

# Monetization of Politics and Socioeconomic Development in Abia State in the Fourth Republic

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**Abstract:-** This paper investigated the attendant and manifest implications of monetization of politics on socioeconomic development in Abia state. It explored the character through which monetization of politics expressed itself in Abia state in the fourth republic as well as the implications on social and economic development in the state. Two theories: Investment theory of party competition, and Golden Mean were used in the study. Survey design was also used and the sample size was 400 systematically drawn from four LGAs in Abia using stratified sampling techniques. Primary and secondary methods were adopted in gathering data, while data gathered were analysed qualitatively and descriptively. The study found that monetization of politics in Abia state expressed itself in institutionalized high cost of party forms/campaign costs cum lofty entitlements attached to political offices, and financial inducement between the candidates and the masses. The outcomes of these were inadequate attentions to social and economic development projects in the state. Meanwhile, the politicians kept enjoying their packages whether effective in office or not. The study recommended amongst other things, a paradigm shift from politics of the rich to politics of qualified civil servants, and establishment of external development project monitoring bodies to ensure proper implementation of public projects in Abia and Nigeria at large.

**Keywords:-** Monetization, Politics, Development, Socioeconomic, Investment, Inducement, Entitlements.

## I. INTRODUCTION

A society's level of advancement in any given epoch is determined by its political system and political leadership. Nigerian politics has indeed been monetized, resulting in a system defined by profiteering by local bourgeoisie and political-businessmen at the expense of development.

The use of money by politicians to sway voters in order to win elections, as well as individual and corporate bodies' inordinate investment in parties (attitudinal); and the shaping of the political system to accommodate only the wealthy through expensive cum pricey party forms, high campaign costs, and bogus welfare benefits tethered to political offices (institutional) (Ovwasa, 2013; Audu, 2016) are the dimensions the Nigerian politics has taken contemporarily.

In a nutshell, socioeconomic development is captured as the link between economic activity and social life (Sanders, 2009). The New Partnership for African Development

(NEPAD) equally states that socio-economic development is the ongoing increase in people's well-being and level of living.

From Aristotelian viewpoint, the aspiration of any State ab initio is to establish political communities that will ensure citizens have a good life. No country attains social and economic development (under which the good life of citizens manifests) in a monetized political system designed to feed and sustain a few greedy politicians as such design has the potential of attracting criminals to run public affairs and undermine the overall development of such country.

Abia state as a part of Nigeria has witnessed three successive administrations in this Fourth Republic. Development reports in Nigeria and Abia in particular in these administrations revealed the deteriorating socio-economic fortunes and general groaning of Abians (Federal Office of Statistics, 1999; World Bank Appraisal Mission, 2000; National Bureau of Statistics, 2010; WBAM, 2014; WBPPA, 2014; UNDP, 2018; NBS, 2019). Debt Management Office (DMO) of the federation in 2017 placed Abia as the 5th most indebted state of the federation with a debt stock of 60,648,431,912.05. This increased to 68,762,176,283.42 in 2019.

It is high time we came up with an ideal that should explain better this **Achilles heel** on Abia socioeconomic development as well as the bane in the country's political project and prescribe her antidote.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK/ CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The study adopted two theoretical framework of analysis, viz; Investment Theory of Party Competition (The Golden Rule) by Thomas Ferguson (1995), and The Golden Mean Theory propounded by Aristotle (ca 350 B.C.E/1996).

### A. Investment Theory of Party Competition (The Golden Rule).

This theory championed by Thomas Ferguson (1995) brings to the fore the dynamics and implications of money driven politics on social and economic development in a country. The major argument and relevance of the theory to this study are that the cost of campaign, information, nominations/interest form, etc in the present political systems is very expensive and cannot be borne by political candidates alone. As a result, political parties and political candidates seek for investors to have a chance of winning elections. It equally holds that democracy as Rule by the people remains an abstract concept because business elites, not voters, play the

leading part in political systems since they do not just vote, but also invest in the political process and as a result control the system from outside lending credence to the slogan of 'He Who Pays The Piper Calls The Tune'. In the same pole, it projects that voters might prefer to vote for candidates or political parties that their manifesto protects their interest but the fact remains that they never get a chance to choose any policy/policies directly. With all these it proposes that electoral/campaign reforms (cutting costs), communities cum voters (the masses) involvement in both selection of political representatives and investing to the success of the selected candidates during elections, will make for proper representation and accountability to the masses (Ferguson, 1995; Einstein, 1945).

