

The Economics of Gangsterism and Sycophancy in Nigerian Politics

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Abstract: The study seeks to unveil the operational forces surrounding and compelling gangsterism and sycophancy in Nigerian politics by examining the level of influence economics has on politics as the two concepts are very highly dependent. Political decisions tend to be overwhelmingly influenced by economic benefits. The primary cause of restiveness, communal and ethnic clashes, tension and class antagonism is believed to be largely defined by economic factors. This state of affairs has impacted negatively on the ideological foundations of political parties in Nigeria and has given vent to the formation of gangs and sycophantic groups within the political parties with the principal aim, though latent, of looting the national treasury. The activities of the gangs and the sycophantic groups in Nigeria currently appear to be uncontrollable and seem to steer the wheel of governance in the Nigerian polity. This is detrimental to democratic and economic institutional development in Nigeria. The country's electoral system, therefore, needs an overhaul. The Electoral Commission should encourage and bring to bear strategies that will engender ideological principles in Nigerian political parties. The media, as the vanguard and watchdog of the society, should re-evaluate its role and in the circumstance, elect to be independent and astutely critical in its holistic delivery of the needs and demands of democracy.

Keywords: Economic benefits, electoral system, gangsterism, ideology, sycophancy

INTRODUCTION

Economics and politics are two concepts with very high degree of interdependence. Political decisions and actions are believed to be dominantly influenced by economic needs (Marx, 1975). Politics in Nigeria (the most populated black nation in the World-with a population of about 150 million people) revolves around its rich Crude-Oil wealth-the principal income earner to the national treasury.

Nigeria is the sixth largest producer of crude oil in the world (OPEC, 2009). Due to the sustained demand for Crude-oil over the decades by the international community, Nigeria had continuously earned a steady flow of income from the export of this product. From 1972 to 1979, earnings from crude oil accounted for about 83% of total earnings to the country. Between 1980 and 2010, earnings from oil constituted more than 96% of total earnings to the country (CBN, 2008; OPEC, 2009). However, a fair chunk of the oil earnings instead of being translated to sustained overall growth and development of the country, with adequate provision of basic infrastructure and basic needs, are controlled by a privileged few, mostly politicians and top government officials and functionaries, who eventually launder such earnings to be kept in foreign accounts and purchases of several choice properties abroad, coupled with investment in blue-chip firms abroad, while leaving the country

totally raped and barren with diseases, squalor and complete lack of Basic Infrastructure and Basic Needs, like power, roads, railways, health care, education, good drinking water source, among others. This is corroborated by Transparency International Report (2009).

The concentration of the country's wealth in the hands of politicians, bourgeois elites in government and business (with vast foreign stake-holding interest) usually attracts the attention of the 'masses', especially the unemployed and the low income earners, who have quite little or no access to the wealth portfolio. These 'masses', who are attracted to holders of the wealth portfolio, in many cases derive such attraction from their desire to also benefit from the wealth pool. However, in many instances, they are disqualified by issues like: illiteracy, ineptitude, *god-fatherism*, nepotism, religious and cultural affiliation, tribe, among others. To get to the wealth pool or to catch some crumbs of the wealth, therefore, the 'masses' in Nigeria have invented a very novel approach to contract the attention of the wealth holders: the politicians and their elite supporters. This they do by forming themselves into gangs and sycophantic support groups specialized in singing praises of politicians and their political parties whom they know have a firm grip to the Wealth Pool of the nation. The viciousness of the new approach exhibited by the masses compels the politicians to believe that they can always get unfettered political support from the groups, while encouraging them to deal

Thus, in contemporary Nigeria, the emerging model that supports, convinces and gives the political class the congenial atmosphere to gain more control of the wealth pool of the nation is gang and sycophantic politics. The gangs and sycophantic groups usually brand themselves with different names, insignias and colors in support of the politicians and political parties of their choices, whom they believe will have easy access to the wealth pool. In many occasions opposing gangs and sycophantic groups have committed their lives through violence and conflicts for their groups to remain relevant in the scheme of things. Additionally, sycophantic groups often feed the political class with information, often distorted, garnished with lies and unfounded optimism, from the polity.

