

**VOTE BUYING AND ITS IMPLICATION ON DEMOCRATIC
GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF ONDO STATE 2020
GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION.**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, JIMOH, ADEBAYO ZAKA, humbly declare that this dissertation is an outcome of my research efforts carried out in the school of Postgraduate Studies in the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies/University of Benin. I honestly wish to further state that this research work is entirely mine under the supervision and guidance of my lecturer, Dr. Abdullahi Zainawa.

Where work of other varied persons and scholars have been consulted or used, such have been duly acknowledged by means of referencing.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this dissertation titled: “**Vote Buying and its Implication on Democratic Governance: A Study of Ondo State 2020 Governorship Election**” was carried out by JIMOH, ADEBAYO ZAKA and has been read and approved for the award of Master in Elections and Party Politics for University of Benin/ National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies.

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DEDICATION

Firstly, this research work is dedicated to the Lord, the omniscience, the omnipotent, giver of life and death. Also, to the blessed memory of my late father, Alhaji Yakub Jimoh. May your gentle soul continue to rest in peace!!!! Amen. And lastly, to my adorable mother, Mrs. Olarewaju Jimoh.

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In achieving a project of this nature different people made diverse levels of contributions. It is, therefore, necessary to acknowledge all those who assisted in the making of this great work.

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ABSTRACT

Vote buying has taken the centre stage in Nigeria's political process. This is because parties and candidates have shown by their conduct during political campaigns, that good party manifestoes and integrity of candidates jostling for public offices are no longer sufficient to guarantee electoral success. In view of this, they resort to vote buying. Also, the electorates on the other hand too have obviously demonstrated cynical electoral behavior by the readiness to sell their votes to the highest bidder. This study attempted to find out vote buying and its implication on democratic governance a study of Ondo State 2020 governorship election. Consequently, the specific objectives of this study were: (a) to determine whether material gifts which politicians and their agents issue to the electorates during the October 10, 2020 gubernatorial election in Ondo State influence their voting patterns; (b) to determine the people's perception of why candidates buy votes during the October 10, 2020 gubernatorial election in Ondo State; (c) to determine the voters' perception of the impact of vote-buying on good governance during the October 10, 2020 gubernatorial election in Ondo State. The overriding significance of this study is to add up to the growing literature on vote-buying and its implication on democratic governance and to guide Electoral Management bodies on how to curb vote buying in future elections.

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used in the study, while primary data were gathered through administration of questionnaire and interviews, secondary data were sourced from books, journals, newspaper articles and observers' report of the election.

The study revealed among other things that: that vote-buying and issuance of material gifts to electorates during elections influenced the voting pattern and is rife among the downtrodden and therefore, pose a very big challenge to all stakeholders in Nigeria electoral system, particularly (INEC). If elections are to be free and fair, and work for the good of democratic governance, the issue must be addressed as soon as possible. Another finding of this study is that, the people are aware that issuance of material gifts during elections amounts to electoral corruption, has an impact on good governance and therefore, not a good practice. They are also aware that elections are a good mechanism of choosing leaders of their own choice and that this mechanism (elections) gives them the power to decide the fate of the existing government. In short, they are aware of the importance of elections in a democratic dispensation. However, the paradox is that while they are aware of the damage electoral corruption can do on democracy, they continue to accept bribes during elections as witnessed in the case study.

The study recommended among other things; political education and civic awareness by relevant institutions to enlighten the electorate on the futuristic implications of vote buying in the democratic process; enforcement of the existing electoral regulations on party finances; and enthronement of good governance and improvement of the conditions of the ordinary people this is because where poverty is reduced to the barest minimum; the electorates can then make independent electoral decisions in voting for credible politicians rather than incompetent but money spending politicians; strengthening the democratic institutions in Nigeria. There is a need for further research and academic interest in the area of vote-buying and its perceived implications on democratic governance. These, if tenaciously adhered to, will no doubt launch Nigeria into an enduring democratic process.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter attempts to give general background to the topic and further discusses the following themes: Statement of the Research Problem, Research Objectives, Research Questions, Scope of the Study, Significance of the Study, Limitations of the Study and Organization of Chapters

1.1 Background to the Study

Elections are said to be a central feature of democracy and for them to express the will of the electorates, they must be free and fair. Democrats believe that if an election is free, it means that all those entitled to vote are rightly registered and are totally free to make their choice of a candidate without imposition or inducement. In the past, there were more cases of snatching of ballot boxes and other forms of violence by politicians wanting to win elections by all means, but recently, Nigeria has seen a wave of vote-buying during elections. Although it is a fact that vote-buying is a global phenomenon, its trend in Nigeria electoral system is worrisome. Buying and selling of votes have become an accepted norm in Nigeria political arrangement which threatens its readiness to embrace democratic virtues. In this study, vote buying will be described as the use of money and material gifts to lure voters during an election.

Although vote buying has become ubiquitous in recent elections, its history predates the return to democracy in May 1999. There have been allegations of vote-buying in the electoral history of Nigeria. It was rife during the Social Democratic Party presidential primary in Jos in 1992. Indeed, vote-buying was part of the reasons adduced by General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida for annulling the 12 June 1993 presidential poll which was hailed as the freest and fairest election in Nigeria's history. Vote buying has been an integral element of money politics in

Nigeria. Recent experiences, however, show that vote buying takes place at multiple stages of the electoral cycle is being observed prominently during voter registration, the nomination period, political parties' primaries, campaigning and election day. It is more dominant on election day, shortly before or during vote casting.

Like a typical market place, the politicians, political parties, and party agents are the vote buyers while prospective voters are the sellers. The commodity on sale is the vote to be cast while the medium of exchange could be monetary and non-monetary items. The market force that determines the value or price of a vote is the level of desperation of politicians to win in a polling unit. Vying for political posts is left for rich individuals due to the huge amount of money involved in preparation for elective offices. Though the Electoral Act regulates political election finance, its application is not obtainable. The electoral body that is responsible for monitoring and regulating expenses of candidates has not been vibrant in such obligation. According to the Electoral Act,

A person who – (a) corruptly by himself or by any other person at any time after the date of an election has been announced, directly or indirectly gives or provides or pays money to or for any person for the purpose of corruptly influencing that person or any other person to vote or refrain from voting at such election, or on account of such person or any other person having voted or refrained from voting at such election, or (b) being a voter, corruptly accepts or takes money or any other inducement during any of the period stated in paragraph (a) of this section, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of ₦100,000 or 12 months imprisonment or both. (Electoral Act, 2010, Article 130)

But despite the (INEC) stance on vote-buying, the act has gradually been turning into a regular phenomenon, as reported during the 2018 governorship elections in Ekiti and Osun States and the 2019 general elections. Since the beginning of the Fourth Republic, Nigeria has witnessed an explosion in the use of the term “vote buying” in academic and media circles and became much more prominent in recent elections.

According to (Ojo, 2018), Vote buying can be described as the exchange of private material benefits for political support. It is seen as a contract, or perhaps an auction in which the voter sells his or her vote to the highest bidder. Vote buying is defined here as any form of financial, material or promissory inducement or reward by a candidate, political party, agent or supporter to influence a voter to cast his or her vote or even abstain from doing so in order to enhance the chances of a particular contestant to win an election. Thus, any practice of immediate or promised reward to a person for voting or refraining from voting in a particular way can be regarded as vote-buying. In most democracies, vote-buying is considered an electoral offence.

The ugly trend of vote-buying in Nigeria's political setting did not start in a vacuum; it is attached to some predisposing factors. According to (Davies, 2006), the inability of the political parties and the contestants to put in place comprehensive and comprehensible manifestoes for scrutiny by the voters is aiding vote-buying in Nigeria. Instead of clear-cut manifestoes that would enable the electorate to make a rational political choice, meaningless slogans, demagogic and rabble-rousing speeches are made.

During the Ondo State governorship election on October 10, 2020, it was widely reported that members of the three main political parties namely All Progressives Congress, (APC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) all engaged in vote-buying. These

parties were accused of giving N3, 000 to N10, 000 across the 3,009 polling units in the state. This researcher, who observed the election, also witnessed some cases. The impunity of vote-buying is becoming the norm in Nigeria electoral politics with political parties trying to outwit one another in the amounts paid to voters.

This dissertation examined the perceived implication of vote-buying study Ondo State 2020 governorship election with the view of bringing to focus its perceived implication on democratic governance.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The October 10, 2020, gubernatorial election in Ondo State, Nigeria is another episode of alleged massive vote-buying by the three major political parties: (APC), (PDP) and (ZLP). With the deployment of 33,783 police operatives, 7,079 Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) personnel, surveillance vehicles, sniffer dogs and many soldiers, one would expect that the election will be devoid of any form of malpractice. The zenith of it is the security operatives' deliberate allowance of a high level of open vote-buying, by these major political parties this ugly incident was witnessed by this researcher.

The level of vote-buying in this election has become a subject of public discourse generating intense debate far more than before. The reason is obvious, while the incident of vote-buying has steadily increased since 1999, the money paid per vote skyrocketed in the 2020 Ondo governorship election. In the history of Nigerian elections, the 2007 presidential election which former president Olusegun Obasanjo dubbed a do or die affair was the most fraudulent and monetized election. As monetized as the 2007 general elections were, as reported in the press,

voters were paid as high as 2000 naira. However, in the 2020 Ondo election, voters were paid as high as N10, 000 Naira representing a 500 per cent increase in the value of a vote from 2007.

The implication of the manifestation of vote-buying in the Ondo election for the Nigeria democracy is that it will undermine political legitimacy and make a mockery of Nigerian democracy. It will create a fundamental problem of unaccountability and irresponsibility as the voters will not have the moral ground to demand good governance from politicians and it will affect the credibility of the elections. This study will bring to the fore, the perceived implications of vote-buying in the development of Ondo State and how the vote-buying was perpetrated in the election. It has equally been revealed that there is a relationship between poverty and selling of votes. The focus of the dissertation would be on vote-buying (the paying of voters to vote for a party or candidate) with the aim to unravel the manifestation of vote-buying regarding voter's choices in the 2020 Ondo governorship election in Nigeria and its implications.

