ISSN 1117-9481

ILORIN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY

Volume 10, NO.1 March, 2018

Published by the
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, NIGERIA

Citizen Journalism in a Digital Age: An Assessment of Content Generation and Audience Perception
Saudat Salah Abdulbaqi; Lambe Kayode Mustapha & Monsur Olawoyin 145-160

From Bread Winner to Waiting to be Fed: The Aged Living on the Fringe of Nigerian Society
Ernest Osas Ugiagbe & Ohen-Osa Harrison Okao 161-177

Money Politics and Vote Buying in Nigeria: Implications on Democratic Governance in Kwara State
ABUBAKAR, Abdulrahman; BAKARE, Adebola Rafiu & BABAITA, Tunde Abdulkareem 178-194

Tax Regimes as Albatross to Micro Finance and Poverty Reduction among Female Beneficiaries in Benin Metropolis, Edo State, Nigeria
Ernest Osas Ugiagbe & Helen Ehi Eweka 195-212

Assessing the Effectiveness of Correctional Rehabilitation and Reformation Programmes for Convicted Inmates in the Nigeria Prisons' Service in Osun State
Longe, Olukayode 213-227

Knowledge and Perception of Gambling among Youths in Ibadan North Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria
Adebimpe A. Adenugba & Ruth E. Akhuetie 228-243

The Biafra Agitation and Internal Security Threat in Nigeria
Owenorisiede Dennis Araziua 244-250

Academics' Social Responsibility in Africa: A Mission Accomplished or Unaccomplished?
Oscar Edoror Ubhenin 251-265

The Determinants of Rural Poverty in Nigeria Using Demographic and Health Survey Data
Osunde Omoruyi 266-277

Ethnicity and Religion as Tools for Political Mobilization in Nigeria
Eghweree Ogheneruonah Charles & Imuetinyan Festus 278-288

MONEY POLITICS AND VOTE BUYING IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS ON DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN KWARA STATE

ABUBAKAR, Abdulrahman
Department of Political Science,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.
Mobile: +2347036120503

BAKARE, Adebola Rafiu
Department of Political Science,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.
Mobile: +2348055803641
E-mail: bolaonboard1@gmail.com

and

BABAITA, Tunde Abdulkareem
Department of Public Administration
Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin
Mobile: +2348028154145

Abstract

A free and fair election is sine qua non to democratic survival in any nation. Election periods are defining moment in all democratic process because it is the only means of political recruitment known to the principle of democracy. However, politicians have become desperate to win electoral contests by deploying financial and material resources to entice the electorates in order to win. This trajectory led to the prevalence of vote buying and the emergence of money politics in Nigeria and other democracies. It is against this backdrop that this paper attempts to examine the root causes of this phenomenon and its implications on democratic consolidation in Nigeria with particular reference to Kwara State. Secondary source of data was adopted and thematic data analysis technique is used to analyse the data. The paper found that there is a link between money politics and vote buying. It also observed that the act is not peculiar to Nigeria and Kwara State alone rather it is a global phenomenon. However, it discovered that its dimension in Kwara State is alarming and disturbing as a result of its negative implications especially in the aspect of weakening governance apparatus leading to democratic decay. The paper therefore put forward a number of recommendations on how to make vote buying less attractive to the moneybags.

Keywords: Money; democracies; governance; politicians

Introduction

Democracy is becoming the most acceptable form of government globally. The transformation of the processes of democracy and political governance is to ensure that the state and its institutions are accountable to the people. Since the wind of democratic change blew across Africa in the 1990s, the expectation of good governance amongst the people became high, following the prolonged regime of dictatorship which presided over

the affairs of Africa for years (Ibeanu and Egwu, 2007). In every democratic system, election stands to answer the fundamental question of who occupies a political seat. It also resolves the disputes among political elites by enthroning a popular government. Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, her electoral process and state powers have largely been subjected to selection. The fundamental issue confronting the democratization process in Nigeria has been linked with the inability to conduct free and fair election. Virtually all the elections conducted in Nigeria since her independence have been characterized by one form of irregularity or the other, except for the 1993 and 2015 general elections that were given a pass mark by the international communities and observers. This poses little prospect for democratic consolidation as the basic institutions of democratic governance remain vulnerable to manipulation (Ibeanu and Egwu, 2007).

Politics, in the actual sense of it, has been regarded as the struggle for power among the actors. These individuals or group of actors pursue conflicting desires on public issues. The utmost aim of the victorious in the struggle is to authoritatively allocate values, setting of economic, social and political agenda for the society (Davies, 2014). On the contrary, the tendency of greediness rather than patriotism has resulted in Nigeria leaders seeing politics as a means of exploitation and self-aggrandizement. While the Nigerian populace craves for a leadership to lift them out of economic and social doldrums, the political elites maintain mercantilism as their watchword. They do everything in the hope of monetary gains and kickbacks (Uyi, 2010).

It is a truism that the electoral system itself cannot guarantee the demands of Nigerians, as the electoral body saddled with the responsibility of conducting free, fair and credible elections has never been truly independent. Their mode of establishment makes them a part of the executive arm (Danjibo, 2007.

This assertion corroborates the statement of the former Chairman INEC, Attahiru Jega, that in Nigeria, political parties budget to bribe security and INEC officials. This is a very serious challenge to our democracy (Hakeem, Suzanne, and Ufo, 2015). Politics in Nigeria is becoming an avenue where money bags and politicians invest to pursue their selfish interests. It has become a platform where the highest bidders determine who controls the steering wheel of state affairs. Money is explicitly regarded as the lubricant of politics. For any candidate desirous to contest and win in an election, such candidate must be the highest bidder. No doubt, the trend of vote buying in Nigeria's political landscape persists till date.

