



DULY ELECTED OR DULY PURCHASED?

Report on Vote Buying and Selling in
the 2018 Ekiti Governorship Elections



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REPORT ON VOTE BUYING AND SELLING IN EKITI 2018 OFF-CYCLE ELECTIONS

YIAGA AFRICA Initiative
August, 2018



Duly elected or duly purchased?

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Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the election research team who worked on this study. They include Dr. Mike Olumisi, lead researcher, Safiya Bichi, Senior Research Officer, Segun Ogundare, Senior Program officer, elections and Paul James, Training manager. We acknowledge our team of enumerators for their dedication and commitment to the success of the research.

We also thank Professor Samuel Egwu, INEC Resident Electoral Commission for Niger State and Dr. Adagbo Onoja for reviewing this report. The report was greatly enriched by the expertise of the YIAGA AFRICA team members who assisted in reviewing and providing feedback on the report. Worthy of mention is Cynthia Mbamalu, YIAGA AFRICA program manager and Project Director, Watching The Vote.

Itodo Samson
Executive Director

Executive Summary

Nigeria's democracy is under threat following growing trend of vote buying and selling in elections. Capacity, competence and character are not parameters for assessing electoral candidates. Cash-for-vote or 'see and buy' is emerging as the major determinant of electoral choice. Besides being illegal as explicitly stated in Nigeria's electoral laws, vote buying also has a tendency to aggravate corruption in public offices as those who hold public mandates are made to seek corrupt means of enriching themselves towards future elections. This menace is undermining electoral choices and could imperil Nigeria's democracy if not abated.

Vote buying is gradually replacing anti-polls or rigging tactics of politicians. This is attributed to checks and balances in the electoral process that has made electoral brigandage unattractive to politicians. Vote buying is the latest strategy adopted by politicians undermine the electoral process. This was evident in the July 14 governorship election in Ekiti state where politicians deployed multiple tactics to buy votes at the polling stations.

Concerned by this emerging trend of 'see and buy', YIAGA AFRICA through its Watching The Vote project undertook a post-election investigation to interrogate the factors that facilitated vote buying and selling in the election. The study as entailed identifying the chain of operation and methods of vote buying before and during election as well as the implication of this emerging political behaviour for democratic consolidation and development-oriented politics. The study reveals the following as drivers of vote buying and selling in Ekiti state;


1. **Poverty and Hunger:** The twin challenge of poverty and hunger was a major factor driving of vote buying and selling in Ekiti state. When households lack means to basic subsistence; the law of exigency takes charge resulting to compromised electoral behaviours such as vote buying and selling.
2. **Improved checks and balances in the electoral process:** The integrity of the electoral commission and introduction of technology and new innovations to the electoral process has deepened the integrity of elections in Nigeria. These improvements have made outright rigging unattractive for desperate politicians. Politicians resorted to vote trafficking as a strategy of compromising the electoral process.

3. Non-payment of workers' salaries, pensions and allowances: Non-payment of several arrears of salaries and emoluments of workers and pensioners in a civil service economy accounts for why many voters could not resist the offer of cash to sell their ballots during the election. Many workers and pensioners could not meet their domestic obligations.
4. Failure of political officeholders to fulfil previous campaign promises: The failure of past political officeholders to fulfil their campaign promises encouraged prospective voters to demand for cash before casting their ballot for individuals or political parties. Many voters were with the wrong orientation that you could only get your share of the National cake from the politicians during elections when they are humble enough to beg for your votes citing examples of past neglect by politicians that got their votes free of charge.
5. Neglect of Rural Communities in the even distribution of infrastructural facilities: The state government either deliberately or due to paucity of funds neglected many rural communities in the provision of basic amenities. The government concentrated development efforts at the centre of attraction (state capital). Communities opted to sell their votes to avert what they termed 'double tragedies' in case they are neglected by a new administration or political leadership.

Methods and Dynamics of Vote Buying in Ekiti state

Different methods were deployed for the purchase of votes during the 2018 governorship election in Ekiti State among which are:

1. On-Line Transaction: Many prospective voters who work and receive salaries from the state government were credited with #3,000 as stipend at the eve of election. Also, unemployed youths numbering over 30 thousand were credited with various amount ranging between #2,000 and #3,000 each as mobilization from the state government, all with a view to influencing their choice of candidate.
2. Various gifts and food items were also distributed by different political parties' weeks/days before the election to woo voters.
3. Suspicious empowerment programmes were carried out prior to the election such as purchase of free JAMB Forms, grading of communities



and farm roads, distribution of “empowerment” items like hair dryers, washing machines, power-generating machines to different individuals and groups with a view to securing their support and vote on election day.

In the final analysis, the study contends that resolving the issue and reversing the trend may involve general economic empowerment of voters (citizens), far more than and beyond casual tinkering with modalities of voting and improving balloting secrecy by the authorities. It will take good governance, legal enforcement, prioritisation of employment generation, restoration of ideological base for political parties, holistic war on corruption, and effective poverty reduction as policy options towards reversing and remedying the ugly trend.

PART 1

Introduction

From foundational Athenian legacy, elections have finally arrived to represent the core and central feature of participatory, multi-party democracy.

But for elections to express the will of the electorate, they must be free and fair, and choices of voters at voting points while the voting process must be unencumbered and secret. However, several factors continually militate against such attainments in Nigeria, particularly since the emergence of civil rule in 1999.

Of particular interest is the phenomenon of vote buying which has become a dominant feature of elections. Understood as direct cash payments for or exchange of gifts for voting in a particular way or for showing up to vote, vote buying is, alongside other forms of clientelist/mercantilist politics, a common phenomenon in today's developing world¹. Vote buying has always been part of Nigeria's political process, albeit discretely². In the last few years, vote buying has worsened from

being one of many campaign tactics into a fundamental determinant of electoral victory. As aptly captured by Matenga³

:

Unlike in other African countries such as Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Malawi, where vote buying takes place prominently during campaign period, in Nigeria it takes place at multiple stages of the electoral cycle and has been observed eminently during voter registration, nomination period, campaign and election day. It also occurs at various institutional levels in the polity – for example, in the legislature, where votes are bought to illegally enact laws that would favour particular individuals or groups.

Indeed, Nigeria has been a victim of a series of anti-democratic activities and power-hungry politicians. The result is the scuppering of the ideals of democracy, political involvement, and good governance. Many Nigerians, including local and international civil society groups raised concerns over

1 Kitschelt, H and Wilkinson, S I (2007) *Patrons, Clients and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, Cambridge University Press

2 Ekezie, Chukwudi (2018) Vote buying: Resolving Nigeria's new political puzzle, *Vanguard*, July 23

3 Matenga, Gram (2016) Cash for Votes: political legitimacy in Nigeria, Available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/gram-matenga/cash-for-votes-political-legitimacy-in-nigeria>

financial inducement for votes which characterized the July 14, 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti, especially by the two major political parties, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). This study proposes a new explanation for the dimension vote buying took in Ekiti state in flagrant violation of the electoral law⁴ and diametrically opposed to the culture of dignity among the homogenous people.

