

MONEY POLITICS AND VOTE BUYING IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC: IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract

Money politics and vote buying have been at the root of Nigeria's political crisis, beginning from the return to civil rule in 1999. In spite of its importance to party politics and electioneering campaign, the negative impact of money politics and vote buying have discredited the democratic process in Nigeria and posed serious threat to national security. Primarily, the aim of this paper is to examine the implications of money politics and vote buying in Nigeria's fourth republic for national security. The paper is rooted in securitization theoretical explanations. Data were generated from secondary materials and content analytical method was adopted. It revealed that: money-politics and vote buying are the major factors that stimulate bad governance, controversies, social conflicts, ethno-religious crises, violence, militancy, separatist agitations, insurgency and all forms of threats to human lives, properties and national security. The paper argues that Nigerian electioneering process since 1999 is characterised by high profile money-politics and vote buying regime such that the power of incumbency, activities of money bags, special interest individuals, political machines and godfathers create tension and security crisis in the polity. This largely destabilises the political order and provoke all forms of crisis and threats to national security. The paper concludes that except money politics is discouraged and the scourge of poverty with other ill-factors addressed, desperate political elites will continue to take advantage of the bastardised system to ruin the future of the hard won democracy by creating tension and security crisis in the polity.

Keywords: National Security, Money Politics, Vote Buying.

Introduction

The discourse on national security in the contemporary time has been an on-going debate with a shift from the traditional or conventional practice on state security to a new dimension of threats to human lives and dignity. In Nigeria, the rate of threats to human lives emanating from Boko Haram insurgency in the North East, Niger Delta militancy, separatist activities of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra

(MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the South East, kidnapping and Fulani herdsmen/farmers' crisis is alarming.

Nigeria's politics since independence in 1960 is in decline and the increasingly monetized electioneering process appears to be driving the nation towards a serious security challenge. Nigeria's democratic system has been characterised by cyclical crisis of militarism, ethnic conflicts, religious intolerance, political thuggery, instability, violence, money-politics and vote buying (Adedayo, 2011; Alfa and Marangos, 2016; Ekanola, 2011; Karim (2006), Karim and Albert, 2011 and Ovwasa, 2014). The reality of this is evident in the injurious nature of the ethnic crisis, separatist agitations, insecurity, election corruption scandals and serial kidnapping and killing of innocent people by insurgent and terrorist groups in the country. The increasing rate of violence and insecurity of lives and properties in the country has deepened the problem of national development which is a major threat to democratic governance, peace, unity, and national security. The security challenge threatening the peace, unity, stability and democratic governance in Nigeria is frightening. The situation is even worse with the polarisation of the political landscape along ethnic politics, religious bigotry, resources control, separatist agitations, kidnapping, insurgency, herdsmen activities and all forms of criminalities.

In the wake of new democratic dispensation in 1999, there was high hopes that democracy would improve the lives of the people and usher in a regime of social justice, rule of law, fundamental human right, good governance, peaceful and credible elections, just and equitable development contrary to military regime. Unfortunately, the result is contrary to general expectation. The structural feature of Nigerian politics appears to be the bane of national development and security in the country. Curiously, money bags politicians, special interest individuals, godfathers and political machines have hijacked the electoral process to the disadvantage of the citizenry. For the most part, this menace appears to be responsible for the emerging regime of insecurity threatening the stability of the country. The wave of insecurity in the country has introduced a high level of uncertainty into the political destiny of the nation. The political ship of Nigeria as a nation-state appears to be heading towards the rock as democracy which was perceived would abate the deepened crisis situation in the country has been a reflection of deep crisis of governance and leadership. Democratic practice in the country since 1999 portrays democracy as a crisis-breeding form of government. The conduct of elections in the country has created serious fissure in national security.

