

Research Article

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Patronage politics and state creation in Nigeria

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Abstract: Nigerians have been engaged in continuous debates and agitations for the creation of new states. Advocates contend that such an initiative has the potential to enhance governance and foster development at the sub-national level. Even when the state creation exercise appears to have failed to address the underlying issues of national and subnational challenges, the agitations remains endless. This paper therefore explores the political elites' rationale for state creation in Nigeria. The paper advanced neopatrimonialism as a theoretical lens to navigate the nature of Nigerian states that make them vulnerable to being used as prebends by the political elites in Nigeria. The paper theorized the existence of formal, codified rules

or routine design but the state actors deviate from the general codified laws to personal and informal practices as an instrument of state reengineering. The paper utilized narrative review as a methodological approach to draw data from arrays of extensive secondary datasets. The paper established a very strong positive relationship between state creation and patronage politics in Nigeria because the neo-patrimonial state orients the political elites to see public offices or created states as prebends to be appropriated for private gains. The paper, therefore, recommends that the government should not embark on the creation of states except where it's extremely vital for socio-cultural or regional balancing.

Keywords: Clientelism, Corruption, Patronage politics, State creation, Neopatrimonialism

1. INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of patronage politics is a recurring theme in literature, transcending political systems across the spectrum of development – be it in developed, undeveloped, or developing nations. This phenomenon is not exclusive to Nigeria's political landscape; rather, it is a global phenomenon (Omobowale & Olarenwaju, 2007; Kenny, 2015; O'Dwyer, 2006). It involves the act of providing loyalists or supporters with the benefits of public office, serving as an incentive for the recipient to continue working in the interest of the patron. The spoils system is used for denoting political patronage derived from the phrase of New York Senator William L. Marcy (1832) "to the victor belong the spoils of the enemy" cited in Durant and Weintraub (2014: 62) It entails the utilization of public resources for private or political gain. Erdmann and Engel (2006), and Chandra (2004) have characterized the concept as elevated political interactions aimed at establishing and sustaining elite cohesion essential for the formation, legitimization, and consolidation of government.

Viewed through the lens of indigenous or traditional notions of good governance, the concept of patronage politics does not adhere to the universal ideals of impartiality, impersonality, or neutrality. Instead, it is shaped and defined within the intricate web of socio-economic and political reciprocal exchanges. These exchanges involve patrons, who possess wealth and status, and clients, who are less resourceful and heavily rely on patrons to gain access to fundamental life necessities. In this context the understanding of good governance, characterized by effective governance and accountability, does not rely on a universal acceptance of the legitimacy of power, processes, and democratic outcomes. Instead, it hinges on whether those in positions of political power allocate public resources to their kin, constituency, region, friends, other sub-ethnic groups associated with the political patron, and the less resourceful (Scott, 1977: 31; Cox & McCubbins, 1986).

Patronage politics is justified through both moral and liberal-functional democratic perspectives. The moral justification aims to attain a sense of restorative justice for years of neglect and marginalization. Meanwhile, the liberal-functional democratic justification is based on strategic distribution to promote growth in a specific sector of the economy. According to Croucamp and Malan (2018), the 1996 national constitution of the Republic of South Africa provided legal authorization for a distributive system centered on patronage deployment. This system is framed within the context of restorative justice, aiming to address the statutory injustices perpetrated by the apartheid regime against the vast majority of citizens. The moral or affirmative interpretation of patronage politics highlights the survival strategy of minorities, especially in a hostile and discriminatory political climate. In this context, minorities, such as the non-white alienated minority in Australia, may choose to cast their votes for politicians who pledge to safeguard their existential interests (Zappala, 1998, cited in Omobowale & Olarenwaju, 2007). Moreover, the affirmative perspective of patronage politics stimulates the political awareness of the populace through the intricate socio-economic and political exchanges between the political elites and the majority of citizens (Lazar, 2004; cited in Omobowale & Olarenwaju, 2007).