Since its creation on the 1st of October 1996, Ekiti State, in the south-western geopolitical zone of Nigeria has gained unusual prominence in Nigeria's tumultuous political landscape.

In spite of its relative obscurity in the economic and strategic mapping of the Nigerian federation due to its relatively small population size and low economic capacity, Ekiti has made a name as one of the most controversial and politically volatile states in the country. The element of volatility in Ekiti politics has been most evident in the nature and character of its political processes since the inception of the current democratic dispensation in 1999.

It is revealing to note for example, that the state recorded twelve changes in administration/ governors within the first eighteen years of its existence, making it the state with the highest frequency of rapid and multiple regime turnover in the country^{5,6}.

Some questions are central to this study: In a supposed social contract between the governed and the government, how plausible is it for vote-seekers to buy citizens' votes in order to serve them? What factors encourage vote buying and selling in Nigeria's electoral process? What is the impact of vote buying on the social contract that underpins electoral democracy?

How can a political system that empowers, and enables the equal participation and involvement of every individual beyond the mundane enticement be created?

This study contends that resolving the issue and reversing the trend may involve general economic empowerment of voters (citizens), far more than and beyond casual tinkering with modalities of voting and improving balloting secrecy by the authorities.

4 Sections 124 and 130 of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) clearly criminalise the act of vote buying as bribery and conspiracy. Section 130, particularly states: "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."

5 Adetoye, M.A. (2010) *The Politics and Contradictions of Ekiti State Creation*, A Doctoral Thesis submitted to the Department of Political Science, Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Ibadan

6 Below is a checklist of Administrators/ Governors who have governed Ekiti State within the first 18 years of its creation: Col. Inuwa Bawa (1st October 1996 – 1998), Navy Captain Atanda Yusuf (July 1998 – May 28 1999), Otunba Adeniyi Adebayo (May 29 1999 – May 28 2003), Dr Ayodele Fayose (May 29, 2003 – Oct. 16 2006), Chief Friday Aderemi (Oct 17 – 19, 2006), Major General Tunji Idowu Olurin (Oct 19, 2006 – April, 2007), Mr Tope Ademiluyi (April – May 2007), Chief Segun Oni (May 2007- Feb. 2009), Chief Tunji Odeyemi (Feb 07 – May 2009), Chief Segun Oni (May 5 – Oct. 15 2010), Dr. Kayode Fayemi (Oct 16 2010-2014), Mr Ayodele Fayose (Oct 16 2014–till date).

Objectives

The general objective of this study is to explore the nature, extent and implications of cash-for-vote in electioneering. Other specific objectives include:

- a. To interrogate the factors that facilitate vote buying in Ekiti State
- b. To identify the chain of operation and methods of vote buying before and during election
- c. To examine the role of the voters' preferences in determining the winner and the payments to voters.
- d. To suggest policy options for stakeholders against future elections

Rationale

There are growing fears that rising cases of vote buying and selling may not only undermine the electorate's right of choice, but ultimately imperil its democracy⁷. In buying out one another, balances are unfairly altered; often so much that rivals might opt for other means to settle scores.

While Nigerians are beginning to celebrate relative decline of godfatherism, gradual disappearance of ballot box snatching and high record of brigandage on election day in the nation's politics, the influence of huge amounts of money in deciding who wins an election is fast replacing anti-poll

styles of brigandage⁸. Vote buying has paved way for the money bags in the country to dominate and occupy key elective and appointive political positions in the country.

Elections in Ekiti state in recent years have raised intriguing issues around monetisation of the electoral process by political parties and their candidates. The implication of this emerging political behaviour for democratic consolidation and development-oriented politics in the state has expectedly generated debates and drawn criticisms among analysts

7 Iyare, Tony (2018) "Vote Buying May Imperil Nigeria's Democracy...Ishola Williams" Available at: <http://www.ndr.org.ng/vote-buying-may-imperil-nigerias-democracy-ishola-williams/>

8 Atoyebi, Olufemi (2018) Ekiti vote buying: Rewarding emerging electoral fraud with victory, The Punch, July 22

9 Ekiti State is in the Southwest geo-political zone of Nigeria, with Ado Ekiti as the state capital. The state was created on October 1, 1996 from the old Ondo State. It comprises 16 local government areas

Methodology

Being a post-election empirical analysis on cash-for-vote, the methods of data collection involved in-depth interview (IDI), and focus group discussion (FGD) in addition to field observations spanning the electioneering period in Ekiti.

The purpose of these methods was to elicit information on cash-for-vote syndrome in Ekiti state and to provide context to other existing data (gathered while observing the election).

The study mainly beamed its search light on active participants during the election, namely: Voters, Politicians and Party Agents. Having earlier identified

the principal actors during the July 14 election, thirty of them (in three groups) were interviewed across the three senatorial districts, namely: Ado Ekiti (Ekiti Central), Ilejemeje LGA (Ekiti North) and Ise-Ekiti (Ekiti South) for FGDs while interviews were randomly conducted among voters and politicians in various communities, across eight local government areas, namely: Ikere LGA, Ise-Orun LGA, Gbonyin LGA, Irepodun/Ifelodun LGA, Ado-Ekiti LGA, Ido/Osi LGA, Oye LGA and Ilejemeje LGA.

The interviews were conducted over a period of five days.



PART 2

Party politics and political behaviour in Ekiti

Elections and voting are important mechanisms for selecting leaders for political offices in every democracy. As a critical component of the electoral process, political parties have a strong influence on the quality, salience, and credibility of the political process.

They also help to inform the voters since their expected ideological differentiation should help the electorate in charting preferred lines of policy preferences that ultimately lead to a clearer system of rational choice-making among competing parties and programmes.

Over the years however, the ideological content of party politics has been lost generally in Nigeria. This has been attributed to the nature of their formations particularly as a result of years of meddlesomeness of the military in the political process. The artificial nature of the midwifery by the military elite in the course of the transitions to civilian rule had given rise to parties without ideologies in the present dispensation.

This is further compounded by the introduction of a multiparty system which allows a limitless number of

parties without any clear identity. The consequence of this is seen in the number of political parties jostling for elective positions. For example, the recently concluded 2018 Ekiti polls had 35 candidates cleared to contest the governorship seat¹⁰.

The effect of this over-bloated space for electoral competition is that elections have lost the ingredient of policy-based debates and assume the character of personality contests as was the case in the 2018 elections in Ekiti.

It is in the light of this that Oluwole¹¹ highlighted the jettisoning of issue-based political debate in the contest between former Governor Fayemi and the contesting incumbent deputy governor, Professor Olusola Eleka which assumed the nature of a contest between the Governor, Ayo Fayose and Dr Kayode Fayemi. Another symptom of the lack of ideological base was the wave of defections that has characterized the polity in general and the state in particular.