The abuse of the electoral process and the enthronement of money-politics and vote buying has been a major threat to democratic practice and national security. The primary concern of this paper is to critically examine the implications of money-politics and vote buying in Nigeria's fourth republic for national security and development. The paper is not to provide a detailed discussion on the concept of national security but a more detailed exposition on the implications of money-politics and vote buying as major threats to national security. The paper therefore presents a broader perspective on the negative role

of money-politics and vote buying to national security and to suggest strategies for tackling the menace.

Conceptualizing National Security, Money Politics and Vote-buying

The concept of security has been subjected to an extensive intellectual discourse on national security (state security) and defence. Security in traditional terms focuses on the concept and practice of state security which hinges mainly on military defence of a state (Waver, 1995; Lipschutz, 1995; Adedayo, 2011). This is a situation where “states threaten each other, challenge each other’s sovereignty, try to impose their will on each other, defend their independence, and so on” (Waver, 1995). Traditionally, attention of scholars on national security was mainly on problems in international relations. In other words, national security is about strategic studies which primarily focus on the military aspects of security in international relations. Here military threat to national security is seen as states’ primary concern.

Karim and Albert (2011) defined security as a “condition achieved when designated information, material, personnel, activities and installations are protected against espionage, sabotage, subversion and terrorism as well as against less or unauthorised disclosure”. The perspective of these scholars is in harmony with the goals of military intelligence, leaving a gap in social, political, environmental and human security concerns. Adedayo (2011) gives credence to this standpoint when he argued that security is about safety, freedom from danger or risk, protection from espionage, infiltration, sabotage, theft etc. Security in this respect is seen in terms of military threats. Perhaps this was what informed the view of Buzan cited in Waver (1995) when he argued that military threats have been primary in the past because they emerged as struggle for survival of sovereign state. What this entails is that the focus on security discourse was on how to maintain the territorial integrity of a state against external aggression. Corroborating this viewpoint, Fayeye (2010:195) defines security as the composition, structure and responsibilities of the security sector. What this means is that security is about safety of personal and communal state from a wide range of critical and pervasive external threats. Traditionally, it was presumed that national security is simply about the preservation of states and its territorial integrity.

During the cold war era, the concept of national security was mainly on military intelligence and state centred because security was assumed to be all about the military ability of a state to defend itself against any form of armed conflict. Perhaps this was why the conservatives have argued that military preparedness is the main variable or instrument for the preservation of national sovereignty and territorial integrity (Karim and Albert, 2011). The progressive, according to Karim and Albert (2011) see beyond military preparedness and also focus on the ability of a state to develop a stable pattern of economic growth and political development.

After the cold war era, discourse on national security with military intelligence and state centeredness as referent object has gradually transformed in concept and practice. This may be due to the fact that traditional concept of security does not explain the political effect of various internal security threats to human lives. In recent year, conceptual reflections on national security have largely been on human security. That is, national security discourse has shifted from physical to human security, from state to security of person (Waver, 1995; Lipschutz, 1995; Adedayo, 2011; Karim and Albert, 2011, Yagboyaju, 2011; Yerima, 2008; and Egvavon, 2009). What this connotes is that most of the threats posited by those who have argued for a redefinition of the concept of national security hinge on social problems, human health, welfare, internal sources of violence and instability, terrorism, insurgency, militants' activities, and the effects of manipulation or disruption of political process of elections on societies. For the most part, such threats certainly could affect the safety of individuals, families, communities, societies and even cohesion and stability of a country.

Re-contextualising national security therefore requires a shift from applying the traditional logic of military explanation to non-military factors that pose threats to national security and analyse them within the socio-political context. Essentially, this is a process of bringing into the discourse of national security those factors different from the conventional security or non-military security problems. These factors encompass emerging sources of threats that pose security challenges to human lives. These include money-politics, vote buying, political thuggery, violence, separatist agitations, insurgency, terrorism, ethno- religious conflicts between the societal groups that inhabit a state and the divergent interests that besiege them.

