked video discussing how Governor Obaseki has been shrewd with state resources. As he puts it in pidgin English:

Dem dey give members (referring to the inaugurated assembly members) five million and that na official money. Them no know say GO (referring to Godwin Obaseki) no fit give person one extra kobo. We don get five million, ten million, twenty thousand dollars, 15 thousand dollars. If na money, na we be money.⁴⁸

By 17th July 2019 when the Edo State House of Assembly (ESHA) was supposed to resume plenary, the House of Representatives threatened to take over the affairs of the ESHA, except Governor Obaseki issued a fresh proclamation to inaugurate the Seventh Edo House of Assembly within one week in line with Section 105(3) of the constitution. It further recommended among other things that all members of the assembly, both the inaugurated and those not yet inaugurated should dissolve their factions and that the Inspector General of Police and the Director-General, Department of State Security Service (DSS), should shut down the State House of Assembly and provide adequate security.⁴⁹

However, Godwin Obaseki would not have any of the threats. Rather, he publicly declared that the crisis in the state and the politics at national level (Abuja) was the outcome of his refusal to share the state resources with some self-styled godfathers.⁵⁰ Like all godfathers, the involvement of state resources, which must have been expended by the godfathers to engineer the emergence of his godson was also a pointer.⁵¹

With this revelation, the governor began to get more supporters. For instance, the former National Chairman of the APC, Chief John Odigie Oyeogun, accused Adams Oshiomhole of turning himself into an agent of disruption, and trying to frustrate the smooth running of government in Edo State.⁵² Also, a former member of Senate and an elder Statesman in the Niger-Delta, Chief Edwin Clark, criticised the interference of the House of Representative, particularly its leadership, Femi Gbajabiamila, without the approval of the Senate that made up the National Assembly in the ESHA crisis. He puts it thus:

The power you have over state House of Assembly is constitutional, which must be exercised with due process. The House of Representatives alone have no power or authority to interfere in the affairs of the Edo State House of Assembly as it is asserted to have done. It is unconstitutional and of no legal effect. The Senate acting on the same subject stated that it has not completed its findings in the disagreement between the members of the Edo State House of Assembly, and it will soon come to the resolution of the matter which is at variance with the position already taken by your House.⁵³

The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, toeing the line of the House of Representative, vowed to take over the ESHA, after the Committee headed by Sabi Abdullahi set out to investigate the crisis affecting the House submitted its report, sitting Section 11(40) of the 1999 Constitution of the FRN. Although some members of the Senate disagreed with the decision of the Committee, the Senate President, Dr Ahmad Lawal, cautioned the opposing lawmakers saying they could not change the resolutions as the matter had been 'laid to rest'.⁵⁴ As the tension escalated, the APC governors' forum chairman, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, together with some APC stalwarts, including the business mogul, Aliko Dangote, made efforts to settle the rift. Few weeks into the crisis, peace efforts were intensified to end the discord between the godfather and his adopted godson.⁵⁵

Figure 2: Dr Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State reconciling the two parties in Abuja



Source: <https://www.legit.ng/1250783-edo-crisis-obaseki-oshiomhole-meet-aso-rock.html>

To counter the motions of the National Assembly, the Secretary to the State Governor, Osarodion Ogie, condemned the decision of the Senate and reminded it of three existing Court (Benin, Port Harcourt and Abuja) orders, which had asked all parties to maintain *status quo*.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the Deputy Speaker, Hon Yekini Idiaiyie and member representing Ikpoba-Okha constituency in the ESHA, Hon Henry Okhuarobo, who were the plaintiffs/applicants approached the Court on whether a fresh proclamation needed to be ordered. However, the Federal High Court sitting in Port Harcourt restrained the governor from doing so. The Court also constrained the Clerk of the National Assembly, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, their servants, agents'

officers or privies from interfering or taking over the legislative functions of the Edo House of Assembly.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, a Federal High Court sitting in Abuja ordered both the Senate and the House of Representatives to halt their plan to take over the legislative duties of Edo House of Assembly. Justice Taiwo Taiwo made the order at a resumed hearing in the case instituted by the Edo State Government to challenge the directive by the Chambers of the National Assembly to the Governor of the State, Godwin Obaseki, to issue a fresh proclamation of the state's House of Assembly. Thus, Justice Taiwo Taiwo ordered the parties to maintain status quo pending the determination of the case.⁵⁸ A peace initiative was mooted to settle the rift between the two parties but while this had not been settled, Obaseki visited the National Chairman at his Iyamho residence during the Salah celebration on Monday 12 August 2019.