A few weeks preceding the Ekiti July 14, 2018 polls witnessed series of defections and alignments across party

¹⁰ Ugwu, R. (2018) INEC clears 35 political parties for Ekiti guber. Sun News, 23rd May. Available at: <http://sunnewsonline.com/inec-clears-35-political-parties-for-ekiti-guber/>. Accessed: 11 August, 2018.

¹¹ Oluwole, J. 2018. ANALYSIS: Ekiti Election: Intrigues as Fayose, Fayemi personalise contest. Premium Times, July 11, 2018. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/275745-analysis-ekiti-election-intrigues-as-fayose-fayemi-personalise-contest.html>. Accessed: 11 August, 2018.

platforms as a result of inability to secure personal interests and ambitions.

Ekiti, like most states in the south-western part of Nigeria, has been a two-party state. Since the creation of the state in 1996 and commencement of party politics in the third republic, political leaderships across the executive and legislative arms have oscillated between two major parties, divided along rather artificial and titular extremes of left and right; so-labelled for fleeting partisan conveniences rather than genuine or observable ideological rivets.

For the 2018 governorship election in Ekiti state, the two parties are the All Progressives Congress (APC), which won the 14 July election, and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), both parties claiming majority of votes cast. Other parties including AD, LP, PPA, YDP, ADP, APDA, KOWA, GPN, NPC, PANDEL, PPA, PDC, MPN and others, could not secure more than 2 per cent of the total number of votes cast

The overriding drive of/motivation for membership of all parties, irrespective of names, remains self-interest. Deep ideological hardliners and genuine moderates are apparently non-existent on Nigeria's political scene for now. So far as overt considerations of politicians are adjudged, and Ekiti cannot be an exception, personal

interest is the endemic driving force. Not particularly expansive in terms of private commercial ventures, Ekiti becomes agog soon as it is time for elections.

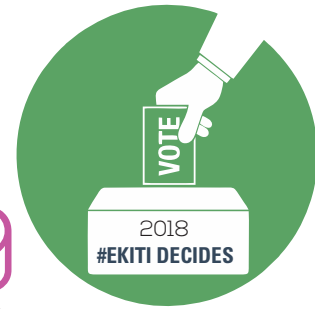
An average indigene of Ekiti state becomes politically active during elections because of the opportunity it provides for distributive politics. They demonstrate sufficient interest in who becomes the governor, state assembly representatives, even local government chairpersons and their counsellors.

The 2018 governorship election was no exception as the entire electorates, lettered and unlettered, old and young, remained awake from the period of campaigns through voting. Campaign fields in the state have never been scanty, even as songs and dancers often do come in copious, involuntary harvests, at such occasions when rival parties reach out on mutual self-annihilation missions, even as contents of speeches reek bile and venom against occupiers of targeted seats.

Factually, some of the attendants at campaigns might have been encouraged by cash but majority of those who make it often to campaign grounds have personal convictions of the necessity of doing so, a trait which tells in their candour and comportment, and general demeanour during campaigns. Irrespective of patronage politics, an average Ekiti electorate remains deeply connected and

9,095,85
registered voters.

As at July 10, 2018 **601,009**
PVCs were collected



405,861
accredited as voters in
the 2018 gubernatorial

2%
of entire votes cast
went to AD, LP, PPA, PPA, YDP,
ADP, APDA, KOWA, GPN, NPC,
PANDEL, PPA, PDC, MPN and others, .

98%
of entire votes cast
went to All Progressives
Congress (APC), and the
People's Democratic Party (PDP),

informed about political developments within and about his/her environment.

The figure of 405,861¹² accredited as voters in the 2018 gubernatorial election exercise is a validation of high political maturity of an average Ekiti person, given the entire population of the state which remains 2.3 million, according to the 2006 census.

Notwithstanding, the state has experienced scores of politically motivated violence, arson, often culminating in killings, maiming, kidnaps, and sundry other untoward developments.

¹² According to INEC Ekiti has a total number of 909585 registered voters. As at July 10, 2018 601,009 PVCs were collected

PART 3

Clientelism (Vote Buying) and Electoral Democracy: A Conceptual Analysis

Although financial inducement of voters is not new in election processes in Africa, it assumed an increasingly worrisome scale in recent times¹².

According to Bratton¹⁴, vote buying is of the many characteristics of elections in Africa and has been indicated in survey-based estimates to feature largely in one out of five elections in Nigeria.

Bratton further suggests that there is a link between poverty and the effects of vote-buying as voter turnout, electoral choices and partisan loyalties are more likely to be influenced by financial inducements of poor people. While long viewed as a corrosive and corrupting influence on Nigerian politics, more recent scholarship has begun to focus on the nuances and complexities of vote buying.

Vote buying is often considered a variety of clientelism. Studies of

clientelism typically assume that political machines distribute rewards to persuade or mobilize the existing electorate. According to a report by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)¹⁵, the availability or otherwise of money has enormous influence on the conduct and nature of general elections.

From most studies, it is apparent that a careful contextualization of electoral democracy, essentially the clientelistic vote buying phenomenon, is needed in order to make sense of its meaning and inherent danger. Comparative research indicates that money is relatively more important in electoral politics in poor countries with a challenging geography and infrastructure compared to more developed countries¹⁶.

Specifically, vote-buying can be described as an economic transaction in which parties and candidates distribute material benefits to

12 Adeleke, G. F. 2016. Influence of dimensional Incentives on Voters' Turnout in 2014 and 2015 Gubernatorial Elections in Southwestern, Nigeria. *International journal of community research, IJCR* 2016; 5(3): 95 – 105.

13 Bratton, Michael (2008). "Vote buying and violence in Nigerian election campaigns." *Electoral Studies* 27 (4): 621-32.

14 Bryan, S & D Baer (eds). 2005. *Money in Politics: A study of Party Financing Practices in 22 Countries*. Washington, DC: NDI.

15 Saffu, Y. (2003). The funding of political parties and election campaigns in Africa. In R. Austin and M. Tjernström (eds), *Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns*. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance IDEA, pp. 21-33.

16 Stokes, S. C. (2007). Political clientelism. In C. Boix and S. Stokes (Eds.), *Handbook of comparative politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.



individual citizens in exchange for their support at the polls. Focusing on clientelism as a method of electoral mobilization, Stokes¹⁷ defines it as the proffering of material goods in return for electoral support, where the criterion of distribution that the patron uses is simply: did you (will you) support me?

Clientelistic vote buying is therefore, "the proffering to voters of cash or (more commonly) minor consumption goods by political parties, in office or in opposition, in exchange for the

recipient's vote"¹⁸. In many emerging democracies, voters themselves often demand gifts or hand-outs of some kind in return for their support.