As a student of Elections and Party Politics, the author regards this problem an important practical phenomenon because it affects the state's overall development. Elections are a means of putting in place a state's political leadership to preside over its economic, political and social affairs. Therefore, if the process of doing so is corrupt then the quality of leadership becomes compromised and tends to manifest into underdevelopment. Otherwise, democratic legitimacy will be weak or lost and can further compromise the tents of good governance where fair elections are an integral part of the democratization process.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study is generally aimed at finding out the implication of vote-buying in the Ondo State 2020 governorship election. Specifically, the following objectives were addressed in the study:

I. To determine whether material gifts which politicians and their agents issue to the electorates during the October 10, 2020 gubernatorial election in Ondo State influence their voting patterns.

II. To determine the people's perception of why candidates buy votes during the October 10, 2020 gubernatorial election in Ondo State

III. To determine the voters' perception of the impact of vote-buying on good governance during the October 10, 2020 gubernatorial election in Ondo State

1.4 Research Questions

This research sets out to provide answers to the following pertinent questions:

I. Did material gifts offered by politicians to the electorates during the October 10, 2020 gubernatorial election in Ondo State influenced voting patterns?

II. What are people's perceptions of why candidates or their agents interested in buying votes during the October 10, 2020 gubernatorial election in Ondo State?

III. What are the voter's perceptions on the impact of vote-buying on good governance in Nigeria and Ondo state in particular?

1.5 Scope of the Study

Having made a feasibility evaluation on the research topic, and to save time, resources and to have more accurate and reliable data, the research focused on vote-buying and its perceived implication on democratic governance. It's limited to the Ondo state 2020 governorship election.

1.6 Significance of the Study

While vote-buying is not a strange phenomenon in Nigeria, it has however witnessed an unprecedented upsurge during the 2020 governorship election in Ondo State. Thus, this has not attracted attention among academics and development experts. Therefore, literatures on vote-buying on the governorship election in the October 10 election and its implications on democratic governance is scanty; hence the few reviewed concentrated more on vote-buying in Nigeria 2017 general elections and few on Ekiti 2018 governorship election.

The overriding significance of this study is to add up to the growing literature on vote-buying and its implication on democratic governance. Thus the study is, therefore, both timely and significant. A detailed analysis of this phenomenon reduced the dearth of knowledge in this area. Besides, the suggestions and recommendations proffered in this study helped improve democracy in Nigeria.

Finally, this work is useful to scholars and students who may wish to carry out further research on vote-buying in Nigeria.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, the researcher encountered limitations in the course of carrying out this study, especially in the area of administering questionnaires. The researcher would have been able to reach more people but due to the pandemic and time constrain. This may not be unconnected with the pandemic and the preventive measures put in place by the state government to manage the global virus. However, the researcher was able to carry out the research by complimenting questionnaires with online interviews.

1.8 Organization of Chapters

In any research work, organisation of chapters is conventional for the presentation of chapters as it will help for proper digestion of ideas in the study. As a result of this, this research work consists of five (5) chapters.

Chapter one gives a general introduction of the research work, highlights the statement of the research problem, research objectives, put some succinct research questions, defined the scope of the study, the significance of the study, research hypothesis and defined key concepts and finally the organization of the work.

Chapter two deals entirely with the review of related literature and the theoretical framework, here relevant scholarly works to the research were thoroughly revised.

The third chapter deals with methods adopted in carrying out this research work. Specifically, the researcher would outline the research design, sample design, measuring instrument, processing of data, validity and secondary data are the broad elements discussed in this chapter. Chapter four deals with the interpretation and analysis of the research proposition.

Finally, chapter five summarizes and concludes the research work as well as gives out relevant recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literature review is a well-integrated discussion and critical evaluation of different scholarly viewpoints on a given research problem as found in the previous relevant studies highlighting their strengths, weakness and indicating how a given study, for example this one will make a contribution to the existing body of knowledge, especially on the research problem and on other related areas of investigation. A well-structured literature review is characterized by a logical flow of ideas, current and relevant references with consistent, appropriate referencing style, and proper use of terminology or terms and an unbiased and comprehensive view of the previous research or studies on the research topic.

2.1 DEFINITION OF TERMS

2.1.1 Vote Buying

Many scholars have given a variety of interpretations to vote-buying according to their perception and orientations. Scholars like (Fredric, 2005) argued that the act of vote-buying is an economic exchange, a contract, or perhaps an auction in which the voter sells his or her vote to the highest bidder. For (Andrea, 2005), vote-buying is a situation where candidates buy and sell votes as they buy and sell apples, shoes or television sets. In this connection, parties and candidates buy votes by offering particularistic material benefits to voters.

Vote-buying, therefore, is an inducement offered to the electorate in an election situation to garner popular vote. In the context of this study, vote-buying can safely be seen as an act of exchanging one's vote for material gains.

Vote-buying propositions may target either electoral choices or electoral participation. They may be intended to persuade individuals to vote in certain ways or to vote or not to vote in the first place. They further argue that strategies to alter turnout may focus on demobilizing active opponents or on mobilizing passive supporters. (Beetseh et.al.2015, 44)

Instructively, it has been said that vote-buying is neither system-specific nor space-bound as it is common to all political systems, be it advanced or developing, medieval or contemporary. It, therefore, exists in all climes and differs in magnitude and manifestations from one polity to the other. The phenomenon of vote-buying therefore portends danger in a democratization process. According to (Etzioni 1989, p.287) an often-quoted definition of vote-buying as the exchange of private material benefits for political support. Etzioni definition stresses on gaining private material benefits by voters in return for their political support. In other words, it is about giving voters some benefits in the form of gifts or incentives for them to reciprocate with their votes by voting for the giver or the candidate. In effects, voters are given items for their private use and they are expected to return this gesture from candidates or political parties by voting for them. Etzioni-sees this act as an exchange in the sense that the materials are given to the electorates in anticipation that the electorates would consider the gift received and vote for them. Invariably, vote-buying is a binding contract, or perhaps an auction in which the voter sells his or her vote to the highest bidder.

Vote buying is defined here as any form of financial, material or promissory inducement or reward by a candidate, political party, agent or supporter to influence a voter to cast his or her vote or even abstain from doing so in order to enhance the chances of a particular contestant to win an election. Thus, any practice of immediate or promised reward to a person for voting or refraining from voting in a particular way can be regarded as vote-buying. (Schaffer, 2002).

2.1.2 The Democratization

Democratization is another concept in this study that is contestable. In view of this, there is nonetheless a core minimalist definition that lies beneath all the interpretations and uses of the term. Thus, democratization is a process by which a society could progress from authoritarianism to minimalist democracy to substantive democracy.

Unarguably, democratization is not something that can be imposed from outside as long as the conditions in the subjected society are noted favourably. Beyond this, democratization cannot be expected to result in substantive democracy without the subjected society going through certain phases of development: from pro-democratic civil society changes to procedural or working democracy to a substantive democracy. (Oddih, 2003)

Democratization is the process whereby a country adopts a civil or democratic regime. As a case study, Nigeria has peacefully transferred power from one political party to another and has conducted peaceful elections variously in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 respectively. It is undoubtedly true that democratization is on-going in Nigeria. Such a transition is critical because it indicates that the major political forces in a country are prepared to settle their disputes without violence. Under such circumstances, democratization is said to have been put on course.

2.1.3 Election Rigging

Election rigging is a facet of election malpractices. Only that the former involves some deliberate criminal activities such as writing and falsification of results, snatching of ballot boxes (often with arms), ballot box snatching, voter

suppression, and intimidation. According to (Agbu, 2016, p.92) Election rigging can occur in the following ways:

I. Manipulating the design of institutions governing elections to the advantage of one or more electoral contestants in violation of the principles of inclusivity, impartiality, openness or transparency, such as through gerrymandering, malapportionment, over-restrictive franchise or candidacy regulations.

II. Campaign regulations that lead to inequalities among contestants.

III. Lack of observer access to electoral processes.

Meanwhile, what most scholars leave out of their conceptualization of the issue is that election rigging though can involve small and large-scale violence, the non-violent (but more sinister) dimension is vote-buying. This is particularly true of elections held between 2015 and 2019. Vote buying was carried out with brazenness and audacity, in some cases with electoral officials and security agents.

2.1.4 Nigeria Electoral Act and Vote Buying

In most democracies, vote-buying is considered an electoral offence. In Nigeria, the provisions of Section 130 of the Electoral Act 2010, as amended, states that:

A person who — (a) corruptly by himself or by any other person at any time after the date of an election has been announced, directly or indirectly gives or provides or pays money to or for any person for the purpose of corruptly influencing that person or any other person to vote or refrain from voting at such election, or on account of such person or any other

person having voted or refrained from voting at such election, or (b) being a voter, corruptly accepts or takes money or any other inducement during any of the period stated in paragraph (a) of this section, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of N100,000 or 12 months imprisonment or both (Electoral Act, 2010).

In addition to this, Section 124 of Electoral Act (2010) gives a fine of N500,000 or 12 months' imprisonment or both on conviction for anyone caught paying money to any other person for bribery at any election. Also, the same section of the Act criminalizes accepting anyone accepting or receiving money or gift, for voting or to refrain from voting at any election with the same penalty as the giver. Despite the clear provisions of the Electoral Act against vote-buying, politicians appear to have been violating it with impunity.

2.2 VOTE BUYING IN NIGERIA

2.2.1 Nigeria's First, Second and Third Republics in Context.

The phenomenon of money politics and vote-buying only became prominent in post-independent Nigeria. Even then, their influence was very minimal in the first republic between 1960 – 1966. During the first republic, appeals to ethnic and religious sentiments were the most important weapons the political leaders and tribal heroes deployed to ensure electoral victories. This was possible because the strength and popularity of the major political parties and their allies were essentially enhanced by the primordial ties they had with the people in their regions. The parliamentary system that was being practised then, also made it possible for the political parties to exercise considerable control over the candidates to be fielded for elections.

As Dudley correctly observed:

Candidates in the elections were less important as the parties took the centre stage, appealed to ethnicity, played alliance politics and used highly emotive terms which in most cases invited people to violence. Most of the election expenses were borne by the parties from the funds they were able to raise (Dudley, 1982, p.68)

It should be noted, however, that although politicians were known to distribute T-Shirts, Caps and badges with party emblems, some foodstuff and sundry items, to voters at political rallies, there was no huge spending by individual candidates to win elections as obtains currently in the political activities of candidates. Money politics and vote-buying escalated to greater dimensions during the second republic which started in 1979.