Karim (2006 and 2011) posited that conceptualisation of national security must involve emphasis on the survival of every human being as well as ecological, social, political and economic issues. Waever (1995) gives credence to this when he argued that the new approach to security is to move from a strict focus on the security of state (national security), towards a broader or alternative focus on the security of people. Security of people in this regard revolves around economic welfare, environmental concerns, cultural identity, resource control issue, political rights and outcome of democratic elections. The understanding derivable from the foregoing is that national security means creating social, economic, political, environmental, and cultural systems that, when combined with military strength of a nation, give the citizens the confidence of safety and assurance for survival, livelihood and dignity.

Adedayo (2011), Waver (1995), Ekanola (2011), Karim (2006), Karim and Albert (2011) have argued that the security of the individuals is the most important factor in the security of a state. Section 14, sub-section (2) (b) of the Nigerian constitution (1999) gives support to this viewpoint as its states that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. In the same vein, Yagboyaju (2011) describes national security as a situation of freedom from the danger of intimidation, harm or injury. This

means protecting people from critical and pervasive threats situations. In this regard, national security or the security of the state is the protection and preservation of the human lives and properties of the state. This, to all intent and purposes, encompasses creating and maintaining a conducive atmosphere devoid of socio-political and economic upheavals, environmental protection, maintenance of law and order, minimising poverty level and preventing political corruption and deprivation.

From the foregoing analysis, it is arguable that the whole essence of military preparedness for the preservation of national sovereignty and territorial integrity of a state is to ensure security of lives and properties of the people that inhabit the state. To this end, national security can therefore be re-contextualised as the holistic efforts to advance equitable development, control of crimes and violence, containment of instability, prevention of electoral malpractices and political corruption, improvement of the welfare and the quality of lives of the citizens. This also involves the protection of fundamental human rights and individual freedom. Thus, Nigeria's national security encompasses the totality of the security interests of all individuals and ethnic groups that inhabit Nigerian society. Since our primary concern in this section is to establish the contrast between traditional paradigm on national security and the emerging security challenge (money-politics and vote buying) which this paper intends to raise through contextual discussion and exposition of a new debate, we therefore present a discuss on money-politics and vote buying and their implications on national security.

Money has been portrayed as an indispensable tool in democratic elections (Ukase, 2016; Alfa and Marangos, 2016; Walecki, 2006; Quentin, 2005; Omenka and Apam, 2006; Ovwasa, 2014; Best, 2006; Ojo, 2006; Aiyede, 2006; Dung, 2006; Kura, 2011; Ibrahim et al, 2015; Adetula, 2006; and Gillon, 2000). Alfa and Marangos (2016), Gillon (2000) and Quentin (2005) have argued that money matters for democracy because of its importance in campaign activities and the execution of elections. Ojo (2006) described money as an instrument used by political parties or candidates in election campaign to secure votes. In the same vein, Adetula (2006) posited that the relationship between money and politics has a powerful implication for democracy. Best (2006) also gives credence to this assertion when he opined that the use of money in politics is a norm especially for those seeking political offices.

In terms of conceptualisation, scholars have given different explanations to the meaning of money-politics. According to Quentin (2005) money-politics involve the misuse of money to undermine the political process for the gain of a political party or candidates. This postulation sees money-politics as a form of political corruption. In the same vein, Evertsson (2008) described money-politics as bribery and a form of political corruption. Gillon (2000) also gives credence to this standpoint when he argued that money-politics encompasses the activities of 'big-money interests' to buy political outcomes. The opinion of this scholar is that money-politics involves a situation in which 'wealthy candidates' and 'special interest individual' employ the use of money to buy

elections. Taking a cue from the foregoing, Ukase (2016) opines that the use of money during election campaigns in most African countries is fraught with despicable level of corruption. Corroborating this standpoint, Beetseh and Akpoo (2015) conceptualised money-politics as the phenomenon in electoral process whereby contenders for elective positions use money or money is used on their behalf as an inducement to sway their support which is not based on persuading the electorates to vote according to their wish and conviction but on the influence of money that has changed hands. The meaning derivable from this is that money-politics encompasses situations whereby money is used to influence the electorate to vote in favour of a candidate or a political party. That is, money-politics involves the use of money to induce voters to vote against their wish and conviction all in the bit to favour a party or candidate. This is a negation of the democratic ethos and potent vice capable of engendering avoidable threats to national security and development.