Studies from various scholars and thinkers on this issue give some insights on how to understand the phenomenon of vote-buying. Clientelist relationships involve two sets of actors: patrons that seek to maintain and build power and clients that seek protection, access to benefits and services, or insurance against risk¹⁹.

17 Brusco, Valeria, Marcelo Nazareno, and Susan C. Stokes. 2004. "Vote Buying in Argentina." *Latin American Research Review* 39 (2): 66-88.

18 Piattoni, S. (Ed.) (2001). *Clientelism, Interests, and Democratic Representation: The European Experience in Historical and Comparative Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press

19 Stokes, S. C. (2007). Political clientelism. In C. Boix and S. Stokes (Eds.), *Handbook of comparative politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Given the contract **enforcement problems posed by the** secret ballot, many studies of vote buying, and political clientelism more broadly, seek to identify the mechanisms that promote contract fulfilment by both buyer and seller²⁰.

In the first place, all elections are a transaction of sorts. Citizens trade their vote for certain outcomes that are important to them – better schools, roads, hospitals, lower taxes, special policies that favour them and so on²¹.

A "vote is literally 'bought' or 'sold' depending on whether one adopts the perspective of the candidate or the voter."²² Vote trading 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 to not vote in the first place. Strategies to alter turnout may focus on demobilizing active opponents or on mobilizing passive supporters²³.

But why is it that in some places, politicians pay for that vote in cash, then proceed to disappear for four or five years, and in other places leaders pay for electoral support by delivering those good development outcomes?²⁴

A very different way of thinking about clientelist exchanges is that they tie the client to the patron not by encouraging a norm of reciprocity but by encouraging a fear that the flow of benefits will be cut off. Most past scholars of clientelism have not differentiated between the use of positive and negative inducements to motivate voters, although this distinction is critical. According to a Mares and Young²⁵:

Positive inducements, a category that includes vote buying, involve offers of rewards such as money, goods, or favours. Negative inducements include the threat of economic or physical sanctions for an individual's voting behaviour.

Such negative inducements include cutting voters off from benefits on which they depend, removing them from their land or residences, or violence, including assault and death. Both positive and negative inducements are hard to measure. Both are usually illicit.

Several reasons feature as causes for people selling their votes, including betrayal by leaders, poverty, and rampant corruption at top levels of leadership. Citizens, especially the poorest and most marginalized, can come to see the disbursement of cash before elections as the one and only

20 Mungai Christine (2017) Vicious circle of vote-buying and the guilt of conscience, Available at:

<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001234650/vicious-circle-of-vote-buying-and-the-guilt-of-conscience>

21 Schaffer, F. C. (2002). What is Vote Buying? Paper Presented at the International Conference Trading Political Rights: The Comparative Politics of Vote Buying, Boston: MIT press.

22 Schaffer Frederic Charles (2005) Paper delivered at the conference "Poverty, Democracy, and Clientelism: The Political Economy of Vote Buying," Stanford University, Department of Political Science, Bellagio Center, Rockefeller Foundation, 28 November – 2 December 2005.

23 Mungai Christine (2017) Vicious circle of vote-buying and the guilt of conscience, Available at:

<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001234650/vicious-circle-of-vote-buying-and-the-guilt-of-conscience>

24 Mares, Isabela and Young, Lauren (2016) Buying, Expropriating, and Stealing Votes, *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 2016. 19:X--X

25 This position features prominently in almost all the views expressed by our respondents (particularly, the voters)

thing they get from an ineffectual government²⁶.

For instance, the poor are likely to be victimized by vote buying because their limited means makes them susceptible to material inducements, including offers of basic commodities or modest amounts of money. Some politicians, as indicated in our findings, sponsor suspicious community "projects" such as school building, street lighting, well digging, and drainage cleaning. It has been observed that vote buying takes place at multiple stages of the electoral cycle in the country and has been seen eminently during voter registration, nomination period, campaign and Election Day.

During electioneering, resources that could have been allocated towards food security, health, education and economic development, are diverted to vote buying with a view to holding on to power, particularly by the incumbent.

Consequently, if vote-buying is allowed to affect both voter turnout and choice, then political accountability and equality are at risk.

This is particularly the case given the disproportionate influence of vote-buying on the most vulnerable

members of the society that arguably have a greater need than the community in which they reside. Thus, the practice of buying votes invites people to vote out of a concern for their own economic well-being rather than the public good. One might add that selling one's vote for money and voting have very different social meanings, in that the former is a private market transaction whereas the latter involves a public relation between citizens.

Given the amount of research and discussion that this practice has received, many scholars question whether vote buying influences the outcome of election. But its overall effects on governance and democratic system have been explained by scholars.

For instance, Leight et al²⁷ assert that "vote-buying endangers the validity of election results; undermines public trust in the democratic system; and negatively affects post-election politics, government accountability, and public perceptions of that accountability".

Broadly speaking, vote buying obstructs the democratic process by

26 Leight, Jessica; Rohini, Pande and Laura Ralston (2016) Value for Money in Buying Votes? Vote-buying and Voter Behavior in the Laboratory, Available at: <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Publications/DFG-Williams-College-Publication>

interfering with the rights of citizens to freely decide who will represent them and their interests. As a matter of fact, vote buying practices create an unbalance between parties that have access to material resources (e.g. incumbent parties) and parties deprived of these resources.

If eventually elected, candidates lacking the personal wealth to finance their own campaigns for public office must tailor their politics to please the individuals and organizations from whom they solicited financial support. In other words, elected officials will become more accountable to those who finance their campaigns than to their constituents.

In many countries, buying votes from members of the electorate is explicitly prohibited under election law or the criminal code. Mere offers and promises are also banned, as are solicitation and acceptance. In Nigeria for instance, vote-buying is a punishable offence according to the Electoral Act 2010. It is provided in its Article 130 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.

In spite of this legal provision and its exhaustive capture, the aforesaid offence has increased in Nigeria's electoral space over the years.

It can be argued that the recent rise in the scourge of vote-buying among political office seekers relates to the improvements in voter accreditation and identification devices, particularly the use of electronic fingerprint identification which has made outright rigging less attractive to desperate politicians.

PART 4

Elections in Ekiti: A Case of Ideological Vacuum or Leadership Failure?

Vote buying is a two-way street. It does not happen if people do not "sell" their votes. That is why voters' behaviour is as crucial as candidates' behaviour.

Recent elections in Ekiti State have spawn debates among pundits on the need to examine the voting behaviours of the people of the state after results from the June 21, 2014 elections affirmed the then incumbent, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, as having lost the elections in all the 16 local government areas of the state to Ayo Fayose—a second-term contestant who had been impeached less than a decade before the election on account of corruption related offences.

Political behaviour plays an important role in understanding a people's political processes. It is often described as that aspect of political life which concerns the "rational actions and decisions of individuals and/or groups to determine their beliefs and opinions about a variety of

personal and public policy issue items...as well as the role of the government in responding to or resolving such issues"²⁸.