Nevertheless, a distributive system within a regime or state, based on moral justification, is likely to impede the long-term growth of the state's productive activities. This could result in de-industrialization, accompanied by the deployment of cadres without due consideration for competencies and merits (Mbeki, 2005). This constrains the advancement and solidification of democratic principles, fostering the personalization of power. Consequently, it undermines the core of checks and balances in a democracy by capturing crucial actors within state institutions, particularly the bureaucracy. This, in turn, leads to regime corruption and the emergence of authoritarianism, given the absence of diverse perspectives in statecraft (Croucamp & Malan, 2018).

Patronage politics has significantly fueled intense and fierce competition for political power, as the state is perceived as a primary source of rewards to be distributed for regime legitimization (Joseph, 1998). Given the state's pervasive intervention in various aspects of life, those who wield influence over its institutions and key sectors reap substantial benefits. As described by Medard (1982:167), the state transforms into a coveted resource that everyone eagerly seeks to exploit. Consequently, control over the state becomes the ultimate goal for major players, ensuring unbounded and uninterrupted access to public resources to sustain patronage networks. In line with Ake's perspective (1981), as cited by Durant and Weintraub (2013: 62), patronage politics has contaminated the political landscape. Ake's assertion captures the prevailing situation, where the allure of political power is so compelling that extreme measures are often taken to secure and retain it. This intense focus on the pursuit of political power tends to divert energy away from economically productive endeavors. There is a habitual inclination to seek political resolutions for almost every problem. As Ake points out, the Nigerian state's pervasive intervention extends to nearly every aspect, asserting ownership over various resources, status, and wealth. Consequently, a desperate and fierce struggle ensues to gain control of state power, as this control implies virtual omnipotence and ownership of everything. In this scenario, politics transforms into a form of warfare, viewed as a matter of life and death.

This Paper therefore examines the impact of patronage politics on state creation in Nigeria within the ferment of neo-patrimonial nature of the Nigerian state. The study started with the introduction. The paper conceptualized

and theorized patronage politics and state creation and also reviews literature on them. The research thereafter examines the heart of the study which is state creation and patronage politics in Nigeria. The last section highlights the concluding thought.

2. CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE

2.1. Conceptualisation and theorisation of patronage politics and state creation

Patronage politics involves a reciprocal exchange of valuable resources between the ruling elites and the governed. The ruling political elites take on the role of patrons, while the electorate with their votes seen as objects of value, are considered clients. These political clients can be seen as supporters of the regime, enjoying privileges like access to state loans, tax waivers, and other preferential contracts provided by the political patrons. It encompasses the allocation of rewards such as contracts, subsidies, development projects, appointments, jobs, and prestige by a patron to their clients. However, in societies marked by high levels of poverty, as seen in Nigeria, the primary concern for the vast majority of citizens becomes daily survival. In such circumstances, valued resources, often in the form of basic necessities like food, can prove sufficient to attract a large number of clients to a political patron.

For clarity, it is imperative to delineate the distinctions between clientelism and patronage within this research. Clientelism entails the politically driven dispensation of favors primarily to individuals, resulting in individual benefits. Patrons in clientelism may not necessarily be officeholders and often rely on private resources or party funds. On the other hand, patronage involves the politically motivated distribution of favors predominantly to groups, typically based on ethnic or sub-ethnic affiliations. In patronage, patrons must hold office or have access to public resources. The key distinction lies in the nature of the relationship between the patron and the targeted client; individual beneficiaries characterize clientelism, whereas patronage involves groups as the recipients of favors (Erdmann & Engel 2006).

Clientelism and patronage encompass several key elements, as outlined by Erdman and Engel (2007), including dyadic relationship, contingency, hierarchy, iteration, and volition:

- **Dyadic Relationship:** This entails face-to-face interactions between the patron and the client. It may also involve a chain of brokerage exchanges where a master patron engages with clients through an intermediary.
- **Contingency:** Patron-client exchanges are underpinned by the expectation of reciprocal benefits, and there are always conditions attached to the relationship.
- **Hierarchy:** Clientelism or patronage involves a complex exchange between individuals of disparate status, with patrons and clients forming a vertical relationship. Patrons typically hold higher socio-economic and political positions, representing the apex of society, while clients, positioned at the bottom, are less resourceful and occupy lower societal strata.
- **Iteration:** The relationship is characterized by continuity and an expectation of future interactions. It involves a promised value that is anticipated to be realized in the future, necessitating ongoing interactions to fulfill the parties' agreement.
- **Volition:** The interaction is voluntary, and each party has the freedom to exit the relationship if dissatisfied.