At that meeting, both were pictured laughing and it seemed the rift had been settled. In fact, the media aide to the governor, Crusoe Osagie, played down any rift between the two, stating that such notion was only being propagated by detractors who wanted to profit from the divisions between the two personalities.⁵⁹ Few days later, Comrade Oshiomhole at an interview in one of the national television stations emphatically stated that the ruse between his godson and himself was not over money or appointment but on ideology, party supremacy and abandonment of the project they both started together. Ironically, he said the governor sacked the only commissioner he nominated.⁶⁰

Subsequently, the Federal Court of Appeal in Port Harcourt held that the Nigeria's constitution is a Federal one, the National Assembly could not unilaterally decide that Edo State House of Assembly was in crisis and seal the house.⁶¹ It further held that it was only the court that could define. It also held that the ESHA could not function and then asked the National Assembly to take over.⁶² After the judgement, Godwin Obaseki hailed the judiciary for upholding the rule of law over the Edo House of Assembly issue, noting that the state government received the ruling with humility and respect for the judicial arm of government.⁶³

From Rhetoric to Physical Violence

On 12 October 2019, a group of youths suspected to be political thugs attacked Adams Oshiomhole's house at Okoroutun Government Residential Area in Benin City. After the youths had waited for him outside his residence for hours to no avail they began to chant 'Oshiomhole thief'. The Police commissioner in the state, Dan Mallam Mohammed and Oshiomhole himself dismissed the attack. Oshiomhole on his part stated that 'people who are looking for trouble are like a small mushroom; you don't need to take a stick to destroy a mushroom. How far can a snail travel? If a snail is running, what is the maximum speed of a snail? Are you going to start running after a snail?'⁶⁴ The statement tilted towards, and presented as the handiwork of the state government. In reaction, the state government denied its

involvement in the attack.⁶⁵ Subsequently, the governor agreed that although the attack was not state-sponsored, it was also necessary for the party's national chairman, Adams Oshiomhole, to observe protocols while visiting the state.⁶⁶ He affirmed that he remained in charge of the party and that his supporters should not join issues with the comrade and his supporters in the midst of extremely hostile, malicious and incorrect statements allegedly being propagated by the media.⁶⁷

Again, at the convocation ceremony of Edo State University, Iyamho on Saturday 2 November 2019, there was a little security challenge at the venue, which was quelled after the intervention of security operatives. After the convocation lecture, the convoy of the *Oba* of Lagos, Rilwan Akiolu, Governor Godwin Obaseki, the Pro-Chancellor of Edo University, Iyahmo, Prof. T.O.K. Audu and other dignitaries, including the deputy governor and members of the Edo State government cabinet visited the country home of Comrade Oshiomhole, but, they were attacked by angry youths who destroyed some of the vehicles on the convoy.⁶⁸ However, there were accusations and counter-accusations on who sponsored the thugs. While the deputy governor, Mr. Philip Shaibu, described the attack on the convoy, which included himself, as a deliberate attempt by the APC national chairman, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, to cause disturbances in the state, the Edo Peoples Movement (EPM) alleged that the attack was sponsored by Mr Shaibu because the governor and his entourage were not invited by the national chairman for the visit.⁶⁹

While some pundits queried if the tussle between the godfather-godson would ever end,⁷⁰ others believe that the governor held the aces that could lead to the restoration of peace within the party and in Edo State in general.⁷¹ For example, Governor Obaseki, while addressing the Edo Women Summit in at ceremony to mark his third year in office, noted that while people thought he was naïve politically, he could cause a lot of havoc. Obaseki emphatically stated that, 'They say we are mosquito, but we will show them mosquito can cause malaria. If you are not careful, malaria will kill you.'⁷² Commissioner for Social Development and Gender Issues, Mrs. Maria Omozele Edeko, called on women from all of the state's 18 council areas to back the governor in his second term bid. She further held that the people should determine who they wanted to enter into a social contract with, and it should not be any godfather.⁷³