In Ekiti State, like most parts of Nigeria, much of what forms political behaviour is influenced by the socio-economic, cultural and historical milieus within which indigenes gain and situate their political experiences²⁹. Economically, the effect of high poverty and youth unemployment levels in Ekiti state is often felt in the nature of youth involvement in the electoral processes. As Ariyibi³⁰ suggested, job availability and employment opportunities form a major factor that may influence voting patterns.

This, according to him, is indicated in the open letter of a legal luminary in the state, Chief Afe Babalola, addressed to Governor Ayo Fayose after his election victory in 2014 where he identified anticipation of a better employment opportunity under his government as a factor that had aided his victory.

27 King, Kendra A. (2010) African American Politics. Cambridge: Polity Press.

28 King, Kendra A. (2010) African American Politics. Cambridge: Polity Press.

29 Sule, B., Sani, M. A. M., Mat, (2015) Political Behaviour and Voting Pattern in Nigeria: A Study of 2015 Presidential Election. Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts and Sciences Vol. 4 No.4, 1-13.

30 Ariyibi, G. (2014) "Afe Babalola writes Fayose, advises on moving Ekiti forward". Retrieved from <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/06/afe-babalola-writes-fayose-advises-on-moving-ekitiforward/#sthash.xqv8cWdo.NjMubmlx.dpuf>. Accessed: 12 August, 2018.



The above assertion is not without basis. Welfare expectations of Ekiti people are known to influence their voting patterns, the fact of the contingency in the conceptualisation of welfare notwithstanding.

This goes hand in hand with recognizing the nature of the Ekiti society—as one in which political leaders must take cognizance of the nature of the masses and the variations in the conceptualisation of good governance that appears to reflect social stratifications among the voting public.

It is not out of place, for example, to see the level of acceptance among a section of the society, who are largely poor and unemployed, canvassing for government tokenism known as "stomach infrastructure" as a measure of good governance, whereas on the other hand, the average working class person tends to define good governance in terms of sustainable infrastructural and welfare enhancing projects such as salary increase, promotion, or other institutionalised benefits.

Viewed from the above perspective, the July 14 2018 election could be described as partly a reaction against the poor economic plight of the average Ekiti worker and the widely increased rate of unemployment occasioned by the Fayose-led People's Democratic Party's mode of governance which appeared to neglect more sustainable issues of youth employment and staff welfare in the largely civil service state.

This is believed to have become an albatross which contributed to the rejection of the People's Democratic Party's candidate Prof. Olusola Eleka in the election. Suffice to say that the ugly condition contributes largely to the people's level of vulnerability in the face of vote-buying.

Hence, nothing however spurs more worry on the credibility and integrity of the electoral process than the issue of monetisation of the process evidenced in recent trends in vote-buying and vote trading among party delegates during the primaries.

This is linked to the ideological vacuum that has become a nature of electoral politics where voters at various levels have no standard parameters for assessing candidates, thus leaving room for the pursuit of personal aggrandizing interest. Closely related to the above as regarding the wider electorate voting political behaviour is the problem of poverty, unemployment and poor workers' welfare in the state. These factors are explicitly captured under our findings.

Leadership corruption and the now widely perceived primacy of self-aggrandisement as the aim of political office seekers also implies that the voting public view the electoral process as an opportunity to make their bit in the spoils of office that have ostensibly been stolen from the public till. Elections thus assume a transactional exchange in which electoral choices are traded for money as items of value that can be sold for financial gains.

This has become a common practice across the political parties since the 2003 elections although it has come to a head with the 2014 and recently concluded 2018 polls. In the run-up to the 2018 elections, there were reports of widespread monetization of candidate selection during the primaries as delegates who were lodged in voting camps resorted to vote trading giving way to the emergence of highest bidders as party flag-bearers. This trend also characterised the actual election.

At the heart of the trends of vote-buying and electoral monetisation in Ekiti State is the changing character of the political elite as custodians of leadership vision. In line with the

perceived changes in the orientation of the political class is a concomitant despondency among the masses as is evidenced in their shifting demand from long-term development delivery to individual personal gratifying access to the benefits or spoils of power.

This reaction among the voting public—manifested in their voting patterns—reflects and forewarns of the need for sensitivity on the part of the elite to the yearnings of the people. As Durotoye³¹ suggests, the people rank supreme in a democratic system of government and are at full discretion to deploy their votes in the manner they, in their majority, deem fit whether the elite agrees with them or not.

This changing orientation however runs contrary to the historical traits of the people who to Durotoye³² "were known for being strong-willed, independent minded and well educated...Even those who did not go far in formal education have a high sense of informal education and they strive to be well informed about political issues around them". Ekiti voters in recent times have become highly unpredictable prompting Adetoye and Omilusi³³ to observe that they appear to have increasingly shown an attraction to "Quick wins" or quick fix solutions to governance deliverables in terms of informal access to material substance and individually handed benefits from political leaders as against the impersonal implementation of sustainable development programmes whose impact could be felt across the social spectrum

Vote buying and political gladiators in the 2018 election

Inducing voters with physical cash at voting points and centres reached an unprecedented scale and in the July 14 governorship election in Ekiti state. The gladiators in the two major parties schemed to outdo each other in procuring votes from the electorates.

Such schemes primarily involved packaging manifestoes and selling such through pamphlets delivered to doorsteps of the electorate, or distributed at campaign grounds, commercial buses, newspapers distribution joints, and several other places. Desperate politicians resorted to snatching of ballot boxes and propagation of fake results when it became evident they were losing in the elections.

Today, the trend of cash-for-votes, while indicating a maturing away from ballot snatching and/or figures cooking, is immediately revealing of credibility of voting, albeit of a condemnable hue!

The fraud, in which political parties, from the known and weighty to the less known, was involved, may be a consequence of failure on part of parties to convince voters through their manifestoes, candidates and programs. Resorting to buying of votes has become the last option for politicians irrespective of and despite the moral condemnation it attracts.

Elections in Ekiti State have recorded varying degrees of monetisation and voter inducement over the years,

starting from the 2003 elections when candidates of the major political parties (the People's Democratic Party's Ayo Fayose and the Alliance for Democracy-A D's Otunba Niyi Adebayo) respectively

introduced the distribution of water and Kerosene as vote winning strategies.

However, as found out in this study, no previous election in Ekiti state has witnessed the scourge of vote-buying at the scale with such level of brazenness as the recently conducted 2018 election.

The sheer brazenness of the menace informed reactions from various sections of the society and international development partners. For example, The Punch newspaper reported a statement credited to the British Government through its High Commissioner to Nigeria, Paul Arkwright, who condemned the scourge of vote-buying in the Ekiti State governorship election, describing it as "a form of electoral misconduct like rigging and ballot stuffing". Citizens observer groups like YIAGA AFRICA Watching The Vote, Civil Society Situation Room and

“

I and my wife got 10 thousand naira. We bought half bag of rice and cooked soup. At least, the rice will last the family for one month" (Voter, Ise-Ekiti)

”

Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) reported several cases of vote buying at polling stations in the state.