The stance of this paper is that money-politics is one of the factors that condition and encourage the flourishing of corruption in Nigerian electioneering process which is a major cause of political violence, separatist agitations, militancy, insurgency and all forms of controversies and criminal activities that threatens national security. The paper sees money-politics as the use of public funds by politicians to subvert the electioneering process to the disadvantage of the polity.

Vote-buying may carry different meaning in different cultural context. The term vote buying can be described as any reward given to a person to vote in a particular way or not to vote for a party or candidate in an election. Vote buying in this regard depicts a corrupt election practice. It is a bribe which has a monetary value. According to Ovwasa (2014) vote buying is the exchange of voting right by the voters with money from the candidates in an election. This postulation sees vote buying as a process whereby voter's conscience and views are manipulated to the advantage of the political party or candidates in an election through the use of money or other material things to induce and appeal to the electorate directly or indirectly. Bryan and Baer (2005) give credence to this standpoint when they argued that vote buying can be a direct or an indirect act. According to them, direct vote buying involves a situation where money is being paid directly to voters by a political party, its candidates or party agents to vote in an election. Indirect vote buying on the other hand include "(i) gifts from political parties and candidates to various opinion leaders, to secure their support and that of their followers, (ii) the act of buying voters card from the electorates and keeping them away from voting during election and (iii) cash or in-kind donations for local projects, such as funeral expenses and school fees, distribution of good items to an entire village or church congregation, such as canned meat or fish, maize, used clothing, and other commodities". Soriwei (2015), Alli (2016a and 2016b), Nwisi (2016), Soriwei, Akinkuotu and Adepegba (2017) and Nafiu (2017) have however argued that the conspiratorial involvement of election management body in collecting

bribe from godfathers and special interest individuals in order to favour a candidate or party during election is a form of indirect vote buying.

Fredrick Charles and Andrea's Schedler (2005) posited that vote buying is a situation where candidate 'buy' and citizens/electorate 'sell votes', as they buy and sell apples, shoes or television sets. What this connotes is that vote-buying is like an auction in which voters sell their votes to the highest bidder. Van de Walle (2009:63) gives support to this viewpoint when he described vote buying as a situation in which the electorates are given money by candidates in exchange for their votes. This postulation depicts a situation in which citizens auction their votes to the party or candidates who offer to pay the most. In the same vein, Dung (2006) conceptualised vote buying as any form of persuasion in which financial gain is suggested by one person to another with the intention of influencing a person's vote. Bowei (2008) defined vote buying as a situation in which political party or candidates induce voters to sell their votes in exchange for money or any other material benefits. These postulations show that vote buying involves the voters (sellers of votes) and the political parties, candidates or party agents (buyers of votes). The actors that buy votes in this regard include: candidates, political godfathers or patrons, political parties which could be ruling or opposition parties, and politicians at national, state and local government council levels.

From the foregoing analysis, vote buying involves any form of persuasion by political parties or their agents in which money is offered or financial benefit is suggested with the intention of influencing a person's vote in favour of a party or candidate. This is an act intended to persuade or induce individuals to vote in a certain ways during an election. In other words, vote buying can be summed up to mean an electoral fraud, manipulation, malpractice, corruption, vote rigging and illegal interference with the process of an election. It is a political arrangement in which wealthy candidates, money bags, godfathers and special interest individuals determine who get elected or who does not get elected against the wishes of the electorates. Vote buying is a threat to the conduct of fair elections. In the eyes of the electoral Act, vote buying is an offence in which a person knowingly or wilfully gives or conspires with another individual to encourage or give monetary value to a person for the purpose of voting for a political party or candidate in an election. This is a flagrant negation of the democratic ethos.