#### B. *The Golden Mean Theory*

This theory championed by Aristotle (Aristotle, ca 350 B.C.E/1996) explains the consequences of excess of anything – property acquisition by political leaders and the masses, size and population of a country, cost of party nomination forms, remunerations, public office holders entitlements, etc as well as the significance of the Golden Mean in structuring and restructuring a State and her political system for social, economic and political development. **The** major argument and relevance of the theory in this study are that the best way of life in a State is a life lived in the MEAN (moderation – in between excess and deficiency). In other words, an excessive amount of even the most useful things in the society would not at any rate bring the owner any benefit, that is, the excess would be useless if not harmful (Ndu, 1998). In fact, the full stomach of the rich (as a result of excess) denies them sleep. It however proposes that moderation improves efficiency and effectiveness of individuals in a State and by extension, discourages lackadaisical approaches to the implementation of development policies by public office holders in a State (Aristotle, ca 350 B.C.E/1996; Norman, 2007; Perry, 2007).

#### C. *The Concept of Monetization of Politics*

Monetization of politics is associated with the use of different forms of monetary or material inducement on citizens by politicians to secure votes and emerge victorious in intra-party or general elections (Okunloye, 2017; Ovuwasa, 2013; Adu, 2016; Chul et al., 2017).

During electoral politics, the use of various forms of monetary or material inducement on citizens for securing patronage, participation, or votes, as well as other stakeholders seeking undue favor to compromise the electoral process for the purpose of emerging victorious in intra-party or general elections is referred to as monetization of politics (Okunloye (2017, p.78). His contention is that when voting at intra-party and general election levels becomes a game of political zero-sum or winner takes all/win at all cost by all means (including illegitimate or extra-constitutional means) and voters begin to vote in accordance with the ability of politicians to offer the highest bids or material inducements, then politics or electoral politics is said to be monetized.

#### D. *The Concept of Socioeconomic Development*

Let us first define development in general before getting into the topic of socioeconomic development. Scholars from all across the world have expressed severe worry about development as a notion. For example, Nworgu (2006:80) defines development as the fulfillment of three basic requirements: life sustenance (the provision of basic needs), self-esteem (a sense of self-respect and independence), and freedom (freedom from three evils, want, ignorance and squalor state). In a similar vein, Alapiki (2004:209) argues that development entails individual and national political freedom aimed at realizing human potential and improving living conditions. Todaro and Smith (2015) equally agree that development is both a physical reality and state of mind in which society has, through some combination of social, economic, and institutional processes secured the means for obtaining a better life (p.22).

On a general plain, development is the improvement in social well-being of citizens (social dimension), economic growth/development and improvement in living standards of citizens (economic dimension), and political freedom of people (political dimension) (Seers,1969; Rodney, 1972; Ake, 2002; Alapiki, 2004; Nwaorgu, 2006; Todaro & Smith, 2015). However, it equally shows that we should be looking at two elements or dimensions of development while trying to define socioeconomic development. These include; social development, and economic development. Let us look at them one after the other.

#### ➤ *Social Development:*

Social development is the ability of the State to provide and maintain basic social infrastructure in the health sector, academic sector, market sector, and other social amenities that enhance and promote social well-being of the citizens of the state as well as the ability of the State to promote gender equality in terms of association of members that can strengthen civil society and promote social co-existence of citizens (Midgley, 2013).

Jinadu (1985) opines that social development, on a general plain has been conceived with references to the "improvement of the quality of life of a country's citizenry" (p.85). Jinadu's attempt to conceptualize social development factors the fact that there is a dichotomy between economic development and social development. Her attempt equally revealed that the need to conceptualize social development especially within the context of African environment cum Third World countries became imperative since identifying with the concept of development within the context of economic growth devoid of social welfare of citizens of a country is faulty. However, her conceptualization does not identify or spell out the constituents of social development.

Sen (1999) defines social development within the context of individual freedom and capabilities. To him social development is the freedom of individuals and capability in the state. Please, we have to understand that in Sen's analysis of development, there are elements of both social and economic constituents in his conceptualization. This is because he uses the concept of freedom in his analysis of dimensions of development

➤ *Economic development:*

Economic development is the ability of the State to provide and maintain basic economic infrastructure in the transport sector by providing and maintaining roads, agricultural sector, and other physical infrastructure that enhance and promote economic well-being of the citizens of the State vis-à-vis the ability of the State to reduce poverty rate of rural dwellers by providing employment through building cottage industries and reducing rural-urban migration.

To Todaro and Smith (2015, p. 16), economic development in the past was seen in the context of altering the structure of production and employment so that the agriculture's share of both declines and that of the manufacturing and service industries increases. The emphasis of this conceptualization was on economic growth. However, the new economic view of development is an attack on widespread absolute poverty, increasing inequitable income distribution, and rising unemployment (p.17). To them, a better conceptualization of economic development should accommodate elimination of poverty, inequality and unemployment. This conceptualization by Todaro and Smith is an attempt to distinguish between economic growth and economic development.