There are many dimensions to the incidence of vote-buying and selling in the course of the election, including the use of government pay roll as means of transfer of stipends to potential voters prior to the election day just as an evaluation of its exact impact on election outcomes is also confounded by other variables. As would be discussed subsequently, it was however, widely reported that voter inducement was a general feature of candidates prior to the election³⁴, varying in degree depending on the spending capacity of individual aspirants.

Conversely, the electorate themselves, in accepting bribe, in whatever form, is an admission that they prefer quick rewards and immediate gratification to other enduring services that may be forthcoming with more visionary candidates.

Selling votes to the highest bidder during elections stamps results with suspect credibility, even as it constitutes a slur upon public image of the electoral umpire and the electoral process. Nearly all the parties that vied for the last governorship election in Ekiti engaged in inducing voters with some measure of gratification, either before or during the election.

Cash and various other items of value changed hands, up until the day of election which witnessed direct

purchase and payment for votes. Rewards ranging from N4,000, N5000 to TV/radio sets, GSM handsets, others distributed to voters in a spree of business dealings dubbed "Di'bo se'be", a Yoruba derisive coinage which means "Vote and make a pot of soup".

While the election lasted and the actions of

'purchases' were going on, the police and other security agencies kept safe distances. Nigerian Police, Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC), Nigerian Immigration, and Nigeria Army, were present at polling stations but they maintained presence at safe distances and points around voting centres.

Unless situations demanded interventions which they offered with rare civility, security officials kept safe distances from actual processes of voting, alongside what might have happened soon before and after.

In the build-up to the election, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had hinted about its inability to stop vote buying. Despite warning from the electoral commission and security agencies parties and candidates defied all odds and procured votes in the Ekiti election.

“ Why I no go collect money. I did oooo. If you no collect your dues now, they no know you when they get to office” (Voter, Oye-Ekiti).

PART 5

Findings

As noted earlier, weeks before the election, aside cash inducement, some politicians also openly influenced voters with gift items such as television set, phones, food stuffs, recharge cards among others. It was a carnival-like scenario across the communities in Ekiti as people delightedly scrambled for these items.

After the election on July 14, several video recordings emerged, showing brazen distribution of cash among the electorate by politicians and political parties. The available evidence, arising from election observation, interviews and FGDs suggests that vote buying had immediate influence on the voters' choice.

Factors Precipitating Vote Buying in Ekiti State

1. POVERTY/HUNGER:

The twin challenge of poverty and hunger was a major factor driving of vote buying and selling in Ekiti state. When households lack means to basic subsistence; the law of exigency takes charge resulting to compromised electoral behaviours such as vote buying and selling. (See the box below for a few reactions of voters and politicians)

2. NON-PAYMENT OF WORKERS' SALARIES, PENSIONS AND ALLOWANCES

on the part of government of the day remains at the bottom of the current malaise to trade away personal judgment for the lure of cash during elections. Non-payment of several arrears of salaries and emoluments of workers and pensioners in a civil service economy accounts for why many voters could not resist the offer of cash to sell their ballots during the election.

Many workers and pensioners could not meet their domestic obligations. For example, a family that has four prospective voters who are sure of gathering twenty thousand naira after casting and showing their ballot papers to a particular party, as exemplified by one of the respondents, would not think twice before opting for such offer because of the consideration of what the amount could do to alleviate their immediate suffering.

3. FAILURE OF POLITICAL OFFICE HOLDERS TO FULFIL PREVIOUS CAMPAIGN PROMISES:

The failure of past political officeholders to fulfil their campaign promises encouraged prospective voters to demand for cash before casting their ballot for individuals or political parties. Many voters were with the wrong orientation that you could only get your share of the National cake from the politicians during elections when they are humble enough to beg for your votes citing examples of past neglect by politicians that got their votes free of charge.

4. NEGLECT OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE EVEN DISTRIBUTION OF INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES:

The state government either deliberately or due to paucity of funds neglected many rural communities in the provision of basic amenities. The government concentrated development efforts at the centre of attraction (state capital). Communities opted to sell their votes to avert what they termed 'double tragedies' in case they are neglected by a new administration or political leadership.

5. IMPROVED CHECKS AND BALANCES IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS:

The integrity of the electoral commission and introduction of technology and new innovations to the electoral process has deepened the integrity of elections in Nigeria. These improvements have made outright rigging unattractive for desperate politicians. Politicians have therefore resorted to vote trafficking as a strategy of compromising the electoral process.

6. CORRUPT LEADERSHIP:

Many politicians had enriched themselves through public wealth, thereby have more than enough cash to manipulate the electoral process in their favour either as contestants or godfathers. Though at the national level, few of them are facing trial while some are convicted through the anti-corruption crusade of the incumbent president, the large percentage is still in the public space dominating and controlling the electoral system.

7. GREED

Greed has caused a lot of crises in the Nigerian society. It is because of greed that political leaders embezzle funds meant for national development and use the proceeds for self-perpetuation in political circle. The same greed and love for material things caused many average Ekiti people to accept money, food items and material gifts to trade away their conscience during poll as implied by respondents in our Focus Group Discussions

Methods and Dynamics of Vote Buying

Different methods were deployed for the purchase of votes during the 2018 governorship election in Ekiti State among which are:

1) **On-Line Transaction:** Many prospective voters who work and receive salaries from the state government were credited with #3,000 as stipend at the eve of election. Also, unemployed youths numbering over 30 thousand were credited with various amount ranging between #2,000 and #3,000 each as mobilization from the state government, all with a view to influencing their choice of candidate.

2) **Various gifts and food items** were also distributed by different political parties weeks/days before the election to woo voters.

3) **Suspicious empowerment programmes** were carried out prior to the election such as purchase of free JAMB Forms, grading of communities and farm roads, distribution of "empowerment" items like hair dryers, washing machines, power-generating machines to different individuals and groups with a view to securing their support/vote on election day.

4) **Impersonation of election observers by party agents:** Some party loyalists acted as election observers with

observers kits from INEC. This gave them free access to monitor the distribution and deployment of their cash for the purchase of vote at every polling booth.

“

We have three eligible voters in my family. We were all mobilised to the tune of 12 thousand naira. We quickly paid the debt we owed our food vendors and collected another”

”

(Voter, Ifaki-Ekiti)

5) **Collection of tally from party canvassers:** In some polling booths, the pay agent is far away at a hidden location. The voter who is authenticated to have voted for the party is given a tally to collect the agreed sum.

6) **As a means of authentication,** some voters use camera phones to snapshot their ballot papers with a view to claiming the money promised them before casting their vote.