Theoretical Underpinning

Securitization theory which was first developed by Waever (1995) and Buzan, Waever, and De Wilde (1998) is largely associated with the Copenhagen School of security studies, which hinges on the process of securitization and de-securitization. Originally devised by Ole Waever, the concept of securitization provided explanation on the debate between those who claimed that threats are objective (i.e. what really constitutes a threat to international security) on the one hand, and those that maintained that security is subjective (what is perceived to be a threat) on the other. The theory has gradually

developed into a research agenda on the dynamics through which political actors transform social issues into security threats and the consequences of such transformation. That is, the main concern has shifted to questions on when, why and how elites in all societies label certain issues and developments as “security problems” and when, why and how they de-securitize issues that have become securitized. In other word, securitization theorists are now concern about the widening of the referent object of security. They argue that security is not only about military defence of the state. It encompasses the expansion of the security realm to include social and political issues.

In an attempt to demystify this debate, Sjostedt (2017) and Baele and Thomson (2017) have observed that the Copenhagen School posits that security should be seen as a speech act, where the central issue is not whether threats are real or not, but the ways in which a certain issue, such as money politics and vote buying, can be socially constructed as a threat. The idea of speech acts has a long tradition in philosophy and has experienced growing debate on how social issues become perceived as a major threat in the discourse of democratic election across the globe. Securitizing money-politics and vote buying therefore underscores their negative impact as issues of utmost priority to national security. The increasingly monetized electioneering process in Nigeria appears to be drifting the nation towards a serious security divide. The abuse of the electoral process and the enthronement of money-politics and vote buying has been a major threat to democratic practice and national security in the country. The security challenge pose by money-politics and vote buying to the socio-economic and political cohesion of Nigerian society since the nation returned to democratic dispensation in 1999 is alarming and reawakening the people’s consciousness about the threat pose by these menaces. The nexus between money-politics, vote buying and national security in the country has been highly problematic. One can therefore think of securitization as the process through which money-politics and vote buying are elevated to security issues that need to be handled with urgency. Situating the applicability of securitization theory to the study of democratic election, this paper is out to describe and review the central assumption of securitization theory to a new debate on money-politics and vote buying as a major threat to political development in Nigeria. Political development and national security have to do with the organisational stability of state, systems of government, and the ideologies that give governments and state their legitimacy.

Money politics and vote buying are clear negation of what democratic elections stand for across the globe. The phenomena of money-politics and vote buying have laid bare the fragility of democracy in Nigeria. These menaces are with obvious implications on lives, properties, political development and national security. Money-politics and vote buying breed serious internal security crisis in Nigeria such that if unchecked, could eventually lead to the dis-integration of the country as a nation. The emerging monetization process of the Nigeria politics is like a timed missile waiting for the destruction of the entire political landscape. The security challenges emanating from money-politics and vote

buying appear to be the major factors responsible for the inability of governments to bring about good governance, prevention of political thuggery, violence, and maintenance of peace and order in the country.

Methodology

This study largely relies on secondary materials and content analytical method. Extant literature on money politics and national security were examined with reflections on Nigeria's fourth republic. Data on historical antecedent of money politics in Nigeria's electoral process and its current trends were employed to draw conclusions on its implications for the Nation's national security. The study adopted secondary source of data and content analytical method because of the nature of the phenomenon and for the purpose of describing the situations as they occur.