It was perhaps encouraged by some wealthy Nigerians who made their money during the Nigerian civil war between 1967 – 1970, by probably supplying arms and ammunitions to both parties to the war and those who were government contractors, reconstructing projects, after the destructive civil war. And, as soon as the military signaled the commencement of competitive politics, these people ventured into politics or sponsored candidates for elective office.

Davies summarizes the situation as follows: There was so much display of affluence and use of money by the wealthy contractors and the mercantile class that those who emerged victorious in the conventions and the primaries of some of the political parties, notably the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Nigerian People's Party (NPP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) belonged to the business managerial group (Davies, 2006).

The situation was even worse in 1993 as the act of money politics and vote-buying took very firm roots in the political activities of contestants. This was because the political campaigns for

the conduct of the 1993 election demonstrated excessive use of money during the party primaries and the presidential elections, even though the elections were conducted under the watchful eyes of the military.

The rich had actually hijacked the two political parties decreed into existence by the military, namely the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). At the primaries, for example, the use of money to win party nomination was pervasive while complaints of bribery trailed the results. As one of the contestants who lost out claimed. Money was paid to party functionaries, who were demanding and negotiating the amount of money to be given to them for payment to win offices and others, and for how votes will be allocated to aspirants (Nwosu, 1996, p.78).

Interestingly enough, the noticeable excessive use of money during the 1993 presidential election was ostensibly adduced by president Babangida to annul the election. In annulling the 1993 election.

He declared: There were authenticated reports of election malpractice against agents, officials of the NEC and voters... There were proof of manipulation, offers and acceptance of money and other forms of bribery. The amount of money spent by the presidential candidates was over 2.1 million Naira (Ojo, 2000).

2.2.2 Prominent Cases of Vote Buying in the Nigeria Fourth Republic

The phenomenon of money politics and vote-buying has become prominent in the politics of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Unlike the previous Republics where appeals to ethnic and religious sentiments were deployed by political leaders to ensure electoral victories, the Fourth Republic is

replete with incidences of blatant vote-buying as both candidates for elections and political parties have lost relevance with the people. In reference to the First, Second and to a large extent, the Third Republics;

Dudley correctly observed as follows:

Candidates in the elections were less important as the parties took the centre stage, appealed to ethnicity, played alliance politics and used highly emotive terms which in most cases invited people to violence. Most of the election expenses were borne by the parties from the funds they were able to raise (Dudley 1982, p. 68)

It should be noted, however, that although politicians were known to distribute gift items such as T-shirts, caps, badges with party emblems, foodstuff and sundry items, to voters at political rallies, there was no blatant purchase of votes on election days as witnessed in the Fourth Republic. The situation seemed to have ironically troubled the conscience of former President Obasanjo, who is a major player of the Fourth Republic to admit though, belatedly that:

With so much resources being deployed to capture elective offices, it is not difficult to see the correlation between politics and the potential for high-level corruption. The greatest losers are the ordinary people, those voters whose faith and investment in the system are hijacked and subverted because money, not their will, is made the determining factor in elections. Can we not move from politics of money materialism to politics of ideas, issues and development (Obasanjo, 2005)

The role of money in any political arrangement cannot be overemphasized; its abuse in Nigerian polity is indeed amazing too. According to (Jide, 2007) there were reported cases of vote-buying

and selling in the following states during the 2007 general elections: Nasarawa, Kwara, Lagos, Borno, Benue and Sokoto. Though the 2011 general election was applauded by both local and international observers on the basis of being free and fair when compared to the previous elections, the interplay of money used in canvassing for electorates by parties and aspirants is worrisome.

For instance, over 1,800 groups emerged on the course of supporting Jonathan's presidential aspiration with so much money worth billions of naira disbursed in financing their campaign strategies (Olusola, 2010). Individual financial donors were something to write home about. If the truth will be told, the 2011 general election was the most expensive in the annals of our electoral democracy. During the party primaries, campaigns and elections, humongous sums of money were deployed by the contestants to outdo each other.

Apart from the legitimate spending on hiring campaign offices and staff, procuring office equipment and vehicles, running jingles and adverts, printing billboards and posters; there were illegal expenses such as bribery of election officials to manipulate election figures, hiring of political thugs to foment trouble at polling canters as well as outright vote-buying (Jide, 2011)

During the All Progressive Congress (APC) presidential primary in Lagos State before the 2015 elections, it was reported that over 8 000 delegates who participated allegedly made US\$5 000 each from the candidates. Delegates were supposed to have received US\$2 000 each from the Atiku Abubakar group and also US\$3 000 each from the Buhari group. Given that more than 8 000 delegates were reported to have attended the primaries, the competing camps could have

spent more than US\$16 million and US\$24 million respectively on vote-buying at the primary stage. (Onuoha and Jide 2015)

In the 18 November 2017 gubernatorial election in Anambra State, many observers condemned the brazen incidences of vote-buying during the poll, stating that the level of commercialization of the vote was an eyesore to democracy. In particular, the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room noted that even more lamentable was the fact that the buying and selling of votes took place in the full glare of security men and election officials. It was simply a bazaar in which the election officials and security agencies were undoubtedly complicit.

Widespread acts of vote-buying were also reported during the governorship election in Ekiti State on 14 July 2018. The 2019 elections were also marred with vote-buying Ondo 2020 governorship election inclusive

2.3 VOTE BUYING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON GOVERNANCE

2.3.1 The Effects of Vote Buying

Since vote-buying can hinder the integrity of the electoral process, a lot of eminent personalities and NGOs including the National Association of Seadogs (NAS), Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), United Global Resolve for Peace (UGRFP), African Electoral Integrity Initiative (AEI), Nigeria Civil Society (NCS), Inter-party Advisory Council (IPAC), and the likes have all risen to condemn the ignoble act in recent times. Some leading Nigerian musicians also lend their voices against vote-buying during the 2019 general elections (News Agency of Nigeria, 2019).

Vote-buying shuts out candidates with lean campaign budgets. By this, there will be an increase in political corruption. This will mean that electoral victories are purchased rather than won fairly, it glaringly leads to state capture. It equally compromises the credibility, legitimacy, and integrity of elections and its institutions. Vote-buying undermines the integrity of elections as the winners are often the highest bidders and not necessarily the most popular or credible contestants (Adamu, Ocheni, and Ibrahim, 2016). It often leads to protests and blames trading among parties and candidates after elections thereby discrediting the process (Gbadamosi, 2019). It, therefore, discourages conscientious people from participating in electoral politics and causes citizens to lose faith in state institutions. Vote trading equally tends to perpetuate bad governance. It not only compromises the wellbeing of those who sold their vote for instant gratification but also the future of those who did not sell their votes but are inevitably exposed to bad governance that results from such a fraudulent process. For every vote traded, many people will suffer the unintended consequences when the traded votes make the difference between winning and losing in the election.

As a result of the prevalence of the dubious use of smartphones as a means of vote-buying, INEC had to redesign the polling units and ban the use of smartphones as measures to cope with the problem during the 2019 general elections. The main effect of vote-buying in elections especially on the Nigerian general elections is that it will always undermine political legitimacy and make a joke of the Nigerian two-decade of the democratic experiment. In addition to this, it will create a fundamental moral burden on citizens to demand good governance from politicians who have previously bought their ways into offices and the legitimacy of future elections.

2.3.2 Factors Responsible For Vote Buying

The ugly trend of vote-buying in Nigeria's political setting did not start in a vacuum; it is attached to some predisposing factors. According to (Davies, 2006), the inability of the political parties and the contestants to put in place comprehensive and comprehensible manifestoes for scrutiny by the voters is aiding money politics and vote-buying in Nigeria. Instead of clear-cut manifestoes that would enable the electorate to make a rational political choice, meaningless slogans, demagogic and rabble-rousing speeches are made.

On the other hand, (Ayoade, 2008) affirms that candidates' ignorance of their political parties programme is embarrassing. As he has rightly observed; candidates spin the issues they think can attract votes, which may sometimes negate party positions. The picture painted above produces representative but not participatory democracy which consequently encourages money politics vis a vis vote-buying.

Poverty and illiteracy also contribute to the unfortunate trend in the society. Poor people are vulnerable and due to the low level of political awareness in the country, intimidation and manipulation become easy tools amidst the people. Majority of the poor are ready to submit their mandate for monetary benefit. They become blindfolded with the token amount realized from the business of politics (selling of votes). Although this menace can as well be attributed to the economic depression in the country, education is the mechanism of political consciousness and rational political behaviour.

Not only has that, but political cynicism among the electorates also supported the spread of money politics in Nigeria. The impression that political office holders are incurably corrupt, self-centred and lack competency has made people view politics as a dishonourable enterprise. And that politics is synonymous to fraud and betrayal of public trust (Ojo, 2008). The general

perception of the voters that political office holders are corrupt is an excuse for accepting money as voting criteria and those funds realized before the election is what they can benefit from the politicians. The argument is that politicians hardly fulfil promises made during campaigns. Meanwhile, this notion derails Nigeria's democracy. The nature of Nigerian politics also encourages money politics. The winner-takes-all syndrome deviates moral principle. Nigeria's politicking gives room for mediocrity and discourages morality which poses threat to democratic sustainability in the country. Politics is viewed as a dirty game and allows a 'do or die' electoral contest, this tells on the level of the political culture in the country. In as much as the rulers could not lead by example, the ruled cannot be easily cautioned.

The factors as identified by (Davies, 2006) are reproduced below as follows:

I. The inability of many political parties and the contestants to put in place comprehensive and comprehensible manifestoes for scrutiny by the voters. Instead of clear-cut manifestoes that would enable the electorate to make a rational political choice, meaningless slogans, demagogic and rabbler-rousing speeches are made. Such speeches either overestimate or underestimate the political perception of the voters, but are rarely educative and convincing.

II. Political cynicism on the part of the voters who believe that political office holder is incurably

III. Corrupt, self-seeking and incompetent, that politics is a dirty and dishonourable enterprise, that the whole political process is a fraud and a betrayal of the public trust. This cynical view of politics is further accentuated by unfulfilled promises made by winners of past elections. Thus, asking for a pay-off, another way by which the people receive their share of the

national cake. On the other hand, the candidates who gave money to voters probably believe that they are investing against electoral failure.

IV. Focusing on personalities rather than on issues. By the mode of their campaign, most candidates draw the attention of the electorate away from the political parties to themselves. The consequence of this is that the political parties and their message become less important to the electorate. The candidates then take the centre stage and would therefore need to spend more money than their parties could afford to mobilize support for themselves.