Close observation of the phenomenon of money politics and vote buying in Nigeria's political context, has shown that the practice has been encouraging politicians to indulge in corrupt practices. The situation paves way for financial demand of electorates and enhances political participation in the country. Money politics and vote buying in the Nigeria political process have taken a center stage. The practices have made the money bags and politicians to continue to dominate and decide who controls the power and allocate the resources of a state. The noticeable problem associated with the practice is the over bearing influence of the political lords on Nigeria electoral process. The implication is the enthronement of unpopular governments which have been hampering democratic survival in Nigeria.

In view of the foregoing background analysis, the main thrust of this paper is to examine money politics and vote buying in Kwara State, Nigeria, assess the factors that

account for its continual practice and draw out its implications on good governance in Kwara State and draw conclusions and recommendations that will stem the tide.

The Concept of Money Politics and Vote Buying

Money politics and vote buying is becoming a phenomenon in Nigeria's electoral process. It has become a strong instrument used by influential individuals and wealthy politicians to secure their selfish interests in the electoral process, particularly in the Nigeria context. The adoption of the policy was as a result of the central role that money plays in politics. It is impossible to analyze Nigerian politics since her independence without recourse to money politics and vote buying. The practice today has become the centrepiece of African politics. Hence, it has been defined as cash and carry politics (Akogun, 2015). The phenomenon in the Nigeria electoral process has been described as a situation whereby contenders for elective positions use money or money is used on their behalf as an inducement to sway their support. This is done without persuading the electorates to vote according to their wish and conviction but on the force of money that has changed hands (Ovwasa, 2013). Related to this is vote buying which was analysed as an economic exchange between the candidates and the electorates. That is to say, the contenders buy and the citizens/electorate sell votes as they buy and sell vital items in the market (Fredrick Charles and Andrea, 2005 cited in Ovwasa, 2013). The acts of money politics and vote buying become a contractual agreement between the contenders of political offices and electorates who are willing and ready to give out their votes in return for money. In most cases the electorates enter into negotiation with the contestants and the highest bidder secures the ballot. Where the contestants invest their money to secure the electorates, the highest bidders usually carry the day. The implication of this is that, the opposition becomes prone to double jeopardy. They are denied access to the government and the resources invested go down the drain. They equally suffer the loss of all other political posts as they would not be compensated for their money invested.

Still on vote buying, Abdulrahman, Danladi and Sanni (2016), opine that it is a process where voters' conscience and views are manipulated to the advantage of the political parties' candidates in an election through the use of money or other materials things to induce and appeal to the electorates directly or indirectly. Parties and candidates buy vote by offering particularistic material benefits to voters. Candidates may generally aspire to purchase political support at the ballot box in accordance with the idea of market exchange (Bettseeh and Akpoo, 2015). As an implication, the majority of the electorates are always denied the opportunity to vote for the candidate of their choice. To be sure, Saliu and Lipade (2008) argued that:

> A great chunk of population is excluded from the mainstream political process due to institutionalized social and economic constraints. For instance, the emphasis on certified education and acquisition of properties obviously put the elite in more vantage position to dominate the vast majority.

Politicians were known to distribute Ankara (clothes), T-Shirts, caps and badges with party emblems, food stuff and sundry items, to voters at political rallies. There was no huge funding by individual candidates to win elections as obtained currently in the political activities of the candidates (Ovwasa, 2013). Money and politics in Nigeria is

quite revealing. It shows the domination of electoral politics in the country by the moneyed elites. One reason for the face-off between decent governance and the other option is money. How do you win a Nigerian election for an unknown candidate in only a few months, facing an entrenched opponent? The answer is: you probably need a lot of money (Collier, 2009 cited in Adetula, 2015). In the actual sense, the politics and vote buying is not peculiar to Nigeria alone; it was entrenched in England in the 19th and 20th centuries. It has also taken a central stage in France, Philippines, Ecuador. In Taiwan, vote brokers typically approach relatives, friends and neighbours. Thailand borrows a similar leaf. Example of this is the 1992 election in Thailand. During campaign, workers for one candidate sought in each village to recruit the person best placed to deliver support, generally someone with significant social status in the village (Callaban, 200, cited in Ovwasa, 2013). In the actual sense, money politics is basically how elections are financed. Political parties or candidates directly or indirectly bribe voters and electoral officers.

Danjibo and Abubakar (2017) simply defined vote buying as the exchange of votes for money or any material benefits either actual or potential. Following this argument, they classified vote buying into various forms. Among these are:

a. Direct inducement of the electorates with money to influence votes in favour of a particular political party or candidates.
b. Inducement of local political elites with money or materials in order to gain the block vote of a particular constituency.
c. Providing wards or electoral constituencies with materials such as clothing, foodstuff with the intention of getting their votes.
d. Paying political thugs to intimidate and harass the electorates to force them to vote for a particular political party or candidate.
e. Paying security agents to aid in electoral fraud.
f. Paying electoral officials to aid in electoral fraud.
g. Paying political thugs to snatch ballot boxers.
h. Purchasing cars or motorbikes, building houses and providing contracts for traditional rulers and local elites in order to get the votes of their subjects, among others. (Danjibo and Abubakar, 2007).