2.2. State creation

This represents a form of political restructuring aimed at decentralizing the entire geo-national political structure by fragmenting the existing geo-sub-national governmental framework, thereby establishing new sub-national governments or additional states. Nigeria's political landscape has undergone several transformations: from two regions in 1914 to three regions in 1946, four regions in 1963, 12 states in 1967, 19 states in 1976, 21 states in 1987, 30 states in 1991, and eventually evolving into a federation of 36 states and a federal capital territory in 1996. The country is perceived as being deeply divided along significant cleavages and groups (Osaghae, 2007). The federal structure of Nigeria has been implicated in governance challenges, leading to numerous calls for political restructuring, often involving the creation of new states. The various endeavors by different regimes to bifurcate

and fragment states have been linked to the elite's politics of appeasement and legitimization (Adetoye, 2016). The configuration of the Nigerian federation has been criticized for its excessive concentration at the center.

Compounding this centralization is the stance of administrative and financial subordination, subjecting the survival, existence, and sustainability of the component units to the whims of the central authority. This distorted federal structure, coupled with patronage politics where each region awaits its turn to partake in the national resources, serves as a catalyst for conflicts and disunity in a nation characterized by deep-seated divisions and numerous identities. Groups unable to secure opportunities and benefits from the central authority, especially in acquiring political power within an environment dominated by the zero-sum game (Cheeseman et al., 2020), may experience frustration, leading some to resort to violence as a means of negotiating existence within a flawed structure built on marginalization.

The perceived marginalization of a specific segment within a state has fueled widespread support for the demand to reconfigure or restructure the federation, garnering significant backing across various component units. One aspect of this restructuring movement involves fervent calls and protests for state creation, intending to introduce a degree of decentralization to the existing system. It is crucial to highlight past initiatives aimed at reshaping the federation, encompassing constitutional conferences, amendments, the establishment of states and local governments, forceful changes in regime, and even a civil war. Despite these endeavors, the persistent clamor for state creation or a reconfiguration of the federal structure in Nigeria has yet to be effectively addressed.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Theory of Neo-Patrimonialism

This is the mix of patrimonial and formal or legal-rational rules as the instrument of statecraft. There is the existence of formal, codified rules or routine design but with sharp deviation from the general codified laws to personal and informal design as an instrument of state reengineering (Hansen, 2003; Szeftel, 2000a; 2000b). Neo-patrimonialism according to Osumah (2013) is an institutionalised mixture of formal, legal-rational rules and informal or personalised rulership. Personal preferences and interests of the ruling political elites disable the formal institutional structure of governance, it overshadows the basic elements of good governance such as accountability, transparency, the universal enlightened conception of "governing well", formal engagement with citizens, efficiency, respect for state institutions and laws, and equal access to socio-economic and political opportunities in the society (Erdmann & Engel, 2006; Osaghae, 2007).

Neo-Patrimonialism is characterized by the concentration of power in a single individual who may only delegate the most trivial or expressive functions. There is the existence of patronage networks or systematic clientelism for regime legitimisation. These patronage networks are sustained with state resources such as appointments, contracts, employment, and projects. The patrimonial state orients the political elites to see public offices as prebends or benefits to be given as handouts to clients to sustain and secure continuous loyalty and support (Hansen, 2003; Osumah, 2013; Erdmann & Engel, 2007). According to Osumah, (2013), systematic clientelism or Patronage politics is one of the major integral elements of neo-patrimonialism.

The uses of the formal institutions are put by the political elites to be dispensed as prebends to serve personal interests, preferences, and sentiments of a few within the patronage networks are not parallel to the creation of states in Nigeria. It is worrisome that despite the present state's un-viability and poor performance posture, state creation is still being touted as a veritable instrument for development while the agitations for more states remain endless.