Few days later, Governor Obaseki said the only condition for peace was for the EPM to return to its umbrella body and stop going to Comrade Oshiomhole for supports.⁷⁴ Governor Obaseki, to again affirm his authority in the state structure of the party, through the party Chairman, Anslem Ojezua and the Assistant State Secretary, Ikenobe Anthony, suspended Comrade Adams Oshiomhole on 12 November, 2019 over his role in the turbulence that rocked the state chapter of the party because they did not want a repeat of what happened in Zamfara State during the 2019 general elections.⁷⁵

In a retaliatory move by another faction of the APC, known as the EPM in the state, the governor, his deputy and the SSG, Osarodion Ogie, were suspended.

While the faction allegedly suspended the governor for maladministration and squandering the state resources, the deputy governor and the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Osarodion Ogie, were suspended for anti-party activities.⁷⁶ Following the suspension and counter suspension, the National Working Committee of the APC, through its National Publicity Secretary, Lanre Issa-Onilu, during an emergency meeting at the National secretariat in Abuja, stated through the party's twitter handle that it had suspended the APC Chairman of the state, Anslem Ojezua, while a fact-finding committee will be formed to look into the political crisis in the state.⁷⁷ However, Obaseki, while speaking at a meeting to ratify the suspension of Comrade Oshiomhole from the party on 13 November 2019, announced that although he was not happy with the development in the state, no one made him a governor nor was his election funded by anyone. Rather, he became governor by God's grace and the people's mandate.⁷⁸ He noted further:

If you come into power on some basic principles, do not expect to change those principles because you have a certain ambition. If you came to power believing no man is God, then the day you start to play God, you will get the consequences.⁷⁹

A party chieftain in the state, Charles Airhavbere, countered some of the assertions of Governor Obaseki that the fight in the state is not as a result of resource sharing or godfather-godson politick, rather, it was as a result of the highhandedness of the governor and his refusal to listen to the voice of reason, failure to fulfil his electoral promises, refusal to embrace dialogue, consultation, negotiation and compromise.⁸⁰ He opined that Governor Obaseki's resort to the use of raw power in dealing with his political associates had led to the alienation of many APC stalwarts in the state. Countering the opinion, the state's commissioner for information, Mr. Paul Ohonbamu, opined that the intra-party crisis was a battle for dominance and liberation between the national chairman of the party and the governor.⁸¹ Another group, the Benin Solidarity Movement under its leadership, Comrade Curtis Eghosa Ugbo, warned Comrade Oshimhole not to take the Benin people for granted and also noted that the crisis between Governor Obaseki and Comrade Oshiomhole may have adverse effect on the people of the state.⁸² Significantly, the end to the crisis in Edo state was not imminent as Comrade Oshimhole and the government of the day continued to throw tantrums at each other.⁸³

Godfather-godson Conflict: For Personal or Public Good?

The conflict between the godfather and his godson exacerbates the nature of the post-colonial state and the patronage politics among the *elites*. On one hand, although Comrade Oshiomhole had ceased being the governor of the State, yet, he controlled the machinery of the state from the State House of Assembly to the key positions. He also appointed some personal assistants to the governor not just to carry out the daily routine of the governor but to also spy on the activities of the

governor. Such move only displays the raw power that the godfather would wield on the governor should he make the wrong move in their game of chess.

Governor Obaseki, on the other hand, who used to be a student of Comrade Adam Oshiomhole, his benefactor, only profited from the rot created in the system. Although he must have been duly qualified to hold the office as enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the question was not whether he was qualified, but whether he competitively attain the position or he just enjoy the benefit of an undue advantage over every other candidate for the primaries of the ruling party. The answer to this is not far-fetched. Comrade Oshiomhole knew that he was going to install and impose his godson on the candidates and the people from the onset. The question again is; was his subtle imposition vis a vis reckless display of power for the benefit of the citizenry or his personal interests?