V. The peoples' perception is greatly reinforced by the obscene display of opulence by public office holders and ostentatious living of many politicians that every elected or appointed public officer is amassing wealth from the public treasury. This seems to have strengthened the resolve of many voters to sell their votes to the highest bidder.

VI. The penchant of politicians to strive to win elections, even at the party primary level, at all cost, makes desperate contestants to engage in all sort of malpractices including offering financial and material inducements to voters. Working on the poverty of the people, Nigerian politicians have been known to distribute foodstuff and other consumable materials to voters shortly before the elections and some time on election day, contrary to the provision of the extant electoral law that prohibits such practice. Instances abound too, when candidates threw some money into the air during campaign rallies, making people scramble for it and getting injured in the process.

VII. The noticeable weakness in a party whip, characteristics of party politics in a presidential system, when elected members exercise a considerable degree of freedom when voting on legislative proposals. Such freedom makes the legislators to be more susceptible to

receive gratifications from the private interest groups. The interest groups employ what Shank calls “legalized bribery”. They make large donations to some spurious private or community programmes in which the target legislators are interested, and give expensive gifts to the legislators or sponsor their overseas travel etc. all in the name of public relations to secure the votes of the legislators in the legislature.

VIII. The absence of any legislation that puts any ceiling on financial contributions to political parties and candidates by groups or individuals (Davies, 2006). But we must quickly add that the Nigerian constitution is not completely silent on party finances, but its provisions in respect of the finances of political parties relate only to their source of funds and other assets. For example, section 225(3) of the 1999 constitution merely prohibits any political party to (a) retain any funds or assets remitted or sent to it from outside Nigeria. The requirement that political parties prepare and submit an audited account to the electoral body is only intended to ensure transparency and accountability.

Vote trading equally tends to perpetuate bad governance. It not only compromises the wellbeing of those who sold their vote for instant gratification but also the future of those who did not sell their votes but are inevitably exposed to bad governance that results from such a fraudulent process. For every vote traded, many people will suffer the unintended consequences when the traded votes make the difference between winning and losing in the election

2.4 Vote Buying During the 2020 Governorship Election in Ondo State

The Ondo State Governorship Election of Saturday 10th October, 2020 will go down in history as a process marred with vote-buying. The Centre for Democracy and Development (2020), a

non-governmental organization in its final observation report on Monday, October 12 in Abuja listed vote-buying as one of the factors undermining the sanctity of elections.

CDD stated that:

At several other polling units, CDD observed a consistent pattern of vote-buying, involving vote buyers who used various devices to evade the watch of security officials and election observers. CDD observers documented attempts by political actors to outspend one another by making available large sums disbursed to community leaders for onward distribution to voters.

CDD observation showed that whereas in the past the modus operandi was to distribute cash discreetly at points close to the polling unit, the new tactic is to create outposts where voters can go to collect cash after showing evidence that they voted for the preferred candidates of the vote buyers. It was alleged by those the CDD observers spoke with about vote-buying at polling units on election day that bulk sums ranging from N150,000 to N600,000 were earmarked for each polling unit across each local government areas were handed over to popular figures, especially youth groups to share among voters in their areas.

Another vote-buying tactic used was to make electronic cash transfers to the voter after proving he or she voted for the preferred candidate of the vote buyer. CDD observers reported that party agents largely stayed away from coordinating vote-buying.

Similarly, a civil rights organisation, YIAGA Africa which deployed 646 observers for the election, said:

The vote-buying that we saw in this election is quite disturbing. Nigeria needs a national campaign and a national discussion around vote-buying.

Where elections are determined by the highest bidder or the highest spender makes a mockery of our democracy, it diminishes human dignity but most importantly, it also questions the legitimacy of election outcomes. For Saturday's election, votes were traded between N1,000 and N7,000 in the state.

What is disturbing is the level of impunity of political actors who engaged in this illegal and corrupt act. You go to polling stations and polling stations have become marketplaces, where, in the full glare of security agents who are deployed to the polling stations, people were just buying votes and nobody reprimanded or arrested them. What that tells you is that it appears we have accepted this as a norm and as part of our electoral process and it is very sad.

The menace of vote-buying is a governance problem, it is an indictment on the political class that they failed to lift people out of poverty, to provide the dividends of democracy and so they use that against the people.

Reporting on their coverage of the election (Dada, Bamigbola, Olaniyi and Abiodun, 2020) averred that:

It was observed that voters were induced with sums of money ranging from N3,000 to N5,000 at polling centers, while policemen manning the centers ignored the electoral fraud. After the voting, each voter would meet their ‘paymaster’ at the back of the polling units to collect the money.

A Social Commentator and journalist Dayo Williams during an interview told this researcher the following:

The level of liquidity in Ondo State at the moment is out of this world. Between last night and this morning, the narrative has changed significantly. Like it was in 2016, it is going to be the same way today: dibokosebe. Teeesiojue It's pure and undiluted vote-buying. In the end, the biggest vote buyer will win the election and he may just win across the 18 LGAs.

Also, Jumoke Akindele, former Speaker of the Ondo State House of Assembly and member of the ZLP said:

Elections are no longer a test of popularity in Ondo State. It is a test of how much money the contestants/parties are willing or have to spend.

All parties spent or attempted to spend funds before the Election Day and on D-Day. My party, the ZLP, belongs to the second category.

Apart from the above reports, the vast majority of the observers deployed by the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) that carried out the direct observation of the election confirmed to this researcher that there were incidences of votes buying by agents of politicians in many polling units across the state.

2.5 Nigeria Democracy and Vote Buying

Although vote-buying during elections is not peculiar to the election or new in the nation's democratic process, the practice has in recent times become a significant tool of securing political power as witnessed in Ondo State gubernatorial election and widely witnessed in the July 14, 2018, Ekiti State governorship polls.

However, the magnitude of vote-buying and selling in the 2020 Ondo State election was too glaring to the extent that both local and international observers decried that such bizarre engagement has never been experienced in Nigeria's electoral trajectory.

As noted by (Fredric and Andreas, 2005), there are enormous implications posed by vote-buying in the electoral process as prospective vote buyers typically have no guarantees that voters who accept their material offers shall dutifully reciprocate on election day. There is always uncertainty because vote-buying, even when akin to a commercial transaction, takes place in a non-licensed black market of illicit exchange, rather than a normal consumer market embedded in a network of legal safeguards.

According to (Fredric, 2005) securing the compliance of voters tends to be problematic for four reasons that are inherent to most vote trading arrangements.

I. **Problematic Enforcement:** The enforcement of contractual vote-buying obligations is inherently problematic. Vote-buying typically creates the commitment problems that come along with the deferred delivery of goods and services. This is because vote buyers and sellers do not engage in instant exchanges of merchandise and money, the former face the challenging task of making the latter honour their future obligation, and to that extent, they have to accomplish it without recourse to legal action. While licit consumer markets are institutionalized spheres of

exchange created and protected by the law, markets for votes are neither regulated nor sanctioned by formal rules. Therefore, if voters just grab the money, vote their conscience, and disappear, parties and candidates have no legal sanctions at their disposal to punish them.

II. Problematic Monitoring: The business of vote-buying from the perspective of buyers, involves problems of surveillance as deep and troubling as the problems of enforcement. This is because markets for votes, in contrast, are opaque. Under the veil of secret voting, voter behaviour is shielded from direct inspection. Vote buyers may have great difficulty knowing whether presumptive vote sellers honour their commitments on Election Day.

III. Countervailing Norms: It should be noted that votes do not belong to the universe of legitimate commodities. The explicit purchase of votes runs counter to prevalent norms of democratic liberty and equality. Voter buying, even when consonant with local norms, is still illegal. Where laws against vote-buying are enforced and especially where hefty rewards are given to citizens who reveal the identities of vote buyers to police, voters need to worry those buyers will not only defect but turn them in. From the above, it can be seen that what may look like a simple economic exchange is never quite simple since voter buyers cannot rely on social norms of fair exchange and the threat of legal sanctions that typically sustain licit market transactions. Vote buyers indeed, have to resolve intricate problems of monitoring and enforcement, and they may have to surmount, too, the obstacle of countervailing democratic norms as well as the risk of prosecution. This stems from the fact the systematic uncertainties of compliance they face may indeed be reluctant to bet their financial and political fortunes on the fragile resource of personal trust.

Essentially, when the election is characterized by excessive vote-buying choices of the citizens, invariably, there is the likelihood that the government that emerges cannot represent, protect, and affects the will and aspirations of the people. A government that takes over power through vote-buying processes cannot claim to be democratic or legitimate. The gory effect of this ugly trend leads to political apathy, leadership crisis, political violence, poor political culture and insensitivity to the needs of the people. Implicitly, vote-buying and reciprocity have a far-reaching implication on the relationship between elected leaders and the people. This is because voters may not be able to make correct leadership choices as qualified and credible candidates may not be financially capable of buying voters to vote for them.

The electorate will end up voting the wrong people in positions of thrust with reckless abandon and at the end, the people are governed by corrupt, inept and compromised leaders who have no mass interest at heart, thus good governance and democratic dividends would be truncated. Conscious of the fact that extant laws in Nigeria especially the Electoral Act (2010, as amended) has adequate provisions for penalties for financial inducement in the election, with section 124(a) which states that:

Paying money to any other persons for bribery at any elections attracts conviction to a maximum fine of ₦500,000 or 12 months imprisonment or both; and section 124(b) stipulates that receiving any money or gift, for voting or to refrain from voting at any election attracts a maximum fine of ₦500,000 or imprisonment for 12 months or both.

One should have envisaged that with these laws put in place, vote buying and vote selling would have been ameliorated in the Nigerian democratic process but that was not to be. Vote-buying

and selling in Nigeria have reached a staggering dimension and have remained intractable due to the lack of enforcement of punishment for electoral offences by the relevant government agencies and stakeholders. The attendant consequences are that it undermines the legitimacy of the election and weakens representative democracy and to a large extent, makes a mockery of the Nigerian democratic process. Furthermore, the adumbration of vote-buying in Nigerian political firmament is not only a violation of the law, but it also constitutes an abuse of the constitutional right of the people to choose their leaders in a free, fair and credible manner.