Currents Trends in Money Politics in Nigeria's Electoral Process

The trends of money politics in Nigeria's electoral process have assumed an alarming dimension of vote buying. Ovwasa (2014) reveals that the phenomenon of money-politics became prominent in Nigeria elections in the post-colonial period. The wave of money politics spiralled to greater dimensions during the 1979 and 1993 general elections. This was because the political campaigns for the conduct of the 1993 election involved "excessive use of money during the party primaries and the presidential elections". The use of money to buy vote became alarming since the wake of the fourth republic in 1999(Alli, 2016; Beetseh and Akpoo, 2015; Walecki, 2006; Kura, 2011; Soriwei, 2017; Ovwasa, 2014; Ukase, 2016, and Alfa and Marangos, 2016). The trend in the country is changing from bad to worse since the country transited from military dictatorship to democratic governance in 1999. The outcome of the 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 general elections and the various houses of assembly, House of Representatives and senate elections have received both national and international criticism about the misuse of money during the elections (Ovwasa, 2014; Soriwei, 2017; Alfa and Marangos, 2016; Ali et al, 2018 and Ogbah, 2019). The Nigerian political system has been hijacked by wealthy candidates and money-bag politicians. The electoral commission has largely failed in its primary responsibility to effectively apply the electoral law acceptable as a legitimate order to ensure free, fair, peaceful, credible and acceptable elections. Experiences have shown that special interest individuals, money-bag politicians and wealthy candidates often infiltrate INEC officials to manipulate the electoral process. The implication of this is that the campaign finance reform intended to curtail the influence of money-politics and restore public confidence in the democratic system has largely failed contrary to the expectations of all and sundry. The involvement of INEC officials in election malpractices in the country is worrisome and has further entrenched the act of money politics and vote buying in the country's body politics. Most often, the political heads of INEC and those working with them are political partners of the incumbent governments. The circumstances of their

appointments perhaps have often responsible for the lack of the good-will and capacity to implement the law. The inability of the electoral Commission to address the problems associated with money-politics and vote buying in the country through the instrumentality of the electoral Act is a reflection of the incapacity of INEC to ensure credible election. The outcomes of various polls in the country in recent times presuppose the fact that the electoral law has, in effect, had unintended consequences. Majority of Nigerians believe that money-bags have hijacked the political system and that recent elections in the country were bought by the highest bidders. Political office holders such as the President or Governors have now assumed the role of godfathers. Majority of them use public funds to sponsor their preferred party loyalists in electoral contest.

Elections in Nigeria in the current dispensation, especially at each of the parties' primaries have been characterised by high level of desperation on the parts of the contestants; do-or-die politics, nasty abuse and name-calling, vote buying, and slogan of ethnicity and disunity within the parties (Alli, 2016a and 2016b; Nwisi, 2016; Soriwei, Akinkuotu and Adepegba, 2017; Nafiu, 2017; Beetseh and Akpoo, 2015; Soriwei, 2017; Ovwasa, 2014; Ukase, 2016; Alfa and Marangos, 2016; and Ogbah, 2019). The phenomenon of money-politics and vote buying is escalating from one civilian transition to another. The act of 'see-and-buy' of votes by political parties and candidates is trendy in Nigeria electioneering process and the electorate are collaborators in this act (Ogbah, 2019). The conspiracy of the electorate with political parties and candidate to sell their votes is a signal of a democracy doomed to fail.

The conduct of elections in the current dispensation has assumed a new dimension of buying and selling of votes. This is a situation in which on the day of voting people are being paid cash (say 2500, 4000, 5000 Naira) to vote for a particular candidate (Ibrahim et al, 2015; Alfa and Marangos, 2016 and Ogbah, 2019). It is a do-or-die affair where free, fair, peaceful and credible election is unrealistic. Most elections in the country are flawed with greed, thuggery, fraud, corruption and violence (Ovwasa, 2014; Alfa and Marangos, 2016; Soriwei, 2017; Ali et al, 2018 and Ogbah, 2019). More worrisome is the level of involvement of the security personnel to pervert the electoral process. The use of the army by incumbent government to garner undue advantage during election is mind-boggling. The situation is precarious as the electorate who are supposed to be agitating for good leadership and governance are the one looking for candidate that can pay the highest before they vote. The level of poverty and political corruption in the country has discouraged most Nigerians from participating in the recent elections. The political ship of the nation appears to be heading towards the rock as the abuse of the electoral process and the enthronement of money-politics and vote buying in the conduct of elections portend serious fissure in Nigeria democracy and national unity. The reality about the Nigerian electoral process is that money-bags influence Nigerian elections and the electoral Reform Acts are undoubtedly cannot capture all the trajectories.