This study seeks to unveil the operational forces surrounding and propelling gangsterism and sycophancy in the Nigerian politics. It further seeks to highlight the economic implications of this state of affairs. The study has nine sections. Section two, which follows the background, presents an eclectic overview of the Nigerian political system while section three offers the conceptual framework. A political Gang-sycophantic model and the characteristics of gangs and sycophantic groups, as operated in Nigeria, are discussed in sections four and five, respectively. Section six discusses the sustenance of the political gangs and the sycophantic groups, while section seven highlights the likely consequences of gangs and sycophantic politics in Nigeria. Section eight proffers solutions how to abate gangsterism and sycophancy in Nigerian politics while section nine concludes the study.

ECLECTIC OVERVIEW OF THE NIGERIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

Political self-determination in Nigeria came with independence in 1960. Prior to 1960, political groupings had started emerging in the then main regions of Nigeria (the Northern Region, Western Region and Eastern Region) that were grooming and preparing to take over the leadership of the country once independence would be granted. The Eastern Region was very famous with the National Council for Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC) party. The western region was dominated by Action Group (AG) party, while the Northern Region had the Northern People Congress (NPC) party. These parties were mainly located around the personages and ideologies of their leaders: NCNC had Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as its leader; NPC had Sir Ahmadu Bello as its leader, while Chief Obafemi Awolowo led the AG.

In the Nigeria's first Republic where ideology and dialectical influence of the party leaders directed the navigation and workings of the political parties, supremacy of the party was paramount and sacrosanct. Political leaders were answerable to their parties. It was very rare to see groups within the parties that were more

powerful than the party and "within" groups that could kow-tow the party.

With the demise of the first republic and the enthronement of military dictatorship (1979-1999), it was easy for the military to use those long years in office to erode all democratic properties and institutions that the first Republic politicians had conceptualized or built which were ideology-based. Thus, the military-born second and third Republics, (1979-1983) and (1999-2007) respectively and the fourth Republic (2007-2011) inherited a political culture and environment that had porous and spurious ideological foundation with underdeveloped and weak democratic institutions. This state of affairs has given vent to the very near inhuman politics in Nigeria.

Notwithstanding the near commonality in the behavioral pattern of the past political eras or republics in the country, which was a direct off-shoot of extreme military dictatorship, the second Republic (1979-1983) is reputed to have seen yet a more strongly-patterned party structure and leadership akin to that of the first Republic, even when it was not so strong. The second Republic was almost devoid of gangs and sycophantic groups that have recently emerged to consume and take away the souls and powers of the parties for economic gains. An argument for the remaining trait of party superiority over sycophantic "within gangs", although very weak, was said to be as a result of the continued stay of the first Republic political icons such as chief Obafemi Awolowo of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of the Nigeria People Party (NPP) and Alhaji Aminu Kano of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) in the second Republic Political arena.

Drawing logically from the fact that the political machinery and institutions in the Nation had been crippled by long military ruler-ship, after the first and second Republics, it was, therefore, very rare to find political leaders who were committed and willing to lead with openness, democratic principles and values. Most of such leaders had either been made impotent by the military class or were so afraid to go back to a system they knew might not support them to steer the ship in the people's desired direction.

With the oil money windfall, it was very expedient for the country's ruling military cabal to know in whose hands the ruler-ship of the country was to be secured when it occurred to them that military dictatorship was old-fashioned and rejected in the country. Even while the pro-democracy groups started kicking to get the military out of power in Nigeria, they never knew that the political leaders that would take over from the military will not be them (the pro-democracy groups) or those who had cut the teeth of proper democracy, rule of law, corruption freedom and populists' politics. Rather, the trainees and apologists of the failed military dictatorship were the ones

that took over the political leadership of the country (Udokang and Awofeso, 2000).

From the second Republic (1979-1983), when the military first decided to step aside and hand over to civilian government, it was very obvious that they aided the emergence of a leadership that was brief in ideology, democratic norms, values, among others. While in leadership, they acted as a group of scavengers who were invited to come and join in the looting of Nigeria's treasury. It has been argued by political historians that the Nigerian people supported the military dethronement of the 2nd Republic, 1979-1983, because they were aware of the very bad and corrupt practices of the government. Facts about misrule, ill governance, corruption and fraud, highlighted by the operations of the government in the 2nd Republic and the military were too obvious to be ignored.