4. Literature survey

4.1. Patronage politics styles

Bearfield (2009: 68) outlines four distinct patronage styles. The utilization of these styles is contingent upon "a patron's use of a given style is situational, determined by the individual needs or goals." As per Bearfield (2009), any of these styles is not exclusive to a specific administration or patron; they are deployed based on the demands of a particular situation. The patronage styles identified are organizational patronage, democratic patronage, tactical patronage, and reform patronage.

Organizational Patronage Politics Style: This style involves the dispensation of partisan rewards with the aim of securing electoral gains. Employed to organize, fortify, and sustain a patron's political machinery during any organized elections, this style is typically deployed by an incumbent or patron throughout the electoral cycle. Its primary purpose is to cultivate a pool of loyalties and supporters, contributing to electoral victory.

The Tactical Patronage Politics Style: This particular approach to patronage politics is employed to bridge discernible cleavages and divisions within the political landscape. It serves the purpose of garnering support for specific policies during the governance tenure of a patron, whether elected or appointed to public office. Political cleavages can manifest as geographical, economic, social, racial, ethnic, or related to political party affiliations. In a federated nation, tactical patronage is utilized to address geographic diversities by employing bureaucratic, administrative, and appointive posts to manage cleavages within the country. Additionally, this style is adept at mobilizing support for particular policies, ideas, or programs, leading the patron to heavily incentivize House leadership to align with their policy preferences (Bearfield, 2009: 70).

The Democratic Patronage Politics Style: This style of patronage is employed to ensure a fair distribution or equal access to socio-economic and political opportunities within a country. Key principles such as power rotation and affirmative actions are influential forces in a political environment shaped by the tenets of the democratic patronage style.

The Reform Patronage Politics Style: This practice involves campaign reformists enlisting individuals or like-minded clients to form a government, aiming to realize the objectives of reform agendas, programs, and policies. However, this approach introduces paradoxes in reform campaigns and the execution of reformist programs. The paradox arises when those campaigning against a patronage-entrenched system find themselves engaging in similar practices to replace the corrupt political regime they opposed initially (Bearfield, 2009: 68). The imperative to reward loyalties often leads reformers back to conventional practices, creating yet another paradox within reformist patronage.

4.2. Categories of political patrons in Nigerian politics

In the realm of Nigerian politics, various classifications of political patrons, commonly referred to as political godfathers according to Albert (2005), play pivotal roles. These patrons actively engage in the dynamics of "boss politics," as articulated by Cheeseman et al. (2020:10), connecting political clients to the "streams of revenue and services emanating from the political centre" (Cheeseman, 2016: 183).

One notable category comprises socio-cultural and ethnic associations. These groups assume the authority of representation and wield influence in determining the individuals who represent them in government. Examples of such groups include the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), claiming representation of the views and interests of the North; the Afenifere group, primarily focused on promoting the interests of the Yoruba; and the Ohaneze group, a socio-cultural body representing the perspectives of the South East in Nigeria. Currently, their authority in

deciding government representation appears to be diminishing, evident in the defeat of many of their candidates in electoral contests by other patron categories in Nigeria.

The second category of patrons comprises "ethnic father figures," distinguished leaders in their regions or ethnic groups. Many of them have previously held public positions and earned commendation for their credible performance. These leaders, such as the late Chief Bola Ige in the Yoruba South-West Nigeria and Edwin Clark, a revered figure in Ijaw politics and the south-south states, possess significant grassroots appeal in Nigeria. Their influence places them in a formidable position to sway the outcomes of electoral contests in their domains.

The third category involves wealthy Nigerians, individuals of great affluence and influence with direct access to the country's president, often considered the "master patron." Viewing those vying for positions as clients, these patrons invest substantial capital, anticipating significant returns in the future. They employ both conventional and unconventional strategies to secure electoral victories for their clients. The dynamic of this relationship is governed by the principal-agent perspective (Mamogale, 2015: 3) and the Godfather-godson model (Ebohon, N.D). In this context, the principal or patron, a wealthy and influential politician, holds sway, while the agent or client, an elected or appointed public official, is tasked with formulating and implementing the "policy preferences of the principal." The patron, in turn, enjoys unrestrained access to state structures and resources for self-reproduction (Ebohon, N.D). Deviation from this established rule of political exchange may result in what Ebohon (N.D: 3) aptly describes as a brazen assault on the state and its people, characterized by primitive "destruction of structures of government and properties," along with the abduction and arrest of a sitting governor who fails to meet financial obligations to his godfather. An illustrative example is Chief Uba of Anambra state, who supported Senator Chris Ngige to win the 2003 governorship election in the state.