2.6 Nexus between Corruption, Poverty and Vote Buying

Corruption has broadly been defined as a perversion or a change from good to bad. Corrupt behaviour involves the violation of established rules for personal gain and profit. Corruption is efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means or private gain at public expense or a misuse of public power for private benefit (Lipset & Lenz 2000:112-4). Also, corruption is a behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role, because of private gains such as personal, close family, private clique, pecuniary or status gains. It is a behaviour which violates rules against the exercise of certain types of duties for private gains - regarding influence (Nye, 1967). This definition includes such behaviour as bribery (use of a reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust); nepotism; and misappropriation - illegal appropriation of public resources for private uses (Unruh, 2008). Regardless of the forms corruption takes, the summary of the various definitions of corruption can be extracted from Article 4 section 1(a-i) of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption:

I. The solicitation or acceptance, directly or indirectly by a public official or any other person, of any goods of monetary, or other benefits, such as a gift, favour, promise or advantage for himself or herself or another person or entity, in exchange for any act or omission in the performance, of his or her public functions;

II. The offering or granting, directly or indirectly, to a public official or any other person of any goods of monetary value, or other benefits, such as a gift, favour, promise or advantage for himself or herself or any person or entity, in exchange for any act or omission in the performance of his or her public functions;

III. The offering or granting, directly or indirectly, to a public official or any other person to illicitly obtain benefits for himself or herself or a third party;

IV. The diversion by a public official or any other person, for purposes unrelated to those for which they were intended, for his own or her benefit or that of a third party, of any property belonging to the state or its agencies, to an independent agency, or an individual, that such official has received by virtue of his or her position;

V. The offering or giving, promising, solicitation or acceptance, directly or indirectly, of any undue advantage to or by any person, who directs or works for, in any capacity, a private sector entity, for himself or herself or for anyone else, for him or her to act or refrain from acting, in breach of his or her duties;

VI. The offering, giving, soliciting or accepting directly or indirectly, or promising of any undue advantage to or by any person who asserts or confirms that he or she can exert any improper influence over the decision making of any person performing functions in the public or private sector in consideration thereof, whether the undue advantage is for himself or herself or

anyone else, as well as the request, receipt or the acceptance of the offer or the promise of such an advantage, in consideration of that influence, whether or not the influence is exerted or whether or not the supposed influence leads to the intended result;

VII. Illicit enrichment

VIII. The use or concealment of proceeds derived from any of the acts referred to in this Article; and

IX. Participation as a principal, co-principal, agent, instigator, accomplice or accessory after the fact or in any other manner in the commission or attempted commission of, in any collaboration or conspiracy to commit, any of the acts referred to in this article.

To allow for a better understanding of the various forms of corruption, Scholars have over time classified corruption in various groups. For instance, (Otite, 2000) classifies corruption into five groups: political corruption, economic corruption, bureaucratic corruption, judicial corruption and moral corruption. (Dike 2005) also argues that there are three major ways to classify corruption: political corruption which is also known as grand, bureaucratic or petty corruption and electoral corruption. The most important thing is that whatever form corruption manifests, it perverts public interest and unlawfully elevates private gain which is glaringly daunting the hope of democracy in Nigeria. Electoral corruptions are also activities manifested and connected with election and successions. This is done by the politicians or political decision-makers manipulating people and institutions to retain power and office (Otite, 2000).

Electoral corruption includes the purchase of votes with money, promises of office or special favours, coercion, intimidation, and interference with freedom of election. Nigeria is a good example of where this practice is common. Votes are bought, people are killed or maimed in the

name of election, 'losers' end up as the winners in elections, and votes turn up in areas where votes were not cast. Many scholars such as (Davies, Olarinmoye, Ojo 2006) have written on money politics and vote-buying in Nigerian politics because of the devastating impact of the phenomenon on body politics. Their views summarily captured electoral corruption as the illegal interference with the process of an election, whether by increasing the vote share of the favoured candidate, depressing the vote share of the rival candidates, or both.

What constitutes electoral fraud varies from country to country. Many kinds of election fraud are outlawed in electoral legislation, but others violate general laws, such as those banning assault, harassment or libel. (Myagkov, [et.al](#), 2008) goes a step further to aver that: Although technically the term 'electoral fraud' covers only those acts which are illegal, the term is sometimes used to describe acts which are legal, but considered morally unacceptable, outside the spirit of an election or in violation of the principles of democracy.

The political behaviour of the ruling class in Nigeria can be better understood within the context of the contest for power as access to primitive accumulation other than for service and; those of the masses, understood within the context of the effect that poor economic situation has made them susceptible to monetary inducements rather than rational choices in the expression of their political participation.

According to (Gilbert and Barigbon 2015) Poor people make poor democratic citizens. It is only when individuals leap out of the vicious cycle of poverty that they begin to demand a role in and provide support for democracy by way of active participation as poverty, insecurity and ignorance do not produce decent democratic citizens. From the above, it is clear that the socio-economic status of the individual defines their level of political participation just as they also

weigh the decision for democratic participation on a cost-benefit scale (Ikelegbe 1995, p. 82). Thus, while democracy ordinarily carries with it the hope of poverty reduction, the Nigerian experience has shown that poverty is a potent tool to hinder democracy. The class analysis could help explain the pervasiveness of vote-buying and selling as a vestige of capitalism explained by its core value of maximization of profit which in turn results in the exploitation of one class by another. The readiness and willingness to exchange one's vote for money easily signify a crucial feature of a society whose economic structure is grounded in exploitation thus recreating conditions of poverty. The blatant purchase of votes suggests the existence of a powerful and dominant class that has a great interest in maintaining a mass of the downtrodden. Such a class deploys poverty as an essential condition for the realization of its interest.

Poverty is the historical process of individual or groups being forcefully eliminated from the control of the decision making machinery that determines the production of resources in a society. It manifests in various forms as hunger or lack of food, lack of money, cloth, shelter, good health or poor education in a national context, poverty becomes a euphemism for under-development or absence/ perversions of democracy (Ikelegbe, 1995, p.13).

In a similar vein, (Akeredolu-Ale, 1975) uses the Power theory of Poverty to explain class and poverty. His power theory posits that "the structure of the political economy in any society determines the extent and distribution of power among the population. In this case, the ruling class constituted by the law, established and legitimised an exploitative system, through which it determines the allocation of opportunity, income and wealth, relying on the use of state power, including the use of oppressive state agents. The poverty of the majority of the people is caused by exploitative and oppressive relations. While oppression occurs when one group illegitimately excludes another from access to those resources, exploitation occurs when such exclusion from

resources gives the controller of the resources the capacity to appropriate the fruit of the labour of others (Gilbert and Barigbon, 2015).

2.7 Theoretical Framework

This section is designed to presents the study conceptual framework, theories are explanation of a natural or social behavior, event, or phenomenon. A scientific theory is a system of constructs and propositions that collectively presents a logical, systematic, and coherent explanation of a phenomenon of interest with some assumptions and boundary conditions. Elite theory's origins lie most clearly in the writings of Gaetano Mosca (1858–1941), Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), Robert Michels (1876–1936), and Max Weber (1864–1920). Mosca emphasized the ways in which tiny minorities out-organize and outwit large majorities. Mosca's term for political elites usually have a certain material, intellectual, or even moral superiority over those they govern

Pareto postulated that in a society with truly unrestricted social mobility, elites would consist of the most talented and deserving individuals; but in actual societies, elites are those most adept at using the two modes of political rule, force and persuasion, and who usually enjoy important advantages such as inherited wealth and family connections. Pareto sketched alternating types of governing elites, which he likened, following Machiavelli, to foxes and lions.

Michels rooted elites in the need of large organizations for leaders and experts, in order to operate efficiently; as these individuals gain control of funds, information flows, promotions, and other aspects of organizational functioning, power becomes concentrated in their hands.

Weber held that political action is always determined by the principle of small numbers that means the superior political maneuverability of small leading groups.

Many consider Weber to be a founding father of elitism as well, due to domination theory (Weber, 2005 [1922]: 695). Indeed Weber's concepts of power and domination, as well as his theoretical work on political parties and the related affirmation that social classes are not necessarily social actors (Weber, 2005 [1922]: 682), are fundamental pillars of contemporary elite theory. As I will argue later on, current elite theory often tends to be Weberian

Elitist theorists not only introduced elites but also contributed on better understanding of social and political life of societies. The key concept is "power" and who has the power she/he is the leader of society. Heredity, wealth, intellect, organizations are the means to get power. Pareto, Mosca, and Michels agree on that elites, aristocrats come to power and all necessary policies and means are used in order to continue to be ruler and protect their privileges. In contrast to Pareto and Mosca, to Michels an amalgamation occurs among the rising elites and old ones rather than replacement of the old elites by the new.

The main assumptions of the elite theory are as follows: First, organizations are creations of people, but a few people control and dominate them once created (Wamsley & Zald, 1976). Second, organizations operate in a sociopolitical and economic environment of which they are a part, but the role of the political and economic elites determines the directions and processes of most organizations (Farazmand, 1994; Selznick, 1957). Third, this leads to the major limitations of the pure rationality often claimed by other theorists to be the only instrumentality in organizing and achieving societal goals. Fourth, even the purest and most businesslike enterprise is, by nature, also political, because its processes and structures contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of the existing political and economic system Fifth, conflicts arise among members of organizations as a result of human nature and social class, the former being

reconcilable whereas the latter is extremely difficult if not impossible to reconcile, because the elite will not abdicate its power and privileges.

The rational choice theory, also known as choice theory or rational action theory is a theory for understanding and often modelling social and economic as well as individual behaviour. It is the main paradigm in the currently-dominant microeconomics school of thought. It is also central to modern political science, as well as other disciplines such as sociology and philosophy. (Becker, 1976) recorded that the rational choice theory was early popularized by a 1992 Nobel Memorial Prize Laureate in Economics Science, Gary Becker, who was one of the first to apply rational actor models more widely. (Elster,1989) stated the essence of rational choice theory when he said that when faced with several courses of action, people usually do what they believe is likely to have the best overall outcome. The ‘rationality’ defined by the rational choice theory adopts a more specific and narrower definition, which simply means that an individual acts as if balancing costs against benefits to arrive at action that maximizes personal advantage. (Friedman, 1953).