7) **In some places,** special agents (canvassers) were at hand to whisper to prospective voters in queue to vote for a particular party and thereafter collect money.

Other Findings

There was a mutual agreement between the voters and the buyers because both parties were willing

Party members (canvassers) moved round the communities a day before the election/election day to give money to party members and "trusted" neighbours.

Voters seem to have completely lost confidence in successive leaders at all levels of governance (either executive or legislative arm, state or local government). This trust issue permeated all discussions with our respondents.

Proceeds from the election bazaar also had direct bearing on the economy. In many communities as affirmed by the respondents, markets were filled up by residents to buy foodstuff a day/2days after the election.

In some polling units, the amount given varied. This was based on the availability of funds proportional to the number of

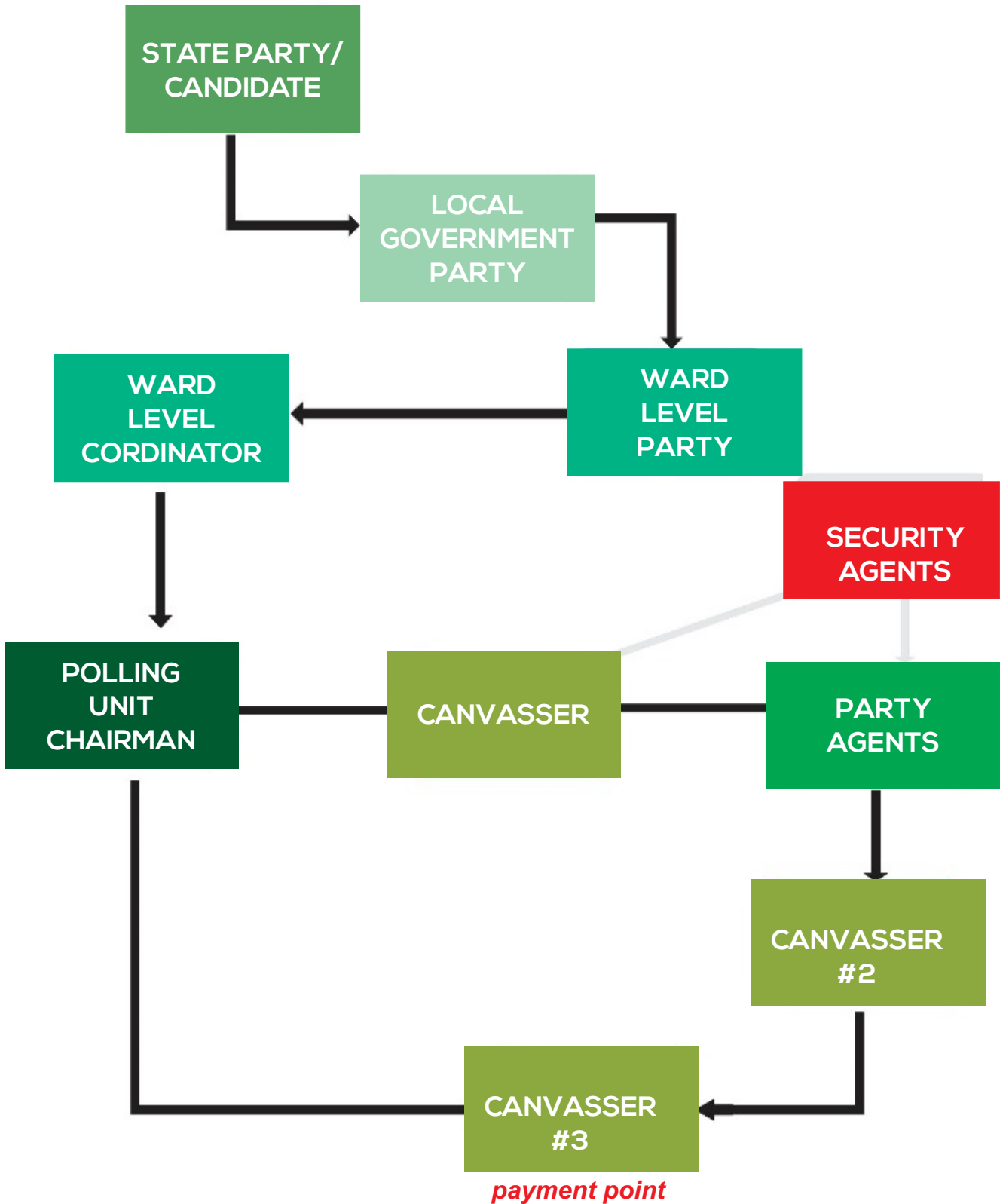
voters that showed up and it was determined by the canvassers (ranging from 5 thousand naira to 2 thousand naira). However, in many of the polling units, the principle of equality was applied in respect of "commoditization" of vote.

Betrayal of trust on the part of the canvassers who, as found out during the field work, diverted the amounts given to them just when many voters began to complain of not being financially compensated. This actually necessitated the variation in payment made as earlier indicated.

"Foreign" registrants, most especially students of higher institutions of learning (non-indigenes) were recruited for voter registration purposes prior to the election. Some were suspected to have come back during the election as attested to by some respondents especially in Ise/Orun LGA.

“ *I am a local government worker. My child has been sick for two days and no money to buy drugs from the Chemist not alone take her to the hospital. I voted and collected 5 thousand naira and immediately got drugs for my baby*” (Voter, Ado-Ekiti) ”

VOTE BUYING CHAIN OF OPERATION IN EKITI STATE



The funds are sourced by the gubernatorial candidate in collaboration with party hierarchy in the state—having taken into consideration the number of wards/units and estimated amount per prospective voter. The fund is allocated to all LGAs (party hierarchy/political leaders) who in turn allocate, based on perceived strength and weaknesses, to the wards within the LGA. At the ward level, there are also unit coordinators and a ward chairman who oversees the allocation to polling units.

The unit coordinator works in partnership with canvassers. The canvassers/mobilisers now woo prospective voters from house to house and assure them of a specified amount. They also do this while voters are in queue, establishing concrete facts of paid voters for last minute negotiation. One of the canvassers works directly with the identified party agent— who monitors how voters cast their votes and for which party.

A canvasser/mobiliser is stationed permanently at a (slightly) hidden place who receives or confirms compliant voters for payment. It should be noted that the security agents, in this chain of operation, act as shadow participants. They connive with party agents, in a few places, to monitor voters, or in extreme cases (and this was not common), direct/lead the compliant voter to the payment point.

“

Why wouldn't I collect money? Election time is the period I make money. Politicians are fraudsters...and its only election period I can enjoy them" (Voter, Iye-Ekiti)

”

PART 6

Recommendations on how to discourage cash-for-vote

Vote buying is a threat to the conduct of fair elections and it has remained rampant because of the abundance of weak parties and self-serving politicians unable to deliver on their campaign promises.