The fourth category of political patrons in Nigeria includes those who exclusively utilize their political machinery to support affluent clients. These patrons are viewed as political entrepreneurs adept at navigating the intricacies of winning elections in specific areas. Proficient in identifying political actors capable of securing victories in each polling unit within a delineated electoral region, these patrons require clients to fund the electioneering process while they deliver the crucial votes. This category of political patrons refrains from investing their own money and heavily relies on the financial resources of the political clients seeking public office.

The fifth category comprises influential individuals who offer their political expertise to support the electoral fortunes of clients, whether rich or less affluent. An illustrative example is the late Dr. Sola Saraki of Kwara State, who significantly supported candidates from both wealthy and less resourceful backgrounds, contributing to their electoral victories in the state.

The sixth category encompasses the master patrons, occupying the highest seats of power in a country or sub-national government. These patrons, who can be either the president of a country or a governor of a sub-national government, wield substantial influence and possess unrestrained access to public resources. Their interactions with clients occur through a brokerage network facilitated by political intermediaries.

4.3. Categories of political clients

Within the intricate political dynamics between political patrons and their clients, three distinct categories of clients emerge and warrant exploration. The first category comprises the core agents, who are the primary clients seeking elective or appointive positions. The second category encompasses the "foot soldiers" tasked with actualizing the transactional or reciprocal political exchanges between the political patron and the clients. The third category involves the broader political clients, including the constituency, ethnic group, and social identity associated with either the patron or the clients. The collective perception within this category is grounded in the notion that "if one of us is involved, it will be more beneficial for us than if another, who is not of our kin and may not have our interests at heart... at least, much more likely than if others are involved who will not care about us but their kin" (Erdmann & Engel, 2006: 21). According to Ikelegbe (2008), political clients have, at times, constituted themselves as instruments of violence, enjoying protection against prosecution through the support of their patrons.

Several systemic factors contribute to the prevalence of patronage politics in Nigeria. These include the absence or presence of weak formal government institutions failing to fulfill their statutory responsibilities to citizens, inadequate governance mechanisms ensuring accountability, checks, and the minimization of patronage politics. Additionally, poor redistributive policies, insecurity, poverty, corruption, and social isolation are factors that foster the prevalence of patron-client politics (Mwenda & Tangri, 2005; Moti, 2019). Moreover, Albert (2005: 91) identifies a profit-motivated political patron, a pliable political process serving the interests of a few in society, a weak civil society and electoral system, some do-or-die office seekers, and a media willing to serve the interests of the highest bidder as contributing factors to the flourishing of patronage politics.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OR METHODS

There is an array of qualitative research methodologies available to social scientists depending on the focus of the research. They include systematic analysis, content analysis, meta-analysis and narrative review (Chukwuere, 2023). In the context of this study, narrative review approach is adopted. Narrative reviews are flexible, evidence-based summaries on a particular topic (Sukhera, 2022; Chukwuere, 2023). It is often deployed in a research that requires synthesis of evidence that may be broad or complex but requires an in-depth and nuanced description and interpretation (Greenhalgh, Thorne and Malterud, 2018). Given that its greatest strength lies in the synthesis and thematization of broad-based literature on a particular subject matter, narrative review often aligns with the interpretivist paradigm that advocates for the subjective interpretation of realities (Sukhera, 2022).

Therefore, the narrative review approach is crucial in this paper based on the following reasons. Patronage politics and state creation is a burning issue in the Nigerian socio-political context, often responsible for the various agitations from below that have rocked the foundation of Nigeria's continued existence as a sovereign nation since 1960. As such, there are litany of scholarly works on the subject, with eclectic perspectives and deductions. Thus, employing narrative review will help synthesize these views, identify gaps and condense the current realities of the subject matter.