Indeed, when a candidate is sure of losing an election, his or her members or followers votes are traded for position in the regimes of the winners. The greatest losers are the ordinary masses, those voters whose faith and investment in the system are hijacked and subverted, because money, not their will, are made the determining factor in elections (Adetula, 2009). This makes politics in Nigeria become a business project always transacted by the powerful oligarchs in Nigeria. The idea of money politics and vote buying makes it possible for politicians to hijack the electoral process in Nigeria.

Not only in Nigeria, a study documented a quantum jump in election costs in the United States over a fourteen-years period. From slightly over US $1.6 billion in 1998, election expenses rose to over US$6.8 billion in 2012. Monies spent by presidential and congressional candidates, political parties and independent interest groups trying to

influence federal elections (Bawa, 2014:61). He avers that Barrack Obama's campaign team generated over US $2.6 billion. It is therefore a truism that:

> If you do not have money, you cannot be able to massively campaign through the media, you can hardly be able to buy guns or give bribe, no matter how acceptable your program is to the public. Money plays an important role because of the corrupt nature of the election process in Nigerian politics which, in nearly all cases, is devoid of ethical conduct (Wakili, Zango and Muhammed, 2008: 62 cited in Bawa, 2014: 61).

It suffices to say that there is a clear line of demarcation between electoral and political process of the third world countries and that of the advanced societies. Most politics in advanced societies are practiced under the ambit of the law. Political parties finance campaigns in accordance with the electoral act. It is against the act for an individual to donate a huge amount of money to a party's campaign and other electoral activities. Meanwhile, politics in the third world nations is excessively monetized, especially in Nigeria where politics has become cash and carry. The policy has turned to negotiation between the politicians and the electorates in Nigeria.

Historical Emergence of Money Politics and Vote Buying in Nigeria

Money politics and vote buying is becoming a common practice among many politicians today in Nigeria and the world at large. The practice became known in the 19th and 20th century in England, France and is common today in the Philippines and Ecuador. In Taiwan, voters, brokers, typically approach relatives, friends and neighbours. The same strategy was adopted in Thailand (Callaham, 2000 cited in Ovwasa, 2013). He cited the example of 1992 elections conducted in Thailand; during campaign, people were employed as campaign workers for a candidate in each village to recruit the person best placed to deliver support, generally with significant social status in the village.

The phenomenon became common practice in Nigeria as it is in many countries. Private interests groups and political action committee which seek policy goals and legislations to server their narrow, private needs continue to use all the means at their disposal, including money, to solidify or expand their influence on the elected officials and electorates (Wright, 1985). The practice became necessary in Nigeria because of the inability of Nigerian politicians to fulfill their campaign promises. The deceit became important for the politicians in order to remain relevant in politics.

By extension, Sohner (1973) opines that money has become the mother milk of politics which political gladiators must drink to remain in business. Indeed, the practice became pronounced during the Second Republic in Nigeria in 1979. It was fuelled by the regime of oil boom during the military era of Gowon (Davies, 2014). He avers that wealthy Nigerians who made their money during civil war, who supplied arms and ammunitions, including individual contractors who were involved in the Federal government reconstruction projects, embraced the practice and adopted it as alternative means of business.

Meanwhile, during the civilian regimes of the 1960s and 1979-1983, use of money took forms of negligible pockets of 'vote buying' and direct government illegal election financing (Bawa, 2014: 62). He stresses further, that it grew to more widespread undertaking during General Ibrahim Babangida's military administration.

It is a truism that 1979 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provide for some form of check especially with regard to external control of political parties. But even that was not accomplished in the 1979-1983 elections (Adetula, 2008: 20). The law or act was circumvented by some political gladiators who eventually used all the means, especially wealth to hijack the activities of the political parties within their regions. With unbridled use of money, little or no attention was paid to political mobilization by those seeking elective positions. Politicians attached much weight to using money to buy votes of the electorates (Adetula, 2008: 20). Against this background, it became clearer that there was need for political finance reform in Nigeria.

In line with the above, the Military regime of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, initiated a new policy to address the practice of money politics and vote buying in Nigeria and also curtail the philosophy of the money-bags hijacking the activities of the political parties at various levels of government. To be sure, Bawa (2014:63) argued that Babangida initiated a new approach that kick started the change in the use of money in electoral and political processes. The regime designed a fully owned, control and management of political parties at all levels of government in the country. The regime directly set up two political parties, namely: National Republic Convention and Social Democratic Party. This approach was adopted in order to checkmate the policy of money-bags in electoral process in Nigeria. He stressed further that to underscore the new philosophy; the government directly funded the construction, staffing, logistics and provision of facilities for party offices.

Indeed, all efforts and strategies put in place by Babangida's military administration to curb the money politics and the founding of political parties by money-bags proved abortive. Rather, the situation became compounded. Ojo (2008:115) adds weight to the thinking that the transition programme of General Babangida was perhaps the most expensive ever, all in an attempt to correct the ills of the past. The first, so called money-bags were dissuaded from founding political parties all in an attempt to whittle down the influence of money politics and vote buying in Nigeria.

Worse still, between 1999 till date, the body politics has witnessed unprecedented influence of money. The role of money in the current democratic dispensation is indeed amazing too (Ojo, 2008: 116). He argues further that the civilian-civilian transition programme of 2003 was a matter of money to buy votes. Politicians were spending so recklessly that everyone knew that politics had become a matter of money. This made former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo to cry out in 2013 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 (sic) of money, not their will, are made the determining factor in elections. Can we not move from politics of money and materialism to politics of ideas, issues and development? (Adetula, 2008: 20).