The danger this poses lies in the fact that citizens, especially the poorest and most marginalized, can rely on cash-for-vote as the one and only dividend they are entitled to.

As a product of deep-seated socio-economic factors, there is no doubt that reversing the ugly trend of vote buying and the monetisation of electoral processes in Nigeria is a herculean one that will require strategic remediation of its underlying root causes.

Cash for vote, which represents a bane upon good governance and credible electoral conduct, is a condemnable scheme by contenders in an election of securing victory over rivals. While it may be difficult to eliminate this nascent phenomenon, it is very possible to minimise its negative consequences on the Nigerian polity through certain policy measures, as a way to assure free, fair, credible and transparent elections in Ekiti.

The following factors must be addressed in order to reverse the scourge of vote-buying

Behavioural change: Loose and undependable as it may be to recommend attitudinal changes, it is the best measure against the ill of vote

purchase and any other electoral malfeasance for that matter. With right attitudes, rigging, vote buying/inducement, alongside possible other electoral infractions cannot succeed. When the electorate have the right attitude and perception towards politics, they are rise above petty tendencies that make them susceptible to wanton inducement at polling booths. Candidates with genuine purposes and right, operable manifestoes will get attracted to spaces of contests.

Reducing the perquisite of public office:

Political positions should be made less attractive by reducing perquisites that await successful candidates. Virtues and values of probity, accountability, transparency and genuine brotherly feeling must be built into positions, such that profit to self is reduced, while the primacy of service to humanity is promoted.

Economic empowerment: Economic empowerment program that lift citizens out of poverty is required to stem the tide of vote buying and selling.

Through robust policy frameworks that free the economic space for people to earn decent living without submitting to undignifying offers of political candidates, the electorate are fundamentally empowered and encouraged to partner in the process of ensuring electoral transparency, rather than leaving such to INEC, or getting them coerced by security agents during exercises.

Other Recommendations include:

- i. **Poverty reduction:** there is no gainsaying the fact that poverty plays a major role in creating the economic atmosphere for voter inducement and vote-buying to thrive as revealed in our findings. The nexus between poverty and elite manipulation and control of the masses leads one to a possible hypothesis that there may be a witting plan to impoverish followers in order to maintain and sustain political control. It is important therefore, that effective and sustainable poverty reduction strategies be put in place to assuage the influence of hunger and starvation in electoral decision making.
- ii. **Comprehensive war on corruption:** corruption is a societal challenge that manifests in every facet of national life in Nigeria. It concerns conducts by the giver and the taker of inappropriate inducement as is the case with perpetrators of vote-buying. Electoral laws must accommodate the various loopholes for corruption in the conduct of elections and see to the discharge of adequate punishment to offenders.
- iii. **Restoration of ideological bases for political parties:** political parties presuppose the existence of a uniting worldview for members of same political parties. To offer a clear platform for citizens' electoral decision making, political parties must embrace codified ideological perspectives that encapsulate their programmes and policy directions.
- iv. **Reversal of rising unemployment:** the challenge of unemployment has been thoroughly debated as a national menace in Nigeria with effects touching on virtually all facets of national life from security to election credibility. To insulate the youth from manipulation, opportunities for employment and productive engagement must be enhanced.
- v. **Good governance:** the imperative of good governance to development cannot be overemphasized. The quality of leadership is critical to its capacity for effective, people-oriented and developmental decision making. As Ogunyemi³³ rightly posited, "If all of the money spent to buy votes are pumped into the economy of the state, they would have been able to pay salaries. There will be prompt payment of salaries, jobs will be available and poverty will leave the state." Also, when the political class embraces the idea of selfless services by implementing the manifestoes of their various parties to the benefits of the people, the menace of commercialization of ballot in the state will drastically reduce.

- vi **Improved management of election security:** Security agencies involved in elections must demonstrate commitment to electoral integrity and transparency through effective and objective management of election security. Security agencies should also intensify efforts in arresting and prosecuting electoral offenders.
- vii **Introduction of electronic voting system:** Introduction of electronic voting could potentially reduce incidence of voting buying and selling in elections.
- viii. **Enforcement of electoral laws:** A corollary of good governance is the introduction of stringent laws and effective implementation and punitive systems capable of dissuading potential offenders and sanctioning perpetrators.

There is no doubt that Nigeria has made significant gains in enhancing the legal framework to guide against vote buying through the Electoral Act. However, there is the need to address some of the notable inconsistencies and potential loopholes in the law to curb the act, which drives up the costs of elections for parties and candidates as well as prevents credible candidates from running for political offices.

One of the most potent strategies is the enforcement of the electoral act provision on the maximum amount on possible campaign budgets of seekers of elective offices; a move which will

immediately limit not just access to cash but even the freedom to dispense such. Indeed, parties and candidates will need to commit funds on printing manifestoes, purchasing office stationeries and equipment, running jingles and adverts, and logistics of movement for officials. But how strictures of transparency and accountability can be imposed, even in the process of ensuring all these, may be another task altogether. Thus, for those who elect to discountenance existing regulations on campaign spending, overshooting limits and limitations, consequences of infractions must be imposed on offenders.

The problem in Nigeria has not always been absence of laws and regulations to countervail deleterious conducts, but the looseness of enforcement in such a way that what is made sauce for the goose is not always made sauce for the gander. While stiff punishment for rigging may be a solution, such can have meaning only if the enabling legal/judicial system is such that justice is served all the times. Law must apply to culprits, irrespective of so-called name, status or location. Such a target requires genuine alertness and cooperation of entire parties, including the government, the electoral commission, the political parties, the candidates, the electorate, the civil society and even the press.

Conclusion

Vote buying is an external pressure on voters which is prevalent in Nigeria. Indeed, the problem of vote-buying remains a threat to democracy in the country as it poses serious challenge to free and fair elections and the legitimacy of political office holders.

Although the effect of voter inducement on election outcomes is yet to be scientifically determined, there is a moral burden on the managers of the election process in Nigeria regarding the credibility of elections in which voters are seen to have been induced by financial exchanges.

A second effect of the scourge bothers on the question of accountability as citizens' role in the democratic election process. The task of holding leaders to account is one of the logic behind the voting power of the masses and relies on the trust between the electorate and elected leaders. This power is undermined where vote-buying is used to secure victory at the polls.

Thus, this study examines issues surrounding political behaviour and party politics in Ekiti State with particular focus on vote-buying as an emerging challenge to elections in the state. It is concluded that for any democratic nation to attain development, its systems of leadership selection or election must be full-proof of corruption and other forms of rigging like vote buying.

Once citizens have formed their voting preferences, they must be allowed to freely express them on Election Day without any encumbrance or inducement.

The study therefore recommends good governance, legal enforcement, prioritisation of employment generation, restoration of ideological base for political parties, holistic war on corruption, and effective poverty reduction as policy options towards reversing and remedying the ugly trend.