Furthermore, as a burning issue, writers and non-writers explain patronage politics and state creation in Nigeria from their individual world views shaped by historical, experiential and socio-political dynamics. Employing narrative review helps to establish the subjective contexts and perspectives existing in the literature.

6. STATE CREATION AND PATRONAGE POLITICS IN NIGERIA

According to Idahosa and Otoghile (1998), the idea of state creation is meant to bring governance closer to the people, guarantee representative seats at the national level of government and improve the socio-economic lives of Nigerian citizens. Also, Ota, Ecoma and Wambu, (2020), posited that the creation of States in Nigeria was anchored, ostensibly, on the need to extend governance closer to the people and to allay the age-long fears of some ethnic groups over the over-bearing influence of their ethnically more populous neighbours. According to Eze, Elimian, and Chinwuba (2015: 113), "State creation is the struggle of a people for uninhibited access to political power, opportunities to contribute to the issues of governance and equitable distribution of national wealth". Adejuyibe (1980: 199-202), asserts that "State creation is an exercise to engender development and check regional economic disparities as well as ensure equality in both political participation and the sharing of federal government resources" (Adejuyibe, 1980: 199-202). It is in line with this thought that Soludo (2012) affirmed that the essence of state governments and governance is to provide the enabling environment for its citizenry to strive towards the attainment of life's basic goals to enhance their well-being. The masses believe that the creation of more states will be the solution to all their economic problems and also an opportunity to have their share of the national cake (Alapiki, 2005). Rothberg contends that nation-states exist to offer a decentralized approach to delivering political (public) goods to individuals residing within specified parameters. Ojo and Adebayo (2008) argue that achieving an equitable spatial spread of economic development can be approached in two ways. The first involves the creation of more states and local government areas, while the second entails effective engagement in physical

(spatial) planning, also known as urban and regional planning. State creation often arises from agitations rooted in issues like marginalization, social inequality, and a perceived absence of government and governance presence.

Several federalism scholars have proposed various factors contributing to the rationale for state creation. These factors include: (a) the necessity to minimize conflicts between states and within states, (b) the pursuit of unity in the country, (c) the imperative for government to be in closer proximity to the people, and (d) the desire to preserve distinctive cultural characteristics and promote economic development (Ojo & Adebayo, 2008; Adejuyigbe, 1979).

However noble the intentions for state creation are, this paper revealed that State creation exercises have not largely improved the development of infrastructure and human development in Nigeria and are benefited mostly by the political elites because it seems the essence is for receiving a monthly allocation from the federal government for personal gains pushed under the guise of developmental purposes. In other words, the idea of state creation is driven by the elites for patronage interest due to the prebendal nature of running the affairs of the State by the actors. Governance and government in Nigeria exhibit a notable disconnect from the populace across all levels of the federation. Despite the restoration of civilian rule in 1999, there has been minimal improvement in fostering good governance in the country. The inability to cultivate transparent and accountable sub-national governments as drivers of local development stems from weak institutional capacity and a lack of political will. Interestingly, even though many states seem economically challenged, calls for the creation of more states persist (Adams, 2016).

Eteng (1998: 58) contextualizes his analysis of "state creation in a political economy framework," asserting that a class-based examination of ethnic and communal politics in Nigeria provides a comprehensive understanding of this enduring national question. The challenge of state creation in Nigeria emanates from the broader 'national question,' which involves the utilization of ethnic, religious, and communal bases for political and economic competition, regime legitimization, and resource allocation contests within the country. In this process, the elite manipulates regional, state, and local government apparatus for both class and communal competition, often prioritizing personal gain (Adetoye, 2016). Suberu (1999: 277) points out that "development is inevitable because Nigeria is an ethnically plural society, and due to the relative underdevelopment of socioeconomic processes and identities, public competition for state resources occurs predominantly among ethnically defined constituencies." Consequently, ethnicity, along with associated primordial factors like communalism, religion, and regionalism, emerges as the primary organizing principles for conceptualizing, articulating, protecting, or promoting collective distributive interests in Nigeria amongst political elites (Suberu, 1999: 277).