The rational choice institutionalism on the other hand focuses on the functionality of institutions (political parties and INEC inclusive) and the patterns, procedures and regularities produce by them for everyone to engage with one another according to a laid down rule. Institutions are equilibrium ways of doing things (Shepsle, 2006). Institutions and their arrangements are in all human society and in use nearly all the time to coordinate human and organizational behavior. The rational choice practitioners explain the activities of power-seeking political parties within a set of institutional constraints. The political elite theorists and rational choice practitioners even though they differ in object and focus of their studies, agree on one essential premise: that institution (political parties and INEC) constitutes the humanly devised mechanisms that shape the interactions and activities of every aspiring political office holder in their struggle for power.

There are a few assumptions made by rational choice theorists. Abell (2000). These assumptions include:

Individualism. It is individuals who ultimately take actions. Individuals, as actors in the society and everywhere, behave and act always as rational beings, selfcalculating, self-interested and self-maximizing, these individual social actions are the ultimate source of larger social outcomes. From this first overarching assumption derives the four other major assumptions summarized below.

Optimality. Individual choose their actions optimally, given their individual preferences as well as the opportunities or constraints with which the individual faced. Abell (2000) defines optimality as taking place when no other course of social action would be preferred by the individual over the course of action the individual has chosen. This does not mean that the course of action that the actor adopts is the best in terms of some objective, and outside judgment. The rational choice theory, therefore assumes, according to Abell (2000), that individuals “do the best they can, given their circumstances as they see them”

Structures. Abell argues that structures and norms that dictate a single course of action are merely special cases of rational choice theory. In other words, the range of choices in other circumstances differs from choices in a strong structural circumstance, where there may be only one choice. Although these structures may be damaging to the rational choice model, individuals will often find a way to exercise action optimally, hence the rational choice model may not necessarily show harmony, consensus, or equality in courses of action. Again, structures, as we know them, may not be optimal from the viewpoint of an individual with few resources,

however, the rational choice approach will attempt to explain is how this situation emerges and is maintained through rational choices.

Self-Regarding Interest. This assumption states that the actions of the individual are concerned entirely with his or her own welfare. Abell (2000) noted that in as much as this is a key assumption in the rational choice approach, is not as essential to the approach as the assumption on optimality. He also noted that various types of group sentiments could exist, such as cooperation, unselfishness, charity, which initially may seem to be contrary to individual optimality. Rational choice theorist may argue that these sentiments can be incorporated into the rational choice model by observing that such sentiments may ultimately be aimed at pursuing some form of self-interest. For instance, charity movements or efforts Abell says, could ultimately be aimed at making an individual feel good or could be a means of raising one's social esteem in the eyes of others.

Rationality. This appears the most predominant assumption of the rational choice theory. All individuals, according to this assumption act in ways that would benefit them more; every individual is most like to undertake courses of actions that they perceive to be the best possible option and one that would immensely be to their own advantage.

The rational choice theory is a growing paradigm in political science and can be applied to a range of areas in the discipline, especially, voting behaviour, policy formulation and implementation, rule formation, among others. Competition among political parties can be dismissed as rational, based on the assumptions of the rational choice model. Every political party will always engage in activities that will ultimately lead to the realisation of their own interests maybe alongside pursuing democratic or other purposes of governance. From the

nomination of candidature to the campaign tact and strategies, up until the conduct of the election and behaviour of voters, all these activities seem to be manipulated by political parties, either by physical or psychological methods, to bring about the achievement of the party interests first, other things can follow after.

Several critique and scholars have identified some limitations of the rational choice theory. Aside, some of the disagreements that have been associated with accepting the basic assumptions of the approach, there are a number of other weaknesses that have been attributed with the rational choice theory. Some of these weaknesses are:

Problems associated with inadequate information and uncertainty. This may make it difficult for individuals to make rational decisions. As a result, they may rely on other ways of making decisions.

Human social action and interactions are complex, and many of the theories examined earlier may provide better guides to how these take place.

Norms and habits may guide much action, and once these take root people may not question them but use them to pursue meaningful social action.

The rational choice theory as has been portrayed above assumes the near impossibility of 'all things being equal', and on this basis, individuals make choices and decisions that they see as rational, not minding that the circumstances, and situations in which these decision are made has a large impact on whether or not such decisions are rational, also, the values, beliefs and philosophy of the individual also influence the rationality of choices and decisions made by individuals.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter examines the methodology adopted in the study. It covers the research procedure which includes research design, study areas and study population. Also included are sampling technique, sample size, research instrument, validation of the instrument, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a survey research method where a representative proportion of the whole study was drawn. It is believed that assessment of the representatives of the entire population through samples drawn from the same will enable the researcher to generalize on vote-buying and its implication on democratic governance. Thus, this method is appropriate for this study since it assesses people's opinions, beliefs, procedures, feelings and outcomes about a phenomenon. Good number of stakeholders were also interviewed in the study which includes, candidates in the election, members of the state working committees of political parties, security agents, party agents, public servants and voters.

3.2 Study Area

The study covered the Ondo state. All three senatorial districts were selected using a probability sampling technique. Three local governments selected from each senatorial district using a stratified sampling technique. The criterion for the selection of the study area was based on voting strength and perceived incidents of vote-buying during the election.

3.3 Study Population

Despite the wider circulation of questionnaires across the three senatorial districts and persuasion of residents, total of 100 respondents gladly completed the questioner. This may not be unconnected with the novel coronavirus pandemic and the preventive measures put in place by the state government to manage the global virus. However, in other to compliment the questioner, the researcher was able to reach out to people across the state via interview sessions, by talking to people in the markets, malls, banks, motor parks, place of worships among others. Also, more people were reached through online interview. The researcher was able to phone residents of the state to contribute to the research work. The selection of these samples was based on the knowledge of democracy, good governance and participation during elections.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sampling Size

Using a stratified random sampling technique, three local governments were selected from each senatorial district. Detailed information about the study and how to answer the questionnaire was provided for the respondents and due consent of the respondents were sought for before the questionnaires were administered on them.

Table 3.1 Respondents for this study

	Respondents	Number of questionnaires administered
1	Voters	80
2	Journalists	10
3	Election Observers	10
	Total	100

Note: A good number of respondents were reached through interview sessions

3.5 Research Instrument

The instrument for this study is a questionnaire. The structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. The research instrument was structured to address the objectives of the study; to determine whether material gifts which politicians and their agents issue to the electorates during election campaigns do influence their voting patterns, determine the people's perception on why candidates buy votes, determine the voters' perception on the impact of vote-buying on good governance and establish whether the socio-economic status of voters have bearing on the likelihood of accepting gifts from politicians in exchange for the vote.

3.6 Validation of Research Instrument

In ensuring the validation of the instrument, the substances of the questionnaire were subjected to the scrutiny of experts. The questions contain some control measures that established the sincerity of the respondents while responding to the questions. The questionnaires are structured in such a way that its contents are capable of generating the needed data to achieve the objectives of the study. It was also designed in such a way that ambiguity was avoided as much as possible and that no important information was left out. The descriptive and content instruments are valid.

3.7 Data Collection

This study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary data was sourced using questionnaires while the secondary data was sourced from textbooks,

articles, journals, newspapers and other published and unpublished materials. In addition to the questionnaires, more data were generated through interview sessions both physical and online. This further enhanced the data collected as vast majority of the people interviewed allied with the positions of those who administered questionnaires.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed using a frequency distribution table and was analysed using quantitative content analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The chapter deals with the analysis of data collected from the respondents, of the sampled population. A total of 1000 questionnaires were administered and 100 respondents representing 10% of the entire population correctly filled and returned their questionnaires. Interviews were used to compliment that, texts and tables were also used to illustrate the responses as well as percentage to show the rate of each response.

4.1 Population of the Study

S/N		NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED	NO. OF QUESTIONNAIRE RETURNED	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	Voters	800	80	10
2	Journalists	100	10	10
3	Election Observers	100	10	10
	TOTAL	1000	100	10

Source: Field survey, 2020

From the table overleaf, it reveals that 10% of the questionnaire distributed was sampled. This may not be unconnected with the novel coronavirus pandemic and the preventive measures put in

place by the state government to manage the global virus. However, it was complimented with interview sessions both physical and online.

Questionnaire Results:

Table 4.2 Gender of Respondents

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Male	69	69.%
Female	31	31.%
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey, 2020

Table 4.2 indicates that out of 100 respondents sampled, 69 respondents representing 69 per cent are males while 31 respondents representing 31 per cent of the entire respondents are females.

This reveals that the majority of the respondents are males.

Table 4.3 Age Bracket of Respondents

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
18-25	18	18.%
26-35	55	55.&
36-45	16	16%

46- 55	6	6%
50 +	5	5%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field survey, 2020

From the above table 4.3, it implies that the age bracket of 18-25 years were 18 respondents representing 18 per cent of the total respondents sampled, 55 respondents, representing 55 percent of the entire respondents are between the age range of 26-35 years, those within the age of 36-45 years were 16 respondents representing 16percent of the total respondents,6 respondents, representing 6 percent falls within the age group of 46-55 while the remaining 5 respondents, representing 5 per cent of the entire population are within 50 years and above. The review shows that most of the respondents fall under the age bracket of 26-35 years.

Table 4.4 Marital Status of Respondents

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Married	32	32.%
Single	66	66.%
Divorced	-	-
Widow	1	1.%
Widower	1	1.%

Total	100	100
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Source: Field survey, 2020

As shown in Table 4.4 above, it reveals that out of 100 respondents sampled, 32 respondents representing 32percent of the entire respondents are married while 66 respondents, representing 66per cent of the entire respondents are single. From the above, it is obvious that the majority of the respondents sampled are single.

Table 4.5 Educational Status of Respondents

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Primary School Education	-	-
Secondary School Leaving Certificate	7	7.0%
University Degree/ Equivalent	66	66.0%
Post-graduate Degrees	27	27.0%
No formal schooling	-	-
Total	100	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 4.5 above shows that out of 100 respondents sampled, 7 respondents representing 7per cent of the entire respondents are with Secondary School Leaving Certificates, 66 respondents representing 66 percent of the entire respondents are with University Degree/Equivalent qualifications, 27 percent respondents representing 27 percent of the entire respondents are with

Post-graduate degrees. The study shows that the majority of the respondents sampled possessed University Degrees/ Equivalent.

Table 4.6 Employment Status of Respondents

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Unemployed	54	54.%
Employed	43	43.%
Retired	3	3.%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 4.6 above highlights the employment status of the respondents which out of 100 respondents sampled, 54 respondents representing 54 per cent of the entire respondents as unemployed, 43 respondents, representing 43 per cent of the entire respondents are employed, while the remaining 3 respondents representing 3 per cent of the entire respondents are retired. The study shows that the majority of the respondents sampled are unemployed.