Furthermore, President Obasanjo examined the cost of conducting elections in Nigeria and lamented that:

> I have said that we prepare for elections, as if we are going to war, and I can state without hesitation, drawing from my previous life, that the parties and candidates together spend during the last elections, more than would have been needed to fight a successful war. The will of the people cannot find expression and flourish in the face of so much money directed solely at achieving victory. Elective offices become mere commodities to be purchased by the highest bidder, and those who literally invest merely see it as an avenue to recoup and make profit. Politics becomes business, and the business of politics becomes merely to divert public funds from the crying needs of our people for real development in their lives" (Adetula, 2008: 19).

However, the situation becomes worrisome to concerned Nigerians as to what might have constituted reckless and uncontrolled spending during elections in Nigeria, or monetization of politics. Responding to this question, Bawa (2014:69) asserts, monetization of politics and reckless spending during elections could be linked to the manner at which money-bags, political godfathers deploy financial resources in prosecuting elections. Not only that, politicians have demonstrated increased deter nomination and audacity in using money illegitimately to influence the outcomes of an electoral or political process in Nigeria. This is because of the expected payoffs in terms of economic patronage.

Monetization of politics in Nigeria today is surging upwards. This can be linked to the inability of various administrations to whittle down the practice. Politicians and money-bags have turned it to a philosophy. In the countdown to 2015 general election in Nigeria, political parties began to strategize on how to make money to finance campaigns and the usual practice of vote-buying. Cost of purchasing nomination forms were jacked up by various political parties.

Many of the parties' supporters especially the businessmen, contractors, and rank and file, began to compete in terms of donation to the contending parties, especially the ruling party (People's Democratic Party and Alliance for People's Congress (APC). Essentially, the NEC of APC met before the 2015 election, on the 30th of September 2014 and decided the costs of the nomination forms amount ranging from 2 million naira to 20 million naira (Bawa, 2014: 66). This decision was seriously criticized by many Nigerians, especially the would-be contestants. It was perceived as a calculated attempt to frustrate some candidates from picking the nomination from. Some lamented that the forms were meant for wealthy people or those who have people that can bankroll them. The entire situation was later linked to the increasing overbearing influence of godfatherism in contemporary Nigerian politics.

It is pertinent note that in preparation towards 2003 primary elections across the parties, the Transition Monitoring Groups - a coalition of civil society organizations, in a statement of the conduct of the PDP, ANPP, UNPP and NDP primaries, in January 2003, complained that there was widespread bribery of delegates, with sacks stuffed with money to influence their voters. Similarly, Mrs Sarah Jubril, a presidential candidate in 2003 elections, petitioned the leadership of her party over alleged misappropriation of grants from INEC (Adetula, 2008).

Money Politics and Vote Buying: The Kwara State Case

The Nigerian state often experiences governmental instability in the forms of bad policy options and implementation. The basic necessities of life such as electricity supply, water supply, portable roads, employment and sound education are mandate in Nigerian society (Beetseh and Akpo, 2015). Democracy that can facilitate good governance and development through free, fair and transparent elections has been assaulted in Nigeria due to money politics and vote buying. Money politics has been used as the mainstream mobilization instrument by the politicians. It is now being adopted as an instrument of domination and oppression. Since Nigeria's return to democratic rule, the expectations of the people from their political leaders are totally different from what they are prepared to give. They expect them to be dynamic and capable of leading them to the path of escaping from poverty (Saliu, 2014). He avers that it is poor understanding that makes a politician not to be able to draw any line between human resources used to win in an election and those required for good governance. The deployment of money into the Nigeria political process cannot be overemphasized. Most especially with the phenomenon of poverty and corruption that have become endemic in our society. Many of the electorates openly demand for money from politicians before they cast their vote. Thus, the highest bidder emerges as the winner in an election.

It is a truism that in contemporary Nigerian politics, particularly under the fourth republic, many politicians would appear to have approximated the state as their personal estate at different levels. This attitude had, however, been present since the outset of democratization process in 1999 (Gambo, 2006). Meanwhile, the domineering of leadership essentially in area of politics in Nigeria has taken a center stage. It has become more visible and widespread to the extent that the events have unfolded themselves. Since the inception of the fourth republic in Nigeria, virtually all elections conducted in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 were characterized by the events of money politics by the money bags at all levels of government. Essentially, between 2003 and 2011 in Nigeria, people tended to vote for the party whose platform or image suggested that electing than would promote attainment or preservation of their personal values.

One would not dispute the fact that average Nigerian adults accepted gifts to vote for candidates in the election, because of abject poverty that has become endemic in the country. In Nigeria today, money politics, vote buying, godfatherism and "share of money" are regular household phrases and slogans portraying moral decadence of politicians (Adetula, 2008: XXVII). By extension, Nigerian political leaders are of separate notions. The leaders of first and second republic attached importance to the growth of the country through nation-building and welfarism of the citizens, while those in the fourth republic are political entrepreneurs. For example, late Lamidi Adedibu of Oyo state, Chris Uba of Anambra state, Ali Modu Sheriff of Borno State, among others. However, it was argued that a politician in the actual sense of it is he who studied the pains of his people and proffer credible solution to them. The solution to mass poverty is not occasional doles in form of alms to the poor (Akegun, 2015). He avers, the solution might be in education, appropriate infrastructure developments, provision of employment, manpower training and development. But when you see a politician that makes money sharing the only weapon of mass mobilization of the people for political purposes, that there is the more rare use of money to achieve selfish political ends.