Money Politics and its Implications for Nigeria's National Security

The enthronement of money politics and vote buying in Nigeria electoral process portends a major obstacle to the attainment of a credible democratic process and national security. This menace has been the cause of all forms of do-or-die politics, crisis, controversies, electoral violence, political apathy, mass poverty, manipulation of the electoral law, and the over dependence of the masses on the political system and corrupt leadership that subverts the system. The menace poses serious negative implications for Nigeria's national security.

National security has been re-contextualised to embrace societal factors that explain the expanding jurisdiction of security as a concept. This involves creation of conditions favourable for the maintenance of peace, unity, progress and protection of lives, properties and national values. However, the security challenge posed by money-politics to the socio-economic and political cohesion of Nigerian society since the nation's return to democratic dispensation in 1999 is alarming. Today, Nigerian elections have been bedevilled by various forms of high profile money-politics and vote buying which have diminished democratic ethos in the nation's body politics thereby breeding the cord of bad governance, electoral malpractices, political thuggery, violence, separatist agitations, insurgency and all forms of criminal acts. Elections in the country have been such that witnessed successive democratic transitions being flawed by serious money-politics, vote buying, violence and controversies. Nigeria has witnessed series of incidents of ethnic clashes, pipeline vandalization, religious bigotry, kidnapping, Boko Haram insurgency, herdsmen activities and separatist agitations; many of which manifested from bad governance, electoral misconduct, money-politics and vote buying.

The 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 general elections and various houses of assembly, house of representative, senate and governorship elections in the country have been adjudged by domestic and foreign election observers with accusations of ballot snatching, vote buying and orchestrated electoral rigging and violence (Egvavon, 2009; Kura, 2011; Ukase, 2016; Adedayo, 2011; Karim and Albert, 2011; Ovwasa, 2014; Ekanola, 2011; Alfa and Magrangos, 2016 and Ogbah, 2019). Egvavon (2009:27) and Alfa and Magrangos (2016) have argued that Nigeria has never had a crisis-free and fair election from civilian to civilian transition in a democratic government. This is a pointer to the fact that elections in Nigeria have never been devoid of malpractices and violence. The root cause of the crises in the country is the greed and unbridled lust for power by unscrupulous politicians who want to capture public offices through money-politics and vote buying.

Today, elections in Nigeria are conducted through a well-organized rigging process in collaboration with corrupt INEC officials and security agents. In most circumstances, the electorates sell their votes to the highest bidder with the impressions that, that is the easiest way to get their own share of the national cake from the politicians who will never remember them when they get to office. The politicians, on the other hand, when in office have often governed with high level of callousness, impunity, force and insensitivity to the

needs of the people. The flawed elections in the country have led to bad political leadership and governance which are largely the root cause of the renewed hostilities by the Niger Delta militants in the south and the Boko Haram insurgents in the north. In other words, the militants' activities and separatist agitations of MASSOB and IPOB in the south and the Fulani herdsmen activities as well as the Boko Haram insurgency in the north are the fallout of bad leadership and governance; which are offspring of the flawed elections manipulated with money-politics and vote buying.

Money-politics and vote buying are the phenomena that lay bare the fragility of democracy in the Nigerian State. Money politics and vote buying are clear negation of what democratic elections stand for. These menaces are with obvious implications on lives, properties, political development and national security. Political development and national security have to do with the organisational stability of a state, its system of government, transitional process and the ideologies that give governments its legitimacy. Money-politics and vote buying in Nigeria breed large scale internal security crisis such that if unchecked, could eventually lead to the dis-integration of the country as a nation. The emerging monetization process of the Nigeria politics is like a timed missile waiting for the destruction of the entire political landscape. The security challenges emanating from money-politics and vote buying appear to be the major factors responsible for the inability of governments to bring about good governance, prevention of political thuggery, violence, and maintenance of peace and order in the country.