Table 4.7 Respondents who participated during the 2020 governorship election in Ondo state

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	72	72.%

No	28	28.%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

As shown in the above table, 72 respondents representing 72 percent of the entire respondents participated during the 2020 governorship election in Ondo state, while 28 respondents representing 28 percent did not participate during the 2020 governorship election in Ondo state.

Table 4.8 Issuance of cash/goods during the 2020 governorship election in Ondo state

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	73	73.%
No	27	27.%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

As shown in the table 4.8, 73 respondents representing 73 percent of the entire respondents witnessed the issuance of cash/goods during the 2020 governorship election in Ondo state, while 27 respondents representing 27 percent did not witness issuance of cash/goods during the 2020 governorship election in Ondo state.

Table 4.9 Gifts to voters during the campaign for elections

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
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Yes	89	89.0%
No	11	11.0%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

As shown in the table, 89 respondents representing 89 percent of the entire respondents believe gifts to voters during the campaign for elections is a good thing. 11 respondents representing 11 percent of the entire respondents' believe gifts to voters during the campaign for elections is a bad thing.

Table 4.10 Respondents knowledge on how politicians offer material gifts/cash during elections

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Always	72	72.0%
Sometimes	18	18.0%
Rare	8	8.0%
None	2	2.0%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

As presented in table 4.10, it indicates that out 100 respondents sampled to reveal the level of knowledge on how politicians offer material gifts/cash during elections, 72 respondents representing 72 percent of the entire respondents feel politicians offer material gifts/cash during elections always, 18 respondents representing 18 percent of the entire respondents think politicians offer material gifts/cash during elections sometimes, 8 respondents representing 8 percent of the entire respondents agreed that it's rare for politicians to offer material gifts/cash during elections, 2 respondents, representing 2 per cent of the entire respondents go with "none". From the review, it shows that the majority of the respondents agreed that politicians offer material gifts/cash during elections.

Table 4.11 Respondents who voted because political parties promised cash/material gifts

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
No	90	90.9%
Yes	9	9.1%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

As presented in table 4.11, analysis of the respondents who voted because political parties promised cash/material gifts with 90 respondents representing 90.9.% of the entire respondents didn't vote because political parties promised cash/material gifts while 9 respondents representing 9.1% of the entire respondents voted because political parties promised cash/material gifts.

Table 4.12 Vote Buying and Intimidation during campaign.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	50	50.0%
No	50	50.0%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

In finding out whether vote buying is as a result of intimidation during campaign, table 4.12 reveals that 50 respondents representing 50.0% of the entire respondents agreed for Yes while the remaining 50 respondents representing 50.0% of the entire respondents feels vote buying is not as a result of intimidation during campaign by going with No.

Table 4.13 Do you think parties involve in vote buying are main political parties

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	86	86.0%
No	14	14.0%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

As shown in the table, 86 respondents representing 86.0% of the entire respondents agreed that they think parties involve in vote buying are main political parties, while 14 respondents representing 14.0% do not think parties involve in vote buying are main political parties.

Table 4.14 How would you suggest curbing the way candidates buy votes in Nigeria (Tick as much as applicable to you)

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
INEC and EFCC should develop a strategic collaborative framework for effective monitoring of political parties' campaign funds	75	75%
The National Assembly should fast-track deliberation and passage of the Bill establishing the National Electoral Offences Commission NEOC	64	64%
The Electoral Act should be amended to: empower citizens to effectively deploy social media tools in facilitating exposure of electoral fraud like vote buying.	60	60%
Civil society groups should advocate and apply pressure for police and other law enforcement agencies to arrest, investigate and diligently prosecute those involved	64	64%

in the act of vote trading		
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 4.14 reveals different channels that can be used to curb the way candidates buy votes in Nigeria. Majority of the respondents with 75% of the entire respondents agreed that INEC and EFCC should develop a strategic collaborative framework for effective monitoring of political parties' campaign funds, 60 respondents representing 60% of the entire respondents agreed that the National Assembly should fast-track deliberation and passage of the Bill establishing the National Electoral Offences Commission NEOC, 64 respondents representing 64% of the entire respondents voted for the Electoral Act should be amended to: empower citizens to effectively deploy social media tools in facilitating exposure of electoral fraud like vote buying. While 64 respondents representing 64 % of the entire respondents felt Civil society groups should advocate and apply pressure for police and other law enforcement agencies to arrest, investigate and diligently prosecute those involved in the act of vote buying.

Table 4.15 Do you think money/ material gifts influenced the decision of voters in your area during the 2020 governorship election in Ondo state

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	92	92%
No	8	8%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 4.15 reveals that 92 respondents representing 92% of the entire respondents submitted that money/ material gifts influenced the decision of voters in their area during the 2020 governorship election in Ondo state.

While the remaining 8 respondents representing 8% of the entire respondents do not think that money/ material gifts influenced the decision of voters in their area during the 2020 governorship election in Ondo state.

Table 4.16 What informed voting choice during the Ondo State governorship election (Tick as much as applicable to you)

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Campaigns promises	52	52%
Political party popularity	15	15%
Candidate acceptability	61	61%
Money/material gifts from political parties	10	10%
Party membership	29	29%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 4.16 reveals what informed voting choice during the Ondo State governorship election 52 respondents representing 52% of the entire samples agreed that campaigns promises informed their voting choice, 15 respondents representing 15% of the entire samples voted because of political party popularity, 61 respondents representing 61% of the entire samples agreed that candidate acceptability informed their voting choice, money/material gifts from political parties was a major factor for 10 respondents representing 10% of the entire samples. While 29 respondents representing 29 % of the entire samples voted based on party membership.

Table 4.17 Do you think vote buying has an impact on good governance.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	57	57%
No	43	43%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

In finding out whether vote buying has an impact on good governance, table 4.17 reveals that 57 respondents representing 57 % of the entire respondents agreed for Yes while the remaining 43 respondents representing 43% of the entire samples feels vote buying has no impact on good governance.

Table 4.18 What is your perception about the Ondo State governorship election? Tick as much as applicable to you. (Tick as much as applicable to you)

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE

Monetized	81	81%
Marred with Irregularities	26	26%
Free and Fair	20	20%
Violent	19	19%
Credible Enough	19	19%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 4.18 reveals the people’s perception about the Ondo State governorship election, 81 respondents representing 81% of the entire samples agreed that the election was marred with vote buying, 26 representing 26% of the entire samples agreed that the election was marred with irregularities, 20 respondents representing 20% of the entire samples agreed that the election was free and fair, 19 respondents representing 19% of the entire samples agreed that the 2020 Ondo State governorship election was violent. While 19 respondents representing 19 % of the entire samples are of the opinion that the 2020 Ondo State governorship election was credible enough.

Table 4.19 Obligation of voting as a business. If your answer to above is YES, please tick as many as possible on why you see

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
No	78	80.4%
Yes	19	19.6%
Total	97	97

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

As shown in table, 4.19, 78 respondents representing 80.4 % of the entire respondents agreed that the obligation to vote is not a business, while 19 respondents representing 19.6 % agreed that obligation to vote is a business. Meanwhile, of the respondents that sees the obligation to vote as business, 75% of the samples agreed that they sold their vote because the government has failed, 57.1% says because they see government presence only during campaigns, 50% blamed it on the lack of care from the government side, 32.1% sells their vote because they don't have a job, while 17.9% sells vote because they have a large family to cater for.

Table 4.20 Vote buying/material gifts influenced the outcome of the 2020 Governorship Election in Ondo State

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	89	89%
No	11	11 %
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

As shown in table 4.20, 89 respondents representing 89 % of the entire samples agreed that vote buying/material gifts influenced the outcome of the 2020 Governorship Election in Ondo State, while 11 respondents representing 11% do not agree that vote buying/material gifts influenced the outcome of the 2020 Governorship Election in Ondo State.

Table 4.21 Percentage of voters who exchanged votes for money/gifts items during the 2020 Governorship Election in Ondo State.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Below 70%	55	55%
Below 50%	15	15%
Below 30%	7	7%
Below 10%	5	5%
All the Voters	18	18%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 4.21 reveals percentage of voters who exchanged votes for money/gifts items during the 2020 Governorship Election in Ondo State, 55 respondents representing 55% of the entire samples agreed that below 70% exchanged votes for money/gifts items, 15 samples representing 15% of the entire samples agreed that below 50% exchanged votes for money/gifts items, 7 respondents representing 7% of the entire samples believe that below 30% exchanged votes for money/gifts items, 5 respondents representing 5% of the entire samples agreed that

below 5% exchanged votes for money/gifts items, while 18 respondents representing 18 % of the entire samples concluded that all the voters exchanged votes for money/gifts items during the 2020 Governorship Election in Ondo State.

4.3 Discussion of major Findings

The analysis shows whether the actual findings from the answers obtained from the questionnaire are in sync with the views presumed in the research questions or not. This equally provided the rationale for the researcher to make conclusive statement with respect to the subject of research.

The questionnaire alongside the good number of stakeholders interviewed in the study which includes, candidates in the election, members of the state working committees of political parties, security agents, party agents, public servants and voters justified the study.

Three Research Questions guided this study; these questions were framed in the research instrument (questionnaire) therefore the study's findings are presented below:

The first research question stated thus: Did material gifts offered by politicians to the electorates during the October 10, 2020 gubernatorial election in Ondo State influenced voting patterns? Responses from tables' 4.9, 4.15, 4.20 and 4.21 provided answers to this research question. Majority of the respondents and interviewees sampled, agreed that gifts to voters or handing of cash for votes by politicians during election campaigns is a bad good thing, also money/ material gifts influenced the decision of voters during the Ondo state 2020 governorship election, they also agreed that vote buying/material gifts influenced the outcome of the election and about 70% of voters exchanged votes for money/gifts items during the election.

Also the second research question stated that: What are people's perceptions of why candidates or their agents interested in buying votes during the October 10, 2020 gubernatorial election in Ondo State?

Responses from table 4.13 answered this question as 86 respondents representing 86. % of the entire respondents agreed that the main political parties are the parties involve in vote buying.

The third research question stated that: What are the voter's perceptions on the impact of vote-buying on good governance in Nigeria and Ondo state in particular?