Prior to the emergence of money politics and vote buying in Ilorin and the entire Kwara state, there exist some personalities who were in forefront of Kwara politics, including Alhaji Yusuf Amuda Gobir, Sule Maito, Buhari Edun, J.S Olawoyin, J.C. Ekunrin among others. They were all amiable philanthropists and patrons (Animasaun, 2016 and Akogun, 2015: 71). They were not wealthy in terms of money but contributed to community development through provision of jobs community development and provision of contracts to their friends and other individuals. They were rich in character, service and integrity. Despite their access to money, they were not interested in wealth acquisition; rather they were interested in community development and also furnished the people with information that would lead to development of their communities.

Animasaun (2015: 226) recalls that Yusuf Amuda, through his federal appointment obtained from several people various forms of public service patronage. Meanwhile, the likes of Olawoyin Maito among others did not amass wealth but enjoyed the support of many people. Though Jimoh (1994) cited in Animasaun (2015) argues that within the same period late Dr Olusola Saraki was already making generous donations to the execution of community projects. The demise of the above philanthropist popularized Dr Olusola Sarakio as a good, merciful and man of the masses. He was accorded the accolade base on succor he provided for his people. Late Olusola Saraki, outsmarted his compeers who wanted the leadership position bestowed on them based on the perceived anti-Ilorin policies of Brigadier Lasisi Bamigboye's administration in Kwara State (Saliu, Pilot Newspaper 2016: 11).

Indeed, Late Saraki started his policy of philanthropy through his intervention that included provision of water tanker for fetching water by the people of Ilorin and environ, provision of free medical care for the people, some medical bills paid for the sick, funeral bills for the dead, gifts of clothes and handbags for estranged housewives, provision of bicycles, road construction, scholarships, bread making (when it was scarce in Ilorin) by extension. Late Saraki asserted that, "the greatness of a man is in recognition of his contribution towards the development of his area be it in cash or in kind". (Saliu, 2016: 11, Akogun, 2015, Shuaib, 2013:3).

To many political observers, contributions to the uplift of his people and the entire community were regarded as political motivation rather than his act of philanthropy. He succeeded in outsmarting his compeers because of what Ojo and Lawal (2011: 188) consider as Late Saraki's "unlimited access to unlimited finance". It is a truism that one cannot give what he/she does not have. One would admit that Late Saraki's fortune in politics was as a result of his tireless intervention in the welfarism of his people. Interestingly, having always been keenly interested in current affairs, especially the policies and programmes of government as they impacted people's lives, it wasn't upon our return (Cited in Late Saraki's autobiography, 2013:12). In 1964, he contested into Federal House of Representatives and lost. Late Saraki re-strategized again and reappeared in politics again from grassroots in Kwara State with a grand style (Shuaib, 2015:5). He avers that his philanthropist activities assisted him in gaining his people's support. By extension, late Dr. Olusola Saraki admitted that:

> The experience taught him some vital lessons about Nigeria. You must not distance yourself from the people; be accessible to them, listen to them, be open and if possible align yourself to the mainstream party. Those lessons stood me in

> good stead during the second republic and subsequently my years of active politicking (Late Saraki cited in Abubakar Olusola Saraki's autobiography, 2013:14).

It is pertinent to note that a leader who is not capable of bailing out his people from abject poverty, unable to provide stomach infrastructure for the people, may not achieve the supports of his people. Therefore, one might argue that late Saraki's philosophy of domination of Kwara politics can be linked to money politics. Akogun (2015:73) recount that if there is any issue that is entirely Kwaran in origin and now remains our contribution to national history of partisan politics, it is money politics. Kwara state is its origin and the major advocates are here. He stresses further that the rot started since 1973 when people of Kwara state have always been bought at a price and money, cheap money is the price. In 1979, late Olusola Saraki became an household name in politics; he contested for Senatorial seat and eventually won and became the Senate leader on the platform of National Party of Nigeria (NPN). Late Saraki was one of the grand founders of NPN. He made tremendous financial contribution to the formation and success of the party.

It is a known fact that Late Olusola Saraki through his wealth became a kingmaker in Kwara State. As rightly observed by Lawal (2005:209) Kwara State's experience is quite unique in view of the domineering influence of Dr. Olusola Saraki in the politics of the state. He has become an indisputable kingmaker of Kwara State. By and large, Ojo and Lawal (2011: 188) add weight to the thinking, that there has never been anyone who has become 'somebody in Kwara State politics such as Governors, Ministers, Commissioners, Ambassadors, Members of National and State House of Assembly, Board Members, Councils and Commission at the State and Federal Levels, Local Government Chairman and Councilors among others who have not gone through the Late Saraki's process or nominated by kingmakers. To be sure, Late Olusola Saraki's domineering influence in Kwara Politics led to the enthronement of five successive state Governors. In 1979, he was instrumental to the electoral victory of late Alhaji Adunnu Attah of the NPN, Chief C.O Adebayo of Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). In 1983, Alhaji Mohammed Shaaba Lafiagi was elected on the platform of SDP (Social Democratic Party in 1991, and Late Rear Admiral Mohammed Alabi Lawal (Rtd) 1999 on the platform of ANPP and Dr Bukola Saraki his biological son succeeded Governor Lawal (2003 – 2007) as the flag bearer of People's Democratic Party (PDP). Bukola Saraki ruled for two consecutive terms. It became the first time in the history of Kwara Politics that a governor would rule for eight years.

It was further argued by Ojo and Lawal (2011) that late Dr Olusola Saraki lost his bid to the nominated as the presidential flag bearer of All Progressive Party (APP) in the 27th Febuary 1999, presidential election. This made Olusola Saraki to snap his figure and give unquestionable directive to his teeming supporters to swift their support for the opposition party (PDP). Suddenly the whole voting pattern changed and PDP won the presidential election in Kwara State with wide margin. No wonder, Late Olusola Saraki argues in his interview with the Nation newspaper that:

> I have never rigged any election since I joined politics about forty-seven years ago since then I have been using my money to contest for elective offices and to serve my people (The Nation newspaper, 15th April 2011)."