From the 2nd Republic henceforth, it became somewhat difficult to easily convince Nigerians, to support government actions whose structure and superstructure were founded in fraud, corruption and social ills. This awareness was created by some patriotic Nigerians such as Prof. Wole Soyinka, Chief Anthony Enahoro (late), Alh. Balarabe Musa, Col. Umar Musa, Chief Gani Fahemi (late) and Femi Falana, among others. In order to be able to mobilize support, after the strong enlightenment of Nigerians against bad government by the outstanding Nigerian icons, the government (even military) had to embark on creating gangs of supporters to sing their praises. These gangs were heavily funded and totally supported by the government, but were inadequate in membership that had integrity and good intentions for the well being and good management of Nigeria. They also tilted towards finding a way to join in the looting of the country's wealth. This strategy which was discovered by the ruling class to be potent was encouraged all through the military era and then transferred to the democracy era and effectively employed by the politicians to get to power.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The framework for this study is drawn from the core argument in the market economy theory of what will be the impediment to free market if unions, monopolies, Oligopolies and cartels exist. The argument in very simple terms is that since a free market economy has two tools of demand and supply to adjust the economy, it will not need any impediment or hindrance that will render these tools (demand and supply) impotent. Unions, monopolies, oligopolies, cartels, etc. will always infringe on free allocation of resources among competing needs through the forces of demand and supply, since in the later (Unions, Monopolies, Oligopolies, cartels, etc.) one agent can, through its control of either demand or supply in the market, cause price to move in its own advantage (Koutsoyannis, 2006).

It is interesting to note that many market economies have tried consciously to reduce the impediments to free

market yet they are there though in varying degrees. This study likens these free market impediments (unions, monopolies, Oligopolies, etc.) to the various gangs and sycophantic groups that try to clog the wheel of democratic liberalization (likened here to free market). These gangs, because of their strength and products, have powers that can change the whole eco-political market (just as the impediments to free market could) to their advantage at the cost of all other market players and stakeholders.

Democracy is expected to be participatory, where every person in the democratic space is free to join or to leave a party and to hold his or her opinions and ideas as long as they do not infringe on the rights of others. Recall that Abraham Lincoln, in his Gettysburg Address in 1863, defined democracy succinctly as "government of the people, by the people and for the people", which typifies a pure participatory framework that seeks a congenial environment for it to nurture and thrive.

In political literature, in theory and conception, the formation of parties is mostly done along ideological lines and leaning. A political party can either be conservative, liberal, socialist, communist, or welfarist. Even within these broad segmentations are slim ideological lines of differences. It is based on this ideological frame that people decided to fuse together as a political party to provide political leadership for their people and countries based on the ideological frame and programs that will be drawn up by the parties. It is also asserted in the literature that in countries that parties are formed based on the traditional theory of ideology; the members of those parties protect their ideological bearing so jealously in order to avoid infiltration. Even when ideologically based political parties failed elections, they would remain in their parties as opposition without crossing carpet. In some cases, the opposition political parties that failed elections might form coalition with the ruling parties, which they will break once their ideologies are tainted. However, the Nigerian condition defies this ideologically based and theoretical underpinning in forming political parties.

In Nigeria, most people join politics because of the economic benefit (s) they will derive there from. Cases abound where even founders of political parties and very top hierarchical party members changed parties at the dangling of even small "carrots" to them. In Nigeria, majority of people do not join political parties because they believe in the professed ideology of that party, but because there is an economic benefit expected from the political parties. In many cases, when political parties failed in elections, some of their members would decamp to the winning party. One may ask why decamp? The probable inducing factor is expected economic benefits as the winning party will be controlling the nation's treasury. Those that decamped may be said to have lacked ideological attachment to their former political parties.