The conflict was, no doubt, avoidable if the people were elected into political positions by the electorates. However, the godfather took matter to the extreme in order to ensure that his interests after office was not only protected, but also ensured that he was never called to account over his stewardship while in power. Thus, imposing his trusted ally and friend was not the best option, and the implication of this sad position was that the godfather had no moral obligation to even insinuate that he was fighting for the masses. More important is the role that the members of the State House of Assembly must play in democracy. The recalcitrant members of the house, though elected by the citizenry, did not show neutrality in the course of the conflict. Rather, most of the followers of the godfather showed loyalty to their benefactor who also ensured that they were all returned unopposed. This played out in the kind of life they lived outside their state when they should have exhausted all legal grounds to recover their mandates. Although, being outplayed by the new Governor Obaseki on the inauguration day was not morally right, one must understand that the governor also knew that inaugurating these majority foot soldiers of his former godfather would spell his doom, and more importantly, the governor knew intuitively that their loyalty was not for him, the constitution or the people, but for the godfather.

Again, the conflict was a clear demonstration of raw power and an open display of primordial and primitive politics of the post-colonial state. It further show that after decades of independence, the political class are still not loyal to the constitution but to their benefactors. This is a serious indictment on the post-colonial state and the politics of greed that has pervaded the entire nook and cranny of the Nigeria polity.

Concluding Remarks

The study examined the causes and manifestations of Godfatherism in Nigeria, with reference to the peculiar case in Edo State. The study found, among other considerations, that the two figures were indeed part of the *elite* in Edo society and politics. It revealed that while Godwin Obaseki was from a wealthy background,

Oshiomhole rose through the ladder from a humble background to share in the opulence of the *elite*; first from a labour leader to a governor and a national chairman of the ruling party. It further noted that national chairman, Adams Oshiomhole, battled with the godfathers during his tenure and won the hearts of the citizenry. This article further demonstrated that having won the people's hearts, he became guilty of the same anomalies he battled against during his governorship days as he chose a candidate, Godwin Obaseki, against the wishes of the majority, particularly when most people thought he was going to choose his deputy-- a credence to Michels' Iron Law of Oligarchy.

The study further showed that while the causes of the rift between the two figures were not explicitly revealed, reading in-between the lines have shown that the crisis erupted as a result of the ego problems of the two personalities, control of state resources, power and leadership issues. Above all, the study supports the position that neopatrimonialism exists in state leadership. In other words, it was about a godson wanting to establish himself, seek a second term party ticket and wean himself against a godfather who wanted to continually enjoy the largesse of both the state and national cookie-jar as well as power. Furthermore, the study revealed that though the manifestation of the crisis did not lead to an all-out war, but rhetoric from both parties and party chieftains amply revealed that it could have escalated out of proportion if not properly handled. It further showed that the non-inaugurated members who were chosen by their various electorates to represent them have not enjoyed the dividend of democracy and have also been denied their legitimate representative --- thereby affecting democratization and development.

Finally, the study made some recommendations; first, it recommended that the electorates should be mindful of who they vote into power and advised that party members and *elite* should ensure that the political *elite* focus on the people. Ideally, therefore, decisions should be taken in the interest of the majority, and not the few-*elite*. Also, party supremacy, internal democracy and a robust political culture through voter education, mass education and mobilization should be carried out by affected stakeholders with a view to educating the citizenry on their rights and obligations in certain situations. It further recommended the adoption of good governance, building of institutions, respect for rule of law, obedience of court order, party supremacy and an all-inclusive government to the political *elites* and those in government. It recommended a revisit of our electoral laws in order to make sure that our elections and votes counts, rather than those of the political godfathers or political *elite*.