In view with the aforementioned, this paper established a very strong relationship between state creation and patronage politics in Nigeria. This is in line with Osumah (2013) who argued that political patronage networks in Nigeria are usually sustained with state resources such as appointments, contracts, employment, and projects. To him, the spoilt system where political appointments, award of contracts, employment, and projects meant for the development of the state are usually diverted and given as a reward for political loyalty and patronage. Hansen (2003) supported this view with his observation that the neo-patrimonial state orients the political elites to see public offices as prebends or benefits to be given as handouts to clients to sustain and secure continuous loyalty and support. It is a practice of rewarding loyalists or supporters with the spoils of public office as an incentive to the client to keep working for the interest of the patron to the detriment of the state's socio-economic development. According to Joseph (1998), the neo-patrimonialism or patronage politics has contributed largely to the vicious, fierce contestation of political power and by extension the constant agitation of state creation because the state is seen as major prebends to be dispensed for regime legitimization. Corroborating this view, Medard, (1982: 167) asserts that the state is over blotted and it intervenes in every aspect of life which majorly benefits those who control and manage its institutions and critical sectors, thus "the state then becomes a pie that everyone greedily wants to eat".

The table below is a testament to the poor orientation of the political elites of what a state is to them as an instrument to be appropriated for private gains. The corruption cases are just for one sector of government in Nigeria.

Table 1: Corruption in Educational Sector in Nigeria

Date	Cases	Actors	Institutions	Amount involved	Outcomes
2003-2011	Misappropriation of funds	Alhaji Danjuma Goje Former Governor of Gombe State; Alhaji Aliyu Abadone, Former Chair, SUBEB Gombe	Gombe state	N1,661,451,371,64	Stalled
2012	MDG funds meant to build permanent structures and modernize schools to educate Fulani herdsmen were mismanaged and stolen	Government officials	Office of the Senior Special Adviser to the President on Millennium Development Goals (OOSAP-MDGs) and National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE)	N950m	In 2011, the commission's board set up an audit team to investigate how the commission spent the N950m MDG funds it got between 2006 and 2009. The report showed that a large chunk of the money was misappropriated; A committee set up by the Federal Ministry of Education, with a 198-page report, signed by A.C. Njoku, also indicted the NCNE and other agencies of large-scale misappropriation of MDG funds
2014		Dr Simon Imnekeme, (Former Secretary to the Edo State Government) Joseph Emoabino, David Igbinoba and Aghator Efe (SUBEB Official)	Edo state universal basic education board	N133 million	Remanded in prison custody
2015	Misappropriation of University Funds, Mishandling Unpaid Funds	Prof. Adebisi Gregory FMVC Daramola. Ayodeji Oresegun (Bursar)	The Federal University of Technology Akure, (FUTA)	N156 million	Stalled
2016	Mismanagement of Intervention Fund	Prof. Omole Bamitale Former Vice-Chancellor	ObafemiAwolowo University	N3.5 billion	Stalled
2016	Diversion of funds	Anthony Elujoba, Former Vice-Chancellor, Adefonke Akeroditu	ObafemiAwolowo University	N1.4 billion	Stalled
2016	Misappropriation of university funds	Prof. Olusota Oyewole, Adeseye Ogunlewe, Pro-Chancellor, Moses Ilesanmi, Bursar	Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB)	N800 million	Stalled
2016	Conspiracy and Money Laundry	Gambo Lawal T. State and Kasimu Mohammed (Official of Zamfara State Universal Basic Education Board)	Zamfara State Universal Basic Education Board	N74 million	Convicted
2016	Inflation of contracts	Mr Stephen Alao former Chairman (SUBEB), Mr Adams	Edo State Universal Basic Education	N1.5 billion	Ongoing