The term *ideology* is derived from the Greek word *eidos*, meaning what is seen or imagined, a mental image

or idea. The term *ideology* is coined from the French word *ideologue*, and was used for the first time by a French philosopher, Antoine Destutt de Tracy in 1795 to denote the general “science of ideas aimed at clarifying and improving the public mind about socio-economic and political life (Udokang and Awofeso, 2000; Scuton, 1983). The Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (2005) defines ideology as visionary theorizing; a systematic body of concepts especially about human life or culture; and as a manner or the content of thinking characteristic of an individual, group, or culture. It further defines ideology as the integrated assertions, theories and aims that constitute a sociopolitical program. Aiken (1956) defined ideology as a system of ideas concerning social and political phenomena held by an individual or a group. Azikiwe (1976) saw ideology in three perspectives, as:

- A body of concept about human life or culture
- A manner or content of thinking characteristic of an individual or a group
- The integrated assertions, theories and aims that constitute a sociological program

On the other hand, politics, in the context of this study, is defined in the words of Appadurai (1975) as “that phenomenon which deals with the state of political society, that is, of a people organized and governed by law within a definite territory”. In a more succinct way, Udokang and Awofeso (2000) refer to politics as “a study of the state and government structures and institutions and the union of men in the society”.

A political party that aims at winning elections and subsequently leading the government and the economy of a country should, therefore, be based on sound ideology.

Paradoxically, in Nigeria, the concept of political party deviates radically and robustly from the central theoretical knowledge of people with similar ideological background and inclination coming together. In the Nigerian politics, often, the aim of people coming together is to gain access to the wealth pool of the country. Since the goal of coming together (that is, forming political parties) is not based on ideology that is pro-people, people thus see the coming together (to form a political party) as a marriage of strange bed fellows coming together to scavenge the wealth pool of the country, who can part ways once their objective of looting the wealth of the country is not attained.

THE POLITICAL GANG-SYCOPHANTIC GROUPS MODEL

We developed this model in an attempt to analyze gang and sycophantic politics in Nigeria. As illustrated in the model below, the political parties have different and various gangs and sycophantic groups that compete within

the parties to get the attention of the leaders and to manipulate issues to their favor.

For a proper articulation of the two groups in this model, the study proffers the following definitions.

- The political gangs are those groups within the parties that involve in activities like violence, rigging of elections, leading campaigns for individuals within the parties, acting as individuals’ vanguard and not the party’s vanguard.
- On the other hand, the sycophantic groups are those who involve more in intrigues, lying about others to cause confusion-official liars and those who pretend to be the advisers to the political leaders. This group assumes any responsibility for political leaders, even when such responsibilities are beyond their scope, as they have the weapons to maneuver their ways into any such situations. The sycophants are a bit more organized than the gangs, because they are those that just wait by the wings to take over from the gangs and lead the process through once elections are won. In many cases the sycophants are even not card-carrying members of the parties they are working with. In other cases they behave like consultants, having and maintaining their presence in all the parties and waiting for the one that will eventually succeed for them to clearly identify with.

The model is presented in schedules. Schedule I shows the political party in a universal set with subsets of gangs and sycophantic groups within the party. Schedule 1 indicates that there are several gangs and sycophantic groups competing for relevance even within a political party or space. For purposes of clarity and functional explanation of the model, we assume as in this case a one party model.

This model which is simplified to a one political party model can be generalized and similar conclusions will be achieved. Meaning therefore that the political party in schedule 1 can be generalized to be more than one political party and similar effect as in a one party model will be attained. So whatever conclusion we will arrive at with the one party model will be the same as if the model was expanded to include other parties.

In schedule 2, the party that wins has a particular gang/sycophantic group that encamps the leadership and will lead in influencing the decisions of the leadership: in this case not even the political party (as it had no ideological foundation nor programs that their elected leaders could adhere to), has influence any longer; hence, only the ruling leaders encamped by their ruling gang/sycophantic group captors can reach the wealth pool in schedule 3. The distribution of the wealth is done in schedule 2, where we have the ruling class and the gangs operating. The distribution of the wealth may take different forms and shapes. For instance, the gangs and sycophantic groups, to a large extent, influence the

appointment of political office holders-ministers, commissioners, advisers, etc. They also influence who gets which contract.