By and large, the friction between the duos became a serious crisis to the extent that they ultimately determined and slugged it out. The patron (Olusola Saraki) and client (Mohammed Alabi Lawal) both deployed all means at their disposal to prosecute the crisis. Late Saraki deployed vast resources, manpower and political tactics to execute the crisis; while Late Lawal deployed state resources, power of incumbency, state apparatus (security agents), and political thuggery to tackle the grand master. One would agree with Akogun(2015:73) that the only politician who had been able to daze the godfather with money was the late Governor Mohammed Lawal. But then if he had money like the godfather, did he understand the science of spending it like the patron? Late Olusola Saraki's political domineering influence in Kwara politics was unique in the sense that he enthroned and dethroned any political office holder within the state. Consequent upon his victory in installing or enthroning five successive civilian Governors in Kwara state from 1979 to 2011, Late Saraki used his political wizardry in dethroning such governors with ease. They were Late Adamu Attallo in 1983 and Late Rear Muhammed Alabi Lawal in 2003.

It is important to note that politicians, such incumbent political office holders (Governors, presidents, ministers, among others) who have always had access to unearned income spend money recklessly on politics. This is because they have easy access and control on the state's treasury. With such huge amount of money, the induced voters, security agents, and even the electoral officers such as the returning officers, collation officers, presiding supervisors, presiding officers, polling clerks, even the opposition party agents. It is sometimes even cheaper to influence the INEC officers. They bribe them and also provide logistics such as vehicles, generator sets, food and drinks in form of assistance. In actual sense of it all, these inducements do not reach the electorates who were masses, but few who made themselves available to stuffed ballot boxes and snatching of ballot boxes and political thuggery.

Factors Responsible for Money Politics and Vote Buying in Kwara State

Party politics before Nigeria's independence was basically centered on issues. These issues were based on the commitment of parties and candidates to nationalist aspirations and goals of ensuring self-government. The situation took another dimension during the 1959 federal elections as the political leaders spent money to ensure the success of their parties (Ezekiel, 2008:37). He noted further that the practice of money politics, vote buying and abuse of office became noticeable with what politician do with public funds. The political leaders saw nothing wrong in diverting public funds for party financing. It is a known fact that Nigerian politicians and money-bags are always at alert, awaiting the season of elections to invest their money and other valuable materials in order to secure the support of the masses to ensure the victory of their candidates in an election. Though, the situation has become sacrosanct in Nigeria, especially in Kwara State where Saraki championed the course.

The fundamental question that keen observers of Kwara politics might be interested in is what are the factors that account for money politics and vote buying in Kwara state? Since it is a global phenomenon, scholars have argued on different grounds. Dansanto (n.d) cited in Ojo (2008: 118) noted three conditions that make the environment conducive for vote buying. These are:

a. Close competition between political factions within the jurisdiction for an an important office;
b. Poverty: rich people, the privileged among us, do not sell their votes.
c. Apathy.

He avers that when you get these three conditions working together, they become the grandest fertilizers that spur vote buying.

In another vein, Davies (2014: 423) identifies a number of factors. Among these are:

a. Focus on personality rather than issues: Most of the candidates during campaigns draw the attention of their electorates away from political parties to themselves. The implication of this is that political parties and their messages become less important to the electorate.
b. The inability of political parties and the contestants to put in place comprehensive and comprehensible manifestoes that would enable the electorate to make a rational choice.
c. 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 sorts of malpractices including offering financial and material inducement to voters. Working on the poverty of the people, Nigerian politicians have been known to distribute food stuff and other consumable materials to voters shortly before the elections and sometimes on Election Day. Contrary to the provision of the extant electoral law that prohibits such practice.
d. Absence of any effective legislation that puts any ceiling on financial contribution to political parties and candidates by groups or individuals.
e. The people's perception, greatly reinforced by obscene display of opulence by the public office holders 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 (Obasanjo and Mabounje, 1992:6) cited in Davies (2014: 423).
f. Political cynicism on the part of voters: This is linked to unfulfilled promises made by the winners of the past elections. This asking for money from the candidates canvassing for votes is equivalent to asking for a pay-off, another way by which the people receive their own share of the national cake.

In a similar vein; other scholars such as Ibeanu and Egwu identified some factors that are responsible for philosophy of money politics by the politician. These are:

i. The fragility of political parties which give way for money politics and vote buying in Nigeria's electoral system. They argue that political parties have remained institutionally fragile and can hardly perform the routine functions expected of them in a fledgling democracy.

ii. Tutorship in democratic governance: To explain why crisis trail democracy in Nigeria, the political elite often asserts that Nigeria is still undergoing some

tutorship in democratic governance. In their argument, the political class deems itself as passing through a phase of political learning (John, 2006: 10). It is a truism that political learning is an important process which a country like Nigeria which had passed through a prolonged period of military rule must undergo in order to perfect or at least improve on its practice of democracy. Berno (1992) clarified, political learning as the process through which people modify their political beliefs and tactics as a result of severe crisis, frustration and democratic change in environment.

iii. Impatience on the part of political actors:

iv. In an attempt by some politicians, especially the political actors or political godfathers to protect and increase their interest politically, they circumvent the rules of the game (election), because of their desperate desire.