		Osabuohien (Director of Finance)	Board		
2013 to 2017	Corruption and Money Laundering	Alhaji Murtala Adamu Jangebe (Chairman, Zamfara State Universal Basic Education Board)	Zamfara State Universal Basic Education Board	N1billion	Charges Equated
2017	Contract Scam, Ghost Workers, and Illegal Deductions of Workers' Salaries	Dr. Aisosa Amadasun Adama Osabuohien, Prince Stephen Alao, Dove Momodu, Mallam Ali Sulayman Bayo Audu Alimagol Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education	SUBEB (Edo State University Basic Education Board)	N1.5 billion	Remanded
2018	Sales Clerk suspended over-collected exam fees claimed was swallowed by a snake	Philomena Chieshe (Sales Clerk)	Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB)	N36m (\$100,000)	Investigation ongoing
2019	Embezzlement of Public Funds	Jonah Jang (Former Governor of Plateau State)	Plateau State Universal Basic Education Board	N3billion	Ongoing
2019	Illegal Levies in Public Schools	Head Mistress	Okotie-Eboh Primary School Sapele Delta State	N800	Demoted
2019	Extortion of a contractor	Prof. Magaji Garba, Former Vice-Chancellor	Federal University of Gusau	N260 million	Stalled
2020	Allegedly impersonating the Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu, and defrauding an unsuspecting citizen	Mr Tony Aiyejina wanted by ICPC	Federal Ministry Education	N2.5m	Not yet arrested
2020-2021	Missing safe school funds	The 36 state governors were accused of missing funds by SERAP	36 state governments	\$30m	Pending

Source: Compiled by the Author (2021) from various Nigerian National Dailies.

In the above table, trillions of naira are being siphoned by individuals and government officials from the coffers of the treasury which are meant to improve the quality of education in the country. Out of the seventeen cases itemized in the table, only one conviction was recorded while others were stalled or still receiving endless investigation. The cases range from misappropriation of funds, MDG funds meant to build permanent structures and modernize schools to educate Fulani herdsmen were mismanaged and stolen, diversion of funds, contract scams, ghost workers, and illegal deductions of workers' salaries, embezzlement of public funds, illegal levies in public schools to extortion of contractors. These funds budgeted to improve the standard and quality of education in Nigeria are been embezzled by individuals contractors with the aid of civil servants to produce substandard amenities and in some cases not produced at all, and by government officials who embezzle the commonwealth for private gains leaving the nation's educational sector worse-off.

The political inclination and the thriving of neo-patrimonialism in the political system are embedded in the overbearing and domineering nature of the state. The state is seen as an "overbearing personality" holding a yam and knife and deciding on whom to share or slice a piece of the yam with. It is the quest to partake in the feast of the state resources that are igniting the elites on the constant agitation for state creation and not for development

purposes (Aihie & Okojie, 2023). Thus, the control of the state apparatuses by the ruling elites is for, and in the whole interest of their clientele network.

7. FINDINGS AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The paper established a very strong positive relationship between state creation and patronage politics in Nigeria because the neo-patrimonial state orients the political elites to see public offices or created states as prebends to be appropriated for private gains. This study indicates that the establishment of new states in Nigeria has not significantly contributed to the improvement of infrastructure and human development. Instead, it emphasizes that the primary beneficiaries are often political elites, who appear to prioritize personal gains through the receipt of monthly allocations from the federal government, masking their motives under the pretext of developmental initiatives. Essentially, the motivation behind state creation is driven by elite interests seeking patronage, given the prebendal nature of how state affairs are managed. The control of state power becomes crucial for accessing its wealth, leading to the deployment of patronage strategies to both seize power and accumulate wealth within the state.

The findings have serious implications for the clamour for more states when the existing states are not largely viable with a high level of dependence on federal allocation for survival. Apart from the viability crisis, the paper established that the primary beneficiaries of state creation exercise are often political elites, who appear to prioritize personal gains through the receipt of monthly allocations from the federal government which are often mismanaged, embezzled or looted.

8. CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper's contribution to the body of knowledge is its major recommendation that the government should not embark on the creation of states except where it's extremely vital for socio-cultural or regional balancing.

9. CONCLUSION

Conclusively, this paper examines the impact of patronage politics on state creation in Nigeria. This study established a relationship between patronage politics and state creation in Nigeria due to the neo-patrimonial nature of the state or corrupt practices of the elites of states. The findings have serious implications for the clamour for more states when the existing states are not largely viable. The paper, therefore, recommends that the government should not embark on the creation of states except where it's extremely vital for socio-cultural or regional balancing.

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