Characteristics of gangs and sycophantic groups in nigeria: Some characteristics are peculiar to political gangs and sycophantic groups in Nigeria. They include:

- **No ideological leaning:** The gangs and sycophantic groups in the Nigerian politics have no ideological character and leaning. They do not believe in any behavioral order or pattern except in the pursuit of money and wealth. In Nigeria, it is very common to see people who profess socialism in conservative parties and taking appointments in conservative governments and vice-versa. The political gangs and sycophantic group members are worst in the attempt to identify political actors by ideological leaning. It is very common to see the same gang/sycophantic group that sang, drummed and rooted support for a conservative political party in government, turning its support for a socialist government immediately the former is out of office. However, the Nigerian condition or situation makes the switch very easy as the parties are without any cogent operating ideology. Once the wealth pool is controlled by the ruling party, the gang/sycophantic group will even compete amongst themselves to assert themselves in order to control the government as in schedule 2 of our model, so they can share in the wealth pool in schedule 3.
- **Attachment to government in power:** The lack of ideological bearing makes the gangs and sycophantic groups to stay in wait and clap for any government in power. Their activities here include propaganda for the government, praise-singing-sometimes to a disturbing and annoying fault.
- **Flexibility:** Once any government the gangs and sycophantic groups supported vacates office, they will immediately vacate their praises, support and closeness to the leaders of that government. Their flexible character makes them change immediately to support and sing praises of the next government notwithstanding the ideological leaning. In many cases they lead the witch-hunt destruction of members of executive council of the former government they were once rooting for.
- **Sycophantic:** These gangs and sycophantic groups are very sycophantic. They have this attribute as a weapon to whip the political leaders into their whims and caprices. They use their sycophancy attribute to make sure that they scare off and drive away competition as they will make sure the leaders that they are close to do not open up to other groups or persons that they perceive may compete with them in the short, medium or long terms.
- **Blackmail and lies:** These political gangs and sycophants have blackmail and lies as major weapons

of operations. They use these weapons to destroy or maim opponents or those who stand on their way to getting to the wealth pool. They possess the machinery to rake up any form of blackmail and lies to turn the political leaders to even move against the best of their friends and accomplices.

- **Suspicion:** Another characteristic of the political gangs and sycophants is suspicion. The members are always suspicious of themselves. They do not believe in any leadership that sustains itself for a long time. When they cannot bring their leadership down, they will break out to form another gang. Their main suspicion arises from money-how much is received? Who gets what? How would the members know that their leaders are telling the truth when they were not with them to witness how much they (leaders) collected from the politicians? These questions make them to be prone to suspicion.
- **Strong capacity to convince leaders:** The power of the political gangs and sycophantic groups lies in their strong and deep capacity to convince the political leaders. In many cases, even when information they are carrying is known to be fabricated and witch-hunting the leaders may still embrace such flows from the gangs and sycophants, not minding even glaring public opinion.
- **Attractiveness:** These gangs and sycophantic groups are so attractive since they have access to blowing themselves up in the media and claiming to possess some vital qualities they indeed do not have. For gangs and sycophants that control the government of the ruling party, one must pass through them to get anything from the government. People thus see them as the way thus, their attractiveness.
- **Diabolical:** They may do some diabolical practices to cause any government in power to acknowledge their relevance. The gangs and sycophants remain very diabolical since they strongly believe that this gives them the power to control the political leaders.
- **Deceitfulness:** They are also very deceitful. They tell lies at will and exaggerate issues. This they do cajole the politicians.

Sustenance of the gangs and sycophantic groups: The belief of the political parties and leaders is that except the gangs and sycophantic groups are properly recognized and mobilized with money and other economic benefits including appointment of its members and cronies into juicy political offices where they loot to sustain their relevance to the ruling governments, they will not get elected. Because of their deceit and control of the media in many cases, the gangs and sycophantic groups will confuse and mislead naive leaders into believing that they control Nigerian voters and could always influence and manipulate elections to favor them (the leaders) if they are employed or allowed to do so. When elections are manipulated against the wishes of Nigerians, the gangs, with their control over media, will air on radios and

publish in both local and national tabloids that they made the unearned victories possible. Since the truth is difficult and costly to be told in Nigeria, the gangs and sycophantic groups will always have their way, as any opposition to their claims may lead to kidnapping or killing of the opposing person (s) or his (their) very-near relations. Among the principal sustenance outlets by the gangs and sycophantic groups are:

Claiming the election mandate of the people: It is very common in Nigeria to notice that immediately after electoral victory, in rare areas that elections were not manipulated, electorates who voted for these governments in many cases are totally denied access to the government they willingly gave their mandates to. This process is mostly manipulated by the gangs and sycophantic groups who have bought their ways into the security system of the political leaders to crowd out honest followers of the government. The gangs and sycophantic groups, therefore, through deceit perfected by their illegal manipulations take the glory of electing their leaders from the people that actually did it.

Derived economic power: Since most political and government appointments and democratic dividends go to these gangs and sycophantic groups, according to how strong they were during elections in rigging and how strong they are in their demand, they become and remain economically strong to sustain their control of the political environment until that government is gone and a new one is put in place.

The likely consequences of gangsterism and sycophancy in the nigerian politics: There is the likelihood that the flourishing of political gangs and sycophantic groups in the Nigerian political system will have some consequences. The likely consequences include:

- **Eventual emergence of gangs that may be out of control:** Contemporary and verifiable experience in Nigeria indicates that once the gangs and sycophantic groups keep multiplying, it will lead to a situation where they will be at war with each other. More so, as the gangs and sycophantic groups grow, mushrooms groups are formed within them still to campaign for presidential and other political aspirants. This often times leads to struggles for relevance and sometimes results in outright physical confrontations. This state of affairs may lead to serious conflagration that may bring about security breaches.
- **Complete annihilation of party ideology:** When the gangs and sycophantic groups are allowed to enjoy

the free conquest of the political system, they may eventually annihilate the parties. It will then be meaningless to actively join a political party, as whatever one desires from government can be easily got from joining a powerful political gang or sycophantic group that controls the government and that can make one have access to the wealth pool easier and faster.

- **Non-implementation of party programmes by leaders:** Increased gangsterism will lead to that situation where political leaders who do not respect their parties or bear any allegiance to the parties' programmes may be voted into office, thus leading to the collapse of parties and the programmes they promised the electorates, who were convinced by such programs to give their mandates to these political leaders in the first instance.
- **Conflict arising from struggle to move to box 2:** Even among the gangs and sycophantic groups, there remain, rising but bottled-up tensions, conflict and struggle to move to schedule 2 of our model (see Model 1). The conflict arising therefrom can cause very serious debilitating effects on the party and governance.
- **Leaders' mix of administrative and political governance:** In a situation where administrative political leaders are also leaders of the party, there is bound to be serious conflict of interest created by the leaders. Here, they have to mix party administration and governance. Since these leaders have been encompassed by the gangs and sycophantic groups, there is the probability for the leaders to hand over the decision making and implementation machinery of the party to these gangs and sycophantic groups: most of whom are not committed or members of the party. Here, policies will be made that have no bearing to the goals and objectives of the party, as they try to inject fresh and unconformable ideas. Also the mixture of governance and party administration, causes serious and cumbersome task to the leaders who have problems in mixing both. This leads to a situation where the political leaders are hijacked by the gangs.
- **Multiplicity of groups and sycophantic groups:** Since it is the easiest and surest model to access the wealth pool of the nation, these groups will eventually multiply-creating serious tendency for conflict.

How to abate gang and sycophantic politics in nigeria:
To abate gang and sycophantic politics in Nigeria, we proffer the following measures.

Encourage more democratic institutions: There is need for the government to encourage the establishment,

nurturing and sustenance of democratic institutions in Nigeria based on ideology. Government should encourage Human Rights groups, political activists, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs), who have ideological background to be established and facilitated to be sustainable in order to take roots. They could even be encouraged to establish local, state or regionally based parties and institutions that educate the people on democratic principles.

Electoral reforms: Nigeria needs a full overhaul of her electoral system. The implementation of the recently approved electoral reform law should be undertaken with zeal by all stakeholders to help engender sound democratic culture.