Notes and References

1. Rick Newman and Emma Peters, "Why rich political donors are wasting a lot of money" *Yahoo Finance*, 2 September 2015. At <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/why-rich-political-donors-are-wasting-a-lot-of-money-200003712.html>
2. Human Rights Watch, "Corruption, Godfatherism and the Funding of Violence, (USA: HRW, 2007). at [https://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/nigeria1007/\\$.htm](https://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/nigeria1007/$.htm)
3. Isaac O. Albert, "Explaining 'Godfatherism' in Nigerian Politics." *African Sociological Review*, 9, 2 (2005):85.
4. Jaja of Opobo later died in 1891. It was reported that with the fall of this powerful Merchant King, other Delta States such as Old Calabar, New Calabar, Brass and Bonny simmered down. For *Opobo* See Diana Rosenberg, 'Ibo Resistance to British Colonial Power' *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 19, 1 (1991) 3; Tunde Oduwobi, "Deposed Ruler under Colonial Regime in Nigeria" *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 171, (2003): 553-571.
5. Olasupo Thompson & O.G.F Nwaorgu, "When Royal Exiles and Tourists return as Mummies: Tourism, Depositions and Exiles among Traditional Rulers in Africa, c.1476-2016" *ITAN: A Journal of History*, AAU Ekpoma, 7, [Forthcoming]
6. R.A. Joseph, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic*, (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd, 1987); R. Lemarchand, "Political Clientelism and Ethnicity in Tropical Africa: Competing Solidarities in Nation-Building", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 66, 1 (1972): 91-112; Chimaroke Nnamani, (2003) "The godfather phenomenon in democratic Nigeria: Silicon or real?" *The Source*, 2 June, 2003; A. Weingrod, "Patrons, Patronage and Political Parties" *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 10 (1978): 379-400; D.C. Bach, D.C., and M. Gazibo, M., eds. (2012) *Neopatrimonialism in Africa and Beyond*. London: Routledge; O.O. Olarinmoye, "Godfathers, political parties and electoral corruption in Nigeria" *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* Vol. 2, 4 (2008):066-073.
7. An Example of this was that of Dr. Chris Ngige and the Uba brothers in Anambra. See, Lambert Uyi Edigin, "Political Conflicts and Godfatherism in Nigeria: A Focus on the Fourth Republic." *African Research Review: An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal*, 4, 4 (2010): 174-186; O. O. Famulusi, "Moral and Development Issues in Political Godfatherism in Nigeria." *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 14, 7 (2012):11-25.
8. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, translated by A.R. Henderson and T. Parsons, (London: William Hodge and Company Ltd, 1947).

9. P. Chabal and J.-P. Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (London: James Currey, 1999).
10. M. Bratton and N. Van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); V-Dem Institute, "Neopatrimonialism and Democracy" Policy Brief, No. 18, 2018: 1-2, https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/e4/29/e4291f8b-fe6d-47c5-af7b-406b18653449/v-dem_policybrief_18_2018.pdf
11. A.S Afolabi (2016): "Party Politics and Political Thuggery in Nigeria, 1957-2011". *Nasara Journal of Humanities*. 6, 1, (2016): 1 - 24.
12. PM News, "Nothing to justify plans to deny Ambode second term-Osinbajo 29 September 2018.; *National Daily*, "10 reasons I was denied second term ticket-Ambode" 13 May, 2019.; Azimazi M. Jimoh, Seye Olumide and Kehinde Olatunji, "Fredh trouble for Ambode over second term move" *Guardian* 12 September 2018.
13. Oladimeji Ramon, "How to end godfatherism in Lagos politics- El Rufai" *The Punch*, 6 May 2019.
14. Tom Lodge, Neo-Patrimonial Politics in the ANC" *African Affairs*, 113, 450, (January 2014): 1-23.
15. Osumah Oarhe, "Tonic or Toxin? The State, Neopatrimonialism, and Anticorruption Efforts in Nigeria" *The Korean Journal of Policy Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2013), 111-134.
16. J.A. Ayoade, "Godfather Politics in Nigeria", in: Victor A. Adetula ed. *Money and Politics in Nigeria*, (Abuja: IFES-Nigeria, 2008), 94
17. Isaac O. Albert, "Explaining 'godfatherism' in Nigerian Politics." 86.
18. Lambert Edigin, "Political Conflicts and Godfatherism in Nigeria" 178.
19. Tim Kelsal, 'Rethinking the relationship between Neo-patrimonialism and Economic Development in Africa' *IDS*, 42, 2 (March 2011), 76-87; Christian Von Soest, "How does neopatrimonialism affect the African state's revenues? The case of tax collection in Zambia" *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 45, 4, (2006): 621-645.
20. Robert Michels *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* [Trans. Eden and Cedar Paul]. (Kitchener, Ontario: Batoche Books, 2001[1915]), 224-241.
21. J. A. Ayoade, "Godfather Politics in Nigeria," 86.
22. Seymour Lipset, Martin Trow and James Coleman's analysis in their study of the International Typographical Union (ITU) showed that sustained union democracy was possible given printers' relative equality of income and status, mastery of communication skills, and generalized political competence, which underpinned the ITU's unusual history of enduring two-party competition (independents and Progressives), which mirrored the American two-party