However, in the case of Kwara State, some of the factors mentioned above have correlation with Kwara politics. It is important to figure out the factors that are peculiar to the state politics among these are:

i. Cash-in on the poverty of the people; Nigerian politicians are well known for distributing foodstuff, clothes and other consumable materials to voters shortly before the elections and sometimes on Election Day (Ojo, 2008:119). The instances when candidate threw some money into the air during campaign rallies make people to scramble for it and get injured in the process. Though money is the language of Kwara politics, the highest bidder in an election carries the day. One would agree with the keen observers of Kwara politics that with the decline of economic fortune of Late Olusola Saraki, such as the collapse of his bank and frosty relationship with the governor, the naira pipe dried up (Saliu, 2014:91-92). He notes further that what was available to the political icon was not such that could have won the electoral battle for him. During the critical times, money even expected from unlikely source to change the course of the war against him.

ii. Poverty becomes one of the strong indicators of money politics in Kwara State. The alarming rate of poverty in the country especially in Kwara state caused by greediness on the part of leadership in the state, poor implementation of economic policies, coupled with sit-tight syndrome in the state, has made money politics and vote buying to have gained ground in Kwara state. Ogbunweze (2005) contends that those in high places do not want to return objection after service. And that people seek public office to initiate a change of financial state or fortune.

iii. There is high docility among the people in Kwara State. It is a known fact that the people of Kwara state are generally docile in taking leaders to task. Whatever is pushed out by the leaders in power is always accepted without proper interrogation. This culture of silence has denied our politics of robust engagement and that has made the actors show little regard for transparency and active participation of people in the policy decision making process (Saliu, 2014: 10).

He observes further that polarization of the citizens into two has made it difficult for people to put all their hands on deck to secure rapid development of the state.

iv. Over-politicization policy of the society: Indeed, politics in Nigeria has been painted by Ayandiji (2004: 87) as over politicization of the state; no enduring party system and government is in place. Ake (n.d.) cited in Ayandiji (2004: 87) adds weight to the thinking that the problem of Nigeria today is the over politicization of social life. We are intoxicated with politics, the premium on political power is so high that we are prone to take the most extreme measures to win and maintain political power. The peculiar case of Kwara state is elite structure, which is tailored along family dynasty. The dynasty has been interconnected that it encompasses the entire family. As a matter of fact, each who has the power to influence the course of party politics in the state. The dynasty has become so interconnected to the extent that several attempts to collapse the structure have been met with stiff resistance.

v. Personality Factor: Late Olusola Saraki's hegemony in Kwara State was a result of his personality. The Kwara State experience is quite unique in view of the domineering influence of late Dr. Olusola Saraki in the politics of five successive civilian governors of the state (Lawal, 2005: 209). At every turn, the candidates during campaigns draw the attention of the electorates away from political parties to themselves. The consequence of this is that, political parties and their messages become less important to the electorates (Davies, 2014). By extension, the candidates along with late Saraki appear on their campaign banners and posters. The implication of this is that any candidate that secures the node of late Saraki to vie for a political post automatically becomes the candidate of the people. This is because all manner of inducement would be made available by the leader to ensure his or her victory in the election. Women and youths take the center stage in this situation in Kwara state, because of their inability to access wealth.

Implications on Democratic Governance in Kwara State

The high prevalence of money politics and vote buying in Kwara State has enormous negative implications on democratic governance. In fact it weakens the governance apparatus thereby contributing to the decay of democracy in the state. These implications include but not limited to the following:

i. It promotes systemic corruption as the moneybags will definitely prevail on the political office holders to make returns on their 'investment'. This can be in form of direct looting of the treasury, over invoicing, contract mobilization without execution etc.: all at the expense of development

ii. It encourages nepotism as moneybags will determine who get what when and how. They will force their stooge on the elected officials to be appointed into juicy political offices in order to spread the tentacles of their influence in the government.

iii. Based on the above points, it will discourage good governance as political office holders will be responsible and accountable to the moneybags instead of the electorate.

iv. On a general note, it makes politics not appealing to those who might have contributed positively to the development but could not withstand the reality of becoming stooge to political moneybags and godfathers. In addition, a number of people may decide not to vote as they may believe their votes will not count since the moneybags in most cases determine the electoral outcome. Therefore, it encourages political apathy and low voter turnout.

v. Above all, it weakens institutions of governance. Legislature becomes rubber stamp as both executive and legislature receive directives from the moneybags. By so doing, the legislature cannot perform oversight on the executive and will be incapacitated to check the excesses of the executive. Legislature becomes moneybags' assembly rather than people's assembly.

Conclusion and Recommendation

From the foregoing, the paper has established the link between money politics and vote buying. It also established the fact that the act is not peculiar to Nigeria and Kwara State alone rather it is a global phenomenon; though its dimension in Kwara State is alarming and disturbing to political analysts and observers as a result of the fact that it serves as hindrance to socio-political and economic development. It is on this note that this paper recommends among others that INEC should enforce its law on electoral spending by establishing a separate Unit to prosecute alleged offenders and those who engage in vote buying (both the sellers and the buyers). It will not be out of place if the government establishes special courts to try electoral issues in which the issues of money politics and vote buying will be put under its jurisdiction.

In addition, the security agencies should assist INEC in enforcing the laws without fear or favour regardless of the economic, social and political status of the violators. It will be better for the country at large and Kwara State in particular if politicians could develop the political will to abide by the rules of the game. Politics should not be seen as a 'do or die' affair that will require the utilization of crook means. People should also not see politics as investment that can yield returns. Finally, the National Orientation Agency (NOA) in conjunction with INEC should embark on rigorous and extensive political education on the danger of vote buying and its implication on the future of the country and the generation yet unborn. By so doing, even if the vote buyers are willing to pay, nobody or fewer people will be interested selling their vote. This will largely makes it an unviable and unproductive venture to the moneybags.