Pressure on political leaders: Pressure should be mounted on the political leaders by the electoral commission to give less prominence to Gangs. Electoral commission should enlighten and persuade political leaders to see the need and reason to recognize political parties as superior to gangs and sycophantic groups. Any group that would want to lend support to the government should do that under a party and not a standalone organization that would latter seek to control the party.

Political parties programs: Since the political leaders emerged through the political parties, they should be encouraged, even by the electoral commission, to adopt their party programmes, which are based on the ideological bent of such parties, if at all they were founded with an ideology, as approved by the electoral body. Programmes of political leaders should not be different from that of the party in order to encourage party supremacy at all levels.

CONCLUSION

As this study derived its framework from an economic theory based on the market model of demand and supply, the concept of freeing political parties from the hamstrings of gangs and sycophantic groups (likened here to unions, cartels, Oligopolies, monopolies, etc.), is the only foreseen hope towards building within the nation viable and credible institutions of democracy.

The coherent argument in its capsule remains that, if like in any market economy, the forces of influence and influence peddling is reduced (much as these acts as self-serving or interest protectionist tools), the market atmosphere will become liberalized and the agents of free and unhindered participation will naturally stimulate the environment to a state of self-determination. Secondly, if as in the case of demand and supply, the system discourages the patronage of gangs and sycophantic groups, its supply value will diminish and party supremacy will be re-established, as in the first republic, at which end, political parties in the nation will be streamlined along the lines of ideology and the congregation of like-minds. When political parties are leveraged with the right ideologies and increased intellectual content are allowed to sift in to the currents of its diverse structuring, the super structure will evolve naturally as a product of equitable participation of the individual, where rights and privileges will be shared not on might and power gangs of sycophants, but on merits and eligibility.

To this end, the hijack, influence and patronizing role of the gangs and sycophants must equally be discouraged, which latent effect will downplay the power and influence of money politics in the nation. But for this to be properly achieved, emphasis must be given to the ventilation of political parties to allow for party internal democracy.

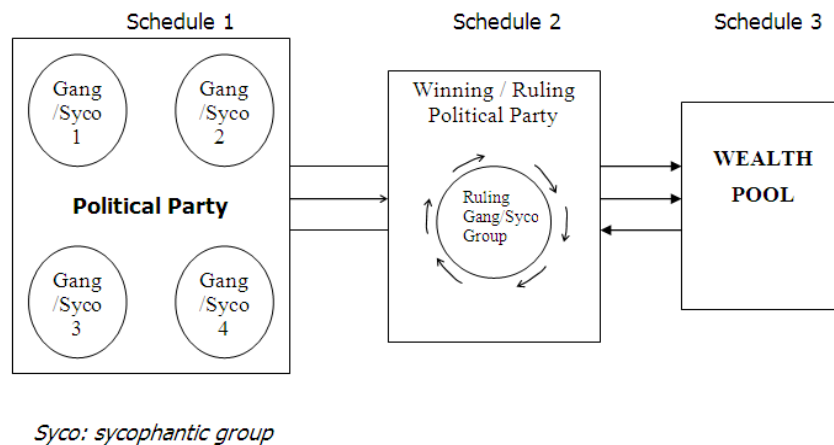


Fig. 1: Political gang-sycophantic groups model

If sycophancy and gangsterism is meaningfully reduced, if not eradicated, in Nigerian politics, the following will likely happen.

- There will be a drastic reduction in the number of scavengers that scramble to loot from wealth pool in Fig. 1.
- Elected political office-holders will have less pressure to loot the wealth of the nation to share to the sycophants and gangs.
- Ideology will take over the whole gambit of governance in the country; consequently, policies will be ideology-based rather than wealth-induced.
- Consequently, boxes 1 and 2 in Fig. 1 will disappear, thus giving the elected political officers the needed atmosphere to serve better the people that elected them.

Amid all these measures for the needed restructuring of partisan politics to reflect the true institutions of democracy in the country, the media as the vanguard and watchdog in our society must reevaluate its role and in the circumstance, elect to be independent and astutely critical in its holistic delivery of the needs and demands of democracy.

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