Adedayo (2011) has argued that politicians who bought their ways to power see themselves as not liable or accountable to the people. In other words, they are political entrepreneurs who see governance as a business because they bought their votes to get to power. So, governance, to them, is all about avenue for recouping money spent during the elections and for personal enrichment. The fallout of this are the ethno-religious crises, militants and herdsmen activities, Boko Haram insurgency, separatist agitations, and dethronement of free, fair and credible democratic process in the country. These to a large extent are serious threats to human lives and national security.

To this end, it is important to note that there is strong relationship between the nature of governance and national security. Good governance guarantees peace, unity, progress, cooperation, effectiveness and legitimacy. Selection of the political leadership through a free, fair, peaceful and credible election devoid of money-politics and vote buying promotes the level of acceptability of government, the rule of law, social justice, human right and development of democratic institutions and practices. Money-politics and vote buying in Nigeria and most developing nations have provoked serious security challenges that distort the ideals of democratic ethos and strategies that support sustainable human development and promotion of human security and national peace and progress. Human security is a core government responsibility, necessary for socio-political and economic development and vital for the promotion of national security and unity. Sustainable development in any society requires sustainable peace. To have sustainable peace,

therefore, the political elites must evolve methods of addressing the root cause of insecurity in the country by fostering free, fair, peaceful and credible electoral process devoid of money-politics and vote buying. This will foster legitimate and effective governance, the rule of law, respect for fundamental human rights, equitable distribution of resources and accountable governance. Only in a state of legitimate and effective governance can peace, unity progress and national security be guaranteed.

Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

This paper conceives the concept of national security from an unconventional standpoint. It sees national security from a perspective different from the traditional-military concept. The paper is aimed at securitizing politics, hinging the debate on how money-politics and vote buying constitute major threats to national security. Within this framework, money-politics and vote buying are seen as major factors that stimulate bad governance, controversies, social conflicts, ethno-religious crises, violence, militancy, separatist agitations, insurgency and all forms of threats to human lives and properties. The paper argues that Nigerian electioneering process is characterised by high profile money-politics and vote buying regime such that the power of incumbency, activities of money bags, special interest individuals, political machines and godfathers create tension and security crisis in the polity. Today, money-politics and vote buying appear to be the major threats besetting Nigeria's national security and peace. The way and manner elections are rigged through the instrumentality of money-politics and vote buying is traumatising and affect the psyche of the citizens. This largely destabilises the political order and provoke all forms of crisis, controversies and violence in the country.

The study recommends the eradication of money-politics and vote buying in Nigeria's electioneering process as a mechanism for enthroning free, fair and credible conduct of elections in order to engender good governance and leadership, peace, progress and unity of the nation. There is the obvious need for improved leadership and governance through credible election of the people's representatives devoid of money-politics and vote buying. The issue of bad governance, poverty, ignorance, corruption and injustice must be addressed in order to ensure enhanced security of lives and properties in the country. Politics of ethnicity, religious and tribal sentiments must be discouraged. The emerging regime of employing the use of solders and other security personnel to terrorise voters and ensure the victory of wealthy candidates is repugnant to acceptable practice or general standard and must be discouraged. The recruitment of militants and political thugs by politicians during elections for electoral violence must be addressed without delay.

Finally, and more importantly, there is the need for the reorientation of all stakeholders in Nigerian politics to develop an attitudinal change that will make democracy work. Stakeholders in Nigeria politics must ensure that elections are conducted according to the electoral law and good conscience. There must be a deep sense of patriotism, honesty and selflessness in refusing to sell and buy vote during elections. This is necessary because free,

fair, peaceful and credible election cannot only be guaranteed by the enforcement of the electoral Act. The social and judicial system must be such that can ensure justice at all times. The electoral umpire, political parties, candidates, ruling government