The above submission actually buttresses the assertion of Seers (1969) while lending his views on the question of development in general. To him, the questions to ask about a country's development are; "What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What is happening to Inequality? The interests of Seers in conceptualizing development were to reduce poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

Feldman, et al, (2016) posit that the term economic development is often conflated with development and growth, which adds to confusion in both policy and academic debates. The point they tried to make is that economic growth is easily quantified and measured, while economic development is more qualitative and "has meant all things to all men and women". To this effect, they defined economic development as development that is focused on quality improvements of life, risk mitigation, innovation, and entrepreneurship that place the economy of a higher growth trajectory.

➤ *Socioeconomic Development: A Relationship between Social and Economic Development:*

Like the definition of development used above, socioeconomic development stresses growth in terms of economic and social elements within a geographic unit. It also the process of increasing affluence by increasing the production, distribution, and consumption of commodities and services known as economic development.

Having established that, Sanders (2009) opines that socio-economic development is the process of social and economic development in a society, measured with indicators, such as gross domestic product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. The contention of Sanders in summary is that socio-economic development is the relationship between economic activity and social life.

In the same vein, the New Partnership for African Development's (NEPAD) Declaration implies that socio-economic development is the continuous improvement in the well being and in the standard of living of the people. According to NEPAD, the socio-economic thematic area aims to ensure that Africans meet their basic needs that are essential to live a life of dignity. This includes access to quality education, better healthcare, decent housing, safe drinking water and good sanitation, as well as equitable distribution of a nation's wealth. Socio economic development is measured with indicators such as GDP, life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Design

The study adopted survey design because it was considered suitable to the subject matter which could not have been properly investigated in a constrained environment. The choice of the design was based on the assumption of Amara and Amaechi (2010, p.17) that in field survey, "the more realistic the situation, the stronger the outcome"

#### B. Study Area

The study area of this research was Abia State of Nigeria created on the 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1991 out of the old Imo State (Ukaonu, 2011, p.1; Ofurum, 2020, p.1). Geographically, the state is located in the eastern part of Nigeria and covers an area of about 5,243.7 sq. km which is approximately 5.8 per cent of the total land area of Nigeria. The state shares common boundaries with Ebonyi, Rivers, Cross River, Akwa-Ibom, Imo state, and Anambra states (Kalu, 2009).

#### C. Population for the Study

The population of the study comprised all the people of Abia state totaling 3,727,300 (National Bureau Statistics, 2016) drawn from all the 17 (seventeen) local government areas of the state.

#### D. Sample and Sampling Techniques

The Sample size of the study was randomly drawn from four local government areas in the state with a population of **831, 500**. The sample size was calculated using Taro Yamane's (1973) formula as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Where } n &= \text{sample size} \\ N &= \text{population} \\ I &= \text{constant} \\ e &= \text{total error margin} \end{aligned}$$

At 95% confidence level and 0.05 (5%) margin of error, the sample size was calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} n &= N \\ & 1 + (e)^2 \\ \text{Therefore: } N &= 831, 500 \quad 831, 500 \\ & 1 + 831, 500(0.05)^2 = 2.079 = 399.9 \\ n &= 400 \text{ approximately} \end{aligned}$$

From this sample size of 400, 100 respondents was selected from four local government areas using stratified random technique.

### *E. Method of Data Collection and Analysis*

The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. While the former included; oral interview, structured questionnaire and personal observation, the latter included; texts materials from different authors, journals on the subject matter, and internet websites. The study also used qualitative and quantitative methods to present and analyze data.

## **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### *A. On Monetized politics in Abia State in the Fourth Republic:*

The study found that, like other states in Nigeria, monetization of politics in Abia in the Fourth Republic is evidenced and continues to exemplify itself in the institutionalization of exorbitant costs of party forms and political campaigns, which discouraged and continues to discourage not-too-wealthy but potential Abians from politics; there were breaches of constitutional provisions for party/candidates fundraising; and there were infractions of constitutional provisions for parity. There was citizens' loss of trust on political campaign promises of politicians but rather saw vote-buying and selling as a way of getting their cuts from the "National Cake" which created room for a relationship of willing-buyer, willing-seller of vote between the seller (voter) and the buyer (political aspirant) involving exchange of money (a bilateral unenforceable contract); and of course, the Nigerian judicial system had become an avenue for the rich but unqualified politicians to have the hope of winning election to the detriment of public good and development in Abia state. All these were the manifestations of monetization of politics in Abia state in the Fourth Republic

### *B. On Social Development in Abia State in the Fourth Republic*

The study found out that the health sector as basic social infrastructure in the state witnessed inadequate attention; public primary and secondary schools suffered inadequate funding; teachers, health workers, and other civil servants often went on strike due to inadequate funding and irregular/non-payment of salaries from the government; gender inequality in participating in politics had widened; and political office holders were entitled to regular payment of salaries and remunerations during and after service whether effective and efficient or not.