- system. For details and clarification, see, C.W. Cassinelli, "The Law of Oligarchy" *American Political Science Review*, 47, 3 (1953): 773-784.
23. Donald Inwalombe, 'Oshiomhole finally buried Political God-Fathers in Edo State' *The Nigerian Observers*, 25 May 2015.
24. Ibid.
25. Godwin Noshghehase Obaseki, 'About' At <http://www.godwinobaseki.com/> (accessed 17 October 2019).
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Wale Odunsi, 'Oshiomhole's favoured candidate picks APC guber form' daily Post, 24 May 2016. At <https://dailypost.ng/2016/05/24/oshiomholes-favoured-candidate-picks-apc-guber-form/>
29. Anselm Adodo, "Edo State's 'do and die' election" *Africa Research Institute*, 5 September 2016.
30. The News Editor, "Oshiomhole Cannot Play Godfather Politics. He Spent All His Energy Fighting Against--Edo Deputy Gov, Pius Odubu"
31. Simon Ebegbulem "Edo 2016: Tension in APC over Oshiomhole's rumored endorsement of Obaseki" *vanguard*, 14 December 2015.
32. As seen in the snippet. See video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xGb4KoRvc4>
33. INEC, "APC Candidate, Godwin Obaseki, Declared Winner of Edo Governorship Election" At <https://inecnigeria.org/news-all/apc-candidate-godwin-obaseki-declared-winner-of-edo-governorship-election/>
34. Darren Kew, Nigerian election and the neopatrimonialism paradox: In search of the social contract" *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 28, 4 (2010): 499-521.
35. Temidayo Akinsuyi, "Oshiomhole, Obaseki Rift Deepens, Divides APC" *Independent Newspaper*, 29 April 2019. At <https://www.independent.ng/oshiomhole-obaseki-rift-deepens-divides-apc/>
36. *Metro Watch*, "At Last, Edo Assembly Inaugurated, Okiye emerges speaker" 18 June 2019. At <https://metrowatchonline.com/at-last-edo-assembly-inaugurated-%E2%80%A2okiy-emerges-speaker/>
37. Ibid. The motion for adjournment was raised by the speaker and the House was adjourned till 17 July 2019.
38. Michael Egbejule, "Thugs attack Edo lawmakers in Benin hotel," *The Guardian*, 19 June 2019. At <https://guardian.ng/news/thugs-attack-edo-lawmakers-in-benin-hotel/> (accessed 18 October 2019).
39. Interviews, Dehinde Famuyiwa, 39 years, tilers, Akapapakva, 17 October 2019; Eghosa Daniel, barber, New Benin, 13 October 2019; Eghosa Darlington, Graduate, Ekenhuan Road, 11 October 2019.

1. Cletus Ukpang, "Oshiomhole-Obaseki rift deepens, as governor sacks eight commissioners" *Premium Times*, 4 July 2019.
2. Johnbosco Agbakwuru, Oba of Benin seeks Buhari's intervention in Obaseki-Oshiomhole feud, *vanguard*, 4 July 2019. At <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/07/oba-of-benin-seeks-buharis-intervention-in-obaseki-oshiomhole-feud/>
3. Leke Baiyewu, "Reps intervene in Edo Assembly, set up probe panel" *The Punch*, 9 July 2019.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Chijioke Jannah, "What Oshiomhole taught us in Edo politics- Gov. Obaseki" *Daily Post*, 13 July 2019.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Chijioke Jannah, "Edo Assembly Crisis: 'Money is pursuing us'--Oshiomhole says in leaked audio [Listen]" *Daily Post*, 15 July 2019.
10. PLAC, "House Adopts and Approves the report of the Ad-hoc Committee on Need for Intervention in the Edo State House of Assembly Crisis" 17 July 2019. At <https://placng.org/wp/2019/07/house-adopts-and-approves-the-report-of-the-ad-hoc-committee-on-need-for-intervention-in-the-edo-state-house-of-assembly-crisis/>
11. Channels Television, "Edo Won't Be 'A Pawn In Anybody's Political Chess Game' - Obaseki" At <https://www.channelstv.com/2019/07/19/edo-wont-be-a-pawn-in-anybodys-political-chess-game-obaseki/>
12. Examples are the cases of Adedibu and Ladoja, as well as Chris Uba and Chris Ngige see, A.G Abdul Jelil, "'Godfatherism' and Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Violence and Political Insecurity in Ibadan" IFRA Paper, 1-29; O.O. Olarinmoye, "Godfathers, political parties and electoral corruption in Nigeria" 71-73.
13. *The Nation*, "You have turned yourself to agent of disruption, Oyegun tells Oshiomhole" 21 July 2019. He handed over to Adams Oshiomhole on 23 June 2018.
14. Tobi Aworinde, "Edo Assembly crisis: Clark writes Gbajabiamila, condemns reps' interference" *The Punch*, 22 July 2019.
15. Queen E. Iroanusi, "Edo Assembly Crisis: Senate gives Gov Obaseki one week to issue fresh proclamation" *Premium Times*, 30 July 2019.
16. Olusola Fabiyi and Sola Shittu, "Oshiomhole, Obaseki's reconciliation ongoing-APC Cair, ex-AGF" *The Punch* 30 July At <https://punchng.com/oshiomhole-obasekis-reconciliation-ongoing-apc-chair-ex-agf/>

56. Deji Elumoye, "Obaseki Insists No Fresh Proclamation of Assembly" *This Day*, 31 July 2019.
57. Sola Shittu, "Don't issue fresh proclamation, court orders Obaseki" *The Punch*, 3 August 2019;
58. Ade Adesomaju, "Court stops Senate, reps from taking over Edo Assembly" *The Punch*, 7 August 2019.
59. Kess Ewubare, "Obaseki pays surprise visit to Oshiomhole, fault reports of dispute" *MSN Africa*, 13 August 2019. At <https://www.msn.com/en-xl/africa/nigeria/obaseki-pays-surprise-visit-to-oshiomhole-fault-reports-of-dispute/ar-AAFKkw0>
60. Eniola Akinkuotu, "Obaseki sacked the only commissioner I nominated in his cabinet" *The Punch* 8 September 2019.
61. Agency Report, "Court stops NASS from taking over Edo Assembly" *Premium Times*, 12 September 2019.
62. Ibid.
63. *The Nation*, "Edo Assembly crisis: Obaseki hails Judiciary for upholding rule of law. Calls for peace, reconciliation" 13 September 2019.
64. Sunday Aborishade, Kamarudeen Ogundele and Sola Shittu, "Thugs attack Oshiomhole's house in Benin" *The Punch* 13 October 2019.
65. Ibid.
66. Agency Report, "Edo crisis: Oshiomhole attacks Obaseki Again" *Premium Times*, 15 October 2019.
67. Jethro Ibileke, "Feud with Oshiomhole: Edo APC under my control--Obaseki" *PM News*, 16 October 2019. At <https://www.pmnnewsnigeria.com/2019/10/16/feud-with-oshiomhole-edo-apc-under-my-control-obaseki/>; *This Day*, "Is Obaseki, Oshiomhole Feud insolvable?" 20 October 2019. At <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2019/10/20/is-obaseki-oshiomhole-feud-insolvable/> Accessed 13 November 2019
68. Sola Shittu, "Obaseki, Oba of Lagos attacked at Oshiomhole's residence" *The Punch*, 3 November 2019. At <https://punchng.com/obaseki-oba-of-lagos-attacked-at-oshiomholes-residence/> (accessed 12 November 2019)
69. Kamarudeen Ogundele and Sola Shittu, "Edo Crisis: Dep gov slams Oshiomhole, group warns Obaseki" *The Punch*, 5 November 2019. At <https://punchng.com/edo-crisis-dep-gov-slams-oshiomhole-group-warns-obaseki/> accessed 13 November 2019.
70. Interviews, Adesina Jacob Olaoluwa, Researcher, 32 years; Rabi'u Sodiq Olumayowa, 27 Years; Rabi'u Sodiq Olumayowa, Journalist, 29 years; Raji Najcemdeen Adewale, civil Engineer, 35 Years; Afolabi Ismail, media expert, 30 years; Arishilejoye Abdulazeez business man, 31 years. (9-17 November 2019); *This Day*, "Is Obaseki, Oshiomhole Feud insolvable?" 20 October 2019.

At <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2019/10/20/is-obaseki-oshiomhole-feud-insolvable/>

71. Interview with Mr Andrew Oroh, former member of House of Representative and former commissioner for Agriculture Edo State. See Leo S Obechi and Olawunmi Ojo, "Obaseki hold the key to peace in Edo State" *The Guardian*, 6 November 2019. At <https://guardian.ng/politics/obaseki-holds-the-key-to-peace-in-edo-state/>
72. He was referring to the statement of Comrade Oshiomhole that the tussle in Edo state was likened to a Mosquito Buzz. See, Osagie Otabor, "Mosquito can cause Malaria, Obaseki tells Oshiomhole" *The Nation*, 8 November 2019. At <https://thenationonlineng.net/mosquito-can-cause-malaria-obaseki-tells-oshiomhole/> (accessed 13 November 2019).
73. Michael Egbejule, "Stop standing against my re-election, Governor Obaseki tells Oshiomhole" *The Guardian*, 11 November 2019. At <https://guardian.ng/politics/stop-standing-against-my-re-election-governor-obaseki-tells-oshiomhole/> (accessed 13 November 2019).
74. Shola Shittu, "Edo crisis: Obaseki sets condition for peace talks" *The Punch* 10 November 2019. At <https://punchng.com/edo-crisis-obaseki-sets-condition-for-peace-talks/> (accessed 13 November 2019).
75. In Zamfara State, there were series of judgements that annulled all the party primaries conducted in the state, and when the Attorney General of the Federation manipulated a judgement in order for the party, APC, to field a candidate at the elections, the supreme court eventually sacked the then elected governor and reinstated the PDP candidate who came second in the gubernatorial elections. See, Victor Ogunyinka, "BREAKING: Edo APC suspends Oshiomhole following vote of no confidence" *Vanguard*, 12 November 2019.
76. Kess Ewubare, "Edo APC suspends Governor Obaseki, gives reason" *MSN Africa*, 13 November 2019. At <https://www.msn.com/en-xl/africa/nigeria/edo-apc-faction-suspends-governor-obaseki-gives-reason/ar-BBWHxHe?li=AAB4Qbx&ocid=wispr>
77. @OfficialAPCNg 13 November 2019; *The Punch*, "We uphold the suspension of Edo APC chairman-Onilu" 13 November 2019.
78. Seun Opejobi, "APC Crisis: Oshiomhole didn't make me governor—Obaseki insists" *Daily Post*, 14 November 2019.
79. Ibid.
80. NAN, "Why we're at war with Obaseki—APC chieftain Airhavbere" *The Punch*, 17 November 2019.
81. Ibid.
82. *This Day*, "Don't take us for granted, Benins warn Oshiomhole" 16 November 2019

83. Sola Shittu, "How Edo deputy governor, Shaibu, betrayed me-Oshiomhole" *The Punch*, 19 November 2019. At <https://punchng.com/how-edo-dep-gov-shaibu-betrayed-me-oshiomhole/>; Sola Shittu, "Alleged betrayal: I'm following your path, Shaibu tells Oshiomhole" *The Punch*, 19 November 2019. At <https://punchng.com/alleged-betrayal-im-following-your-path-shaibu-tells-oshiomhole/>