References

Abdulrahman, A., Danladi, O. & Sani, U. I. (2006). Money Politics and Analysis of Voters Behaviour in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects for Free and Fair Elections. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research*, 3(3) 89-99

Adetula, V. O. A. (2015). Godfathers, Money Politics and Electoral Violence in Nigeria: Focus on 2015 Elections. *Afrobarometer Survey in Nigeria 2012.* Available Online www.afrobarameter.org

Adetula, V. O. A. (2008). Money and Politics in Nigeria. An Overview. In Adetula, V. A. O (ed). Money and Politics in Nigeria. Abuja: Petra Digital Press.

Akogun, I. O. (2005). Letters to The Emir: A Vision for a Meterogenous Kwara State. Nigeria: Integrity Publications

Ayandiji, D. A. (2004). Party and Electoral Politics. In Adigun, A. B., Diamond, L. and Ebere, O. (eds) *Nigeria Struggle for Democracy and Good Governance.* Ibadan: University Press

Beetseh, K. and Akpo, T (2015). Money Politics and Vote Buying in Nigeria: A Threat to Democratic Governance in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. *International Journal of Public Administration & Management Research,* 2(5): 65-73.

Bermeo, N. (1992). Democracy and the Lessons of Dictatorship. *Journal of Comparative Politics*, 25(2)91-272.

Callah, W. A. (200). *Poll Watching, Elections and Civil Society in South East Asia.* Burlington VT. Ashgate

Davies, A. E. (2014). Money Politics in the Nigerian Electoral Process. In Ajayi, R & Fashagba, J. O. (eds). *Understanding Government and Politics in Nigeria.* Ilorin: Yester Today Rcow Consult.

Ezekiel, M. A. (2008). Funding of Political Parties and Candidates in Nigeria: Analysis of the Past and Present. In Adetula, A. O. V (ed) *Money And Politics in Nigeria.* Abuja: Petra Digital Press.

Gambo, A. N. (2006). Godfatherism and Electoral Politics in Nigeria. In Adetula, A. O. V (ed) *Money And Politics in Nigeria.* Abuja: Petra Digital Press.

Hakeem, O., Suzanne, F. and Ufo, O. U. (2015). Oil Corrupts Elections: The Political Economy of Vote Buying in Nigeria. *Journal of African Studies,* 15(2): 1-21

Ibeanu, O. and Egwu, S. (2007). *Democracy and Political Governance in Nigeria.* Lagos: Centre for Democracy and Development

John, O. M. (2006). Background to the Emergence of the Obasanjo Administration and Prospects of Democratic Consolidation. In John, O.M (ed). *Nigeria's Transition to Democracy and Development, Contribution of Obasanjo Administration.* Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

John, O. M. (2006). *Nigeria's Transition to Democracy and Development, Contribution of the Obasanjo Administration.* Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

Joseph, O. N. Ibeaogu, A. S and Nwankwo, O. U. (2014). Political Godfatherism and Governance in a Developing Democracy: Insight from Nigeria. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies,* 3(4): 137-143.

Lawal, E. E (2005). The Phenomenon of Godfatherism in Kwara State Politics. In Saliu, H. A (ed). *Nigeria under Democratic Rule*, Volume 2. (200-220).

McCrae, R. R and Costa, P. T., et al (2000). Nature Over Nurture: Temperament, Personality and Life Span Development. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 78(1): 173-186.

Ogunwezeh, F. (2005). Poverty, Development and the Burden of Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Ojo, E. O and Lawal, E. E. (2011). Godfather Politics: The Collapse of Saraki Dynasty in Kwara State Politics. In Ayoade, J. A. and Adeoye, A. A. (eds). *Nigeria's Critical Elections* USA: Lexington Books.

Ojo, E. O. (2008). Vote Buying in Nigeria. In Adetula, V. A. O. (ed). *Money and Politics in Nigeria*. Abuja: Petra Digital Press.

Ovwasa, O. L. (2013). Money Politics and Vote Buying in Nigeria: The Bane of Good Governance. *Journal of Afro-Asian of Social Sciences,* 4(43): 229-312.

Saliu, H. A. (2014). Promoting Good Governance in Kwara State. Being the text of a paper presented at the Leaders' Institutes Conference on the Need for Progressive Leadership in Kwara State held at Kingstone Hotel Ilorin on 9th August 2014.

Saliu, H. A. (2016). Understanding the Saraki Phenomenon in Nigerian Politics. *National Pilot* Thursday 7th-10th January.

Saliu, H. A. and Lipade, A. (2008). Constant of Democracy in Nigeria: Perspective. In Saliu, H. A et. al (eds). *Perspectives on Nation-Building and Development in Nigeria Political and Legal Issues.* Lagos: Concepts Publications Limited.

Shuaib, M. N. (201). *The Leader: Biography of Dr. Abubakar Olusola Saraki, the Waziri of Ilorin.* Lagos:Tosal Printing Production.

Sohner, C. P. (1973). *The People's Power in American Government and Politics Today.* Illinois: Scott Foresman and Company.

Uyi, E. L. (2010). Political Conflicts and Godfatherism in Nigeria. Focus on the Fourth Republic. *Journal of International Multi-Disciplinary*, 4(4): 174-186.

Wright, J. R. (1985). Pacs Contribution and Roll Calls: An Organization Perspective. *The American Political Science Review*, 79(2).