They were clear indications that both the health and educational sectors (major elements of social development) in Abia state between 1999 to 2019 received less attention. There were series of abandoned social infrastructural projects as a response to social development in the state from in terms of provision and maintenance of hospitals/healthcare services as well as school classroom blocks and markets in both urban and rural areas in the state. Arochukwu general hospital. Ariaria main market Aba, etc attested this finding.

To buttress this, a report from Abia state Ministry of Health (2013) on "State-wide Rapid Health Facility Assessment" on the Preparation for the elimination of Mother-to-child transmission of HIV in August 2013, revealed that there were inadequate medical doctors in the limited hospitals

and healthcare centers in all the local government areas in the state. The report showed that apart from the hospitals in the cities like Umuahia General Hospital, most of the hospitals visited in the rural areas had no resident doctor. It equally showed that there were inadequate drugs as to tackle emergencies in the health care facilities in those areas.

It was recorded that in 2016, primary schools in the whole Abia closed for a whole academic session because of teachers' strike for non-payment of salaries for almost a year. Ironically, this issue of non-payment of salaries to workers in the educational sector for almost a year did not affect political office holders.

These elements (social infrastructures) noted were actually in line with the indicators of social development identified by Carley and Bustelo (2012), World Institute for Development Economic Research (WIDER), Haan and Roberto, 2014; Mondal (2017); Haan and Ellen, 2020), (see chapter two) which according to them the absence of them constitute lack of social development in a state.

### *C. On Economic Development in Abia State in the Fourth Republic:*

The study found out that provision of physical infrastructure like construction of and maintenance of trunk A, B and trunk C roads which should have enhanced economic activities in Abia between 1999 and 2019 received inadequate attention; economic activities did not thrive in rural communities in the state because of lack of accessibility and inadequate social amenities; building of cottage industries in the rural areas as to provide employment for rural dwellers was seen as a secondary factor leading to increase in rural-urban migration; and poverty rate was increasing in the rural areas in the state because lands that should have been used by the indigenous people for agriculture were been bought over by the political class for personal use.

The realities of economic development in terms of provision and maintenance of most of the roads, cottage industries, agriculture, etc were little to be desired as both the corresponding data gathered signified that almost all the trunk, A,B,C roads in Abia state were in pitiable states. In Aba, irrespective of all the monies projected for rehabilitation of the roads, the commercial city would be better described as "a city of waste and the worst of roads" ... a situation that triggered the Aba Women on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2019 to stage a protest against bad road, bad government and no payment of salary in the state.

Arochukwu people were not left out in this quagmire as they would have to take Akwa-Ibom rout from Aba to get to their village because Arochukwu-Ohafia Road as a project that had been awarded twice under this fourth republic had witnessed total abandonment. The first was under Goodluck Jonathan's Administration and second under Mohamed Buhari's Administration with approximately 60% upfront.

These elements were actually in line with the indicators of economic development identified by World Institute for Development Economic Research (WIDER),



Todaro and Smith (2015) and Ikande (2019) which according to them the absence of them constitute lack of economic development in a state.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper has been able to establish that politics has been monetized in Abia and Nigeria at large and this monetization has taken institutional and attitudinal dimensions, expressing itself in institutionalization of high costs of party forms and political campaigns which in turn dissuaded not-too rich but potential citizens of Abia from politics; violations of constitutional provisions for party/candidates' funding which encouraged political elites and investors to invest excessively in politics for personal gains; citizens loss of trust on political campaign promises as vote-buying and selling prevailed.

The consequences of monetization of politics on social development in Abia state in the Fourth Republic expressed itself in; inadequate attention to the health and educational sectors; constant strike by teachers, health workers, and other civil servants due to inadequate funding and irregular/non-payment of salaries from the government. Meanwhile, political office holders ensured they got all their entitlements during and after their tenure whether effective and efficient or not.

In the same token, the implications of monetization of politics on economic development in Abia included, inter alia; inadequate attention to provision of physical infrastructure like construction of and maintenance of trunk A, B and trunk C roads which should have enhanced economic activities; limited economic activities in the rural communities, less attention to building of cottage industries in the rural areas as to provide employment for rural dwellers which has led to increase in rural-urban migration and increase in poverty rate of the rural dwellers.

Based on the above, the study recommended the following;

- A paradigm shift from business-elites/investors' political system to senior-public/civil servant's political system.
- Salaries and entitlements of political office holders slashed to conform to educational qualifications in line with Nigeria's public service salary and entitlements scheme.
- Providing enabling environment for economic activities to thrive in Abia state.
- Establishment of external project-monitoring bodies to ensure proper implementation of social and economic development projects in the state.

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