Responses from table 4.9, 4.10 and 4.17 showed that respondents and interviewees agreed that gifts to voters or handing of cash for votes by politicians during election campaigns is not good for democracy, that politicians always offers material gifts/ cash for votes to the electorates during election and that vote buying has an impact on good governance.

It was also revealed that vote buying is often use to complement election, there is a relationship between economic status and vote buying in Ondo state this is because the price of vote in a village might be lower when compared with the urban centers.

From this study, it is deductible that vote buying influenced the outcome of the 2020 Governorship Election in Ondo State.

The findings also agreed with the elite theory used for this study according to Mosca (1939:75) the political elites in any society are group of minority that possesses the requisite qualities to occupy social and political space. This is the ruling class that performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoy the advantages of political offices. This political elites or ruling

class are often motivated by their irresistible urge for power to govern and control the majority which constitutes the masses. Thus, behind the political elite theory, power is the primary urge or focus. They employ all kinds of methods or strategies including their economic strength or power, particularly money as an instrument of influence to play upon the sentiments of the majority and find their way to political power.

Base on the above, the elites were able to use their power to monopolize the Ondo state voters and hoodwinked them to dance to their tunes.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summaries the major findings of the study, gives recommendations and wraps up with the conclusion.

5.1 Summary and Conclusion

The shameful trade in votes that followed the gubernatorial elections in Edo and Ondo, states and during the 2019 general elections indicates that democracy in Nigeria is on sale in an open market. What is particularly worrisome is the brazen nature vote-buying has assumed in recent times and the grave danger it poses to democracy. This study focus is to determine vote buying and its perceived implication on democratic governance, a study of Ondo state 2020 governorship election. Based on the data collected from the questionnaires in bringing this to light, the research was able to look at how vote-buying marred the election and how it's likely to affect democratic governance in Ondo State. The conclusion drawn from the findings of this study is that vote-buying has an implication on democratic governance.

This study has also revealed that vote-buying and issuance of material gifts to electorates during elections is rife among the downtrodden and therefore, pose a very big challenge to all stakeholders in Nigeria electoral system, particularly (INEC). If elections are to be free and fair, and work for the good of democratic governance, the issue must be addressed as soon as possible. One cardinal issue this study has revealed about vote-buying is that bribes are actually solicited for by the electorate themselves. This can pose a very big challenge to propose (NEOC) because no one will be willing to provide evidence to such acts of corruption.

This study has also revealed that many respondents did not open up to indicate whether they vote because a representative of the political party promised them cash or material gifts. A large number of those who accepted to have witnessed the issuance of cash/goods during the election opted to say they didn't vote because a representative of the political party promised cash when asked to state whether the gifts or money they received did influence their voting. This has various explanations including fear of the unknown owing to the sensitivity of the subject matter. Some, however, were able to open up to state openly that their voting was influenced by the number of gifts they received from those people they voted for.

Other important revelations of this study are those that concern the unemployment level as well as poverty. This study, therefore, links the high prevalence of vote-buying during the election to these very important macroeconomic variables. Because people have no employment and have very little income, they are vulnerable and insecure. This makes them accept anything that comes their way even if it comes in the wrong way. Politicians are also aware of this situation and therefore, would want to take advantage of this situation to increase their chances of winning elections.

Another finding of this study is that, the people are aware that issuance of material gifts during elections amounts to electoral corruption, has an impact on good governance and therefore, not a good practice. They are also aware that elections are a good mechanism of choosing leaders of their own choice and that this mechanism (elections) gives them the power to decide the fate of the existing government. In short, they are aware of the importance of elections in a democratic dispensation. However, the paradox is that while they are aware of the damage electoral corruption can do on democracy, they continue to accept bribes during elections as witnessed in the case study.

5.2 Recommendations

One of the tenets of democracy states that power holders must claim their right to rule through a competitive struggle for people's vote. This struggle must be traded in a free and fair environment where everybody who wishes to aspire for political office is given an equal and non-zero chance of winning an election, provided what they have offered in terms of policy alternatives is in line with people's desires and aspirations for a better future. Based on the research and analysis from this dissertation, the researcher comes out with the following as recommendations:

I. Nigerian economy must be improved to empower the people economically. This is because where poverty is reduced to the barest minimum; the electorates can then make independent electoral decisions in voting for credible politicians rather than incompetent but money spending politicians.

II. The National Assembly should reintroduce the Bill establishing the National Electoral Offences Commission (NEOC) ahead of the 2023 general election. The (NEOC), when established, should be well resourced to perform its statutory functions of arresting, investigating and prosecuting electoral offenders.

III. Election finance is another area that deserves proper regulation. The outrageous spending on Election Day by the majority of the candidates need to be regulated.

IV. There is a need for further research and academic interest in the area of vote-buying and its perceived implications on democratic governance. Doing so could help contribute to the strategic development and management of democratic values in Nigeria and contribute to a more civilized political scene.

V. The mass media has a role to play in sensitizing voters to know their primary responsibilities in electing credible candidates. For example, where the media is celebrating money-bags, who are using their wealth to subvert the democratic process and good governance, the phenomenon of money politics and vote-buying will continue to thrive in the Nigerian political scene.

VI. There is a need for more voter education and sensitization campaigns or awareness of citizens about the malpractice of buying votes. Voters, governments, NGOs, electoral bodies, civil societies, and non-state actors should find it an activity to spearhead and strengthen democracy by mounting vigorous campaigns to educate the electorates not to accept financial or material rewards before they vote for a particular candidate or party as this amounts to selling one's conscience

VII. INEC and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) as seen during the 2019 elections should do more to improve its strategic collaborative framework for effective monitoring of political parties' campaign funds to effectively curb electoral fraud, including vote-buying.

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APPENDIX 1: STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

The UNIBEN- NILDS PG School

National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies,

No 18, Danube Street, Off IBB Way,

Maitama, Abuja

October, 2020

Dear respondent,

REQUEST FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a Postgraduate Student undergoing a full time Masters in Elections and Party Politics Programme of the University of Benin NILDS.

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the successful completion of the Programme, I am undertaking a study on Vote Buying and its Perceived Implication on Democratic Governance in Nigeria: Study of Ondo State 2020 Governorship Election.

I'm glad to inform you that you are one of the few (100) people selected from Ondo State, to participate in the study which is trying to determine vote buying and its perceived implication on the 2020 governorship election.

This research work is for academic purpose; therefore information supplied would be treated with absolute confidentiality. Your privacy is important; it will therefore be completely anonymous.

Thank you, for your acceptance

Adabayo Jimoh

INSTRUCTIONS

Please, tick in the boxes provided for the option chosen. Do not write or tick in the boxes beyond the margin.

Please kindly tick {✓} in the appropriate box

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

Gender:

Male { } (b) Female { }

Age:

18-25{ } (b) 26-35{ } (c) 36-45{ } (d) 46- 55{ } (e) 50 and above{ }

Marital Status:

Married { } (b) Single { } (c) Divorced { } (d) Widow { } (e) Widower { }

Educational Qualifications:

Primary School Education { }

Secondary School Leaving Certificate { }

University Degree/ Equivalent { }

Post-graduate degrees { }

No formal schooling { }

Employment Status:

Unemployed { }

Employed { }

Retired { }

SECTION B: INFLUENCE OF MATERIAL GIFTS

6. Did you participate (vote) during the 2020 governorship election in Ondo state?

1. YES [] 2. NO []

7. Did you witness any issuance of cash/goods in your area from any of the candidates during the Ondo State 2020 governorship election?

1. YES [] 2. NO []

8. In your own view, do you think giving of gifts to voters or handing of cash for votes by politicians during election campaigns is a good thing?

1. YES [] 2. NO []

9. How often do politicians participating in elections offer material gifts/ cash for votes to the electorates in your area?

1. Always []

2. Sometimes []

3. Rare

4. None

10. Did you vote because representative of political party promised you cash/ material gifts?

1. YES 2. NO

SECTION C: WHY CANDIDATES BUY VOTES

11. In your view, do you think candidates buy votes as a result of intimidation during campaign?

1. YES 2. NO

12. Do you think parties involve in vote buying are main political parties?

1. YES 2. NO

13. How would you suggest to curb the way candidates buy votes in Nigeria? Tick as much as applicable to you

(INEC) and (EFCC) should develop a strategic collaborative framework for effective monitoring of political parties' campaign funds

The National Assembly should fast-track deliberation and passage of the Bill establishing the National Electoral Offences Commission (NEOC)

The National Assembly should fast-track deliberation and passage of the Bill establishing the National Electoral Offences Commission (NEOC)

The Electoral Act should be amended to: empower citizens to effectively deploy social media tools in facilitating exposure of electoral fraud like vote buying. []

Civil society groups should advocate and apply pressure for police and other law enforcement agencies to arrest, investigate and diligently prosecute those involved in the act of vote trading. []

SECTION D: ELECTORATES PERCEPTION OF VOTE BUYING

14. Do you think money/ material gifts influenced the decision of voters in your area?

1. YES [] 2. NO []

15. What informed your voting choice during the Ondo State governorship election? Tick as much as applicable to you

Campaigns promises []

Political party popularity []

Candidate acceptability []

Money/material gifts from political parties []

Party membership []

16. Do you think vote buying has an impact on good governance?

1. YES [] 2. NO []

17. What is your perception about the Ondo State governorship election? Tick as much as applicable to you

Violent

Free and fair

Credible enough

Marred with irregularities

Monetized

SECTION E: ECONOMIC STATUS OF VOTER AND EXCHANGE FOR VOTES

18. Do you see the obligation of voting as a business?

1. YES 2. NO

If your answer to above is YES, please tick as many as possible on why you see obligation to vote as a business

Because the government does not care for me

The government has failed

I don't have a job

I have a large family to cater for

Because we see government presence only during campaigns

Others, please specify

19. Do you think vote buying/material gifts influenced the outcome of the 2020 Governorship Election in Ondo State?

1. YES [] 2. NO []

20. In your view, what is the percentage of voters who exchanged votes for money/gifts items during the 2020 Governorship Election in Ondo State?

Thank you for your cooperation

APPENDIX 2: POPULATION OF STUDY

The population of this study consists of major participants and registered voters across the 18 local governments in Ondo state during the 2020 governorship election. Therefore, the respondents are Voters, Journalists, Election Observers and Candidates in the election, with total population of 1000.

1	Voters	800
2	Journalists	100
3	Election Observers	100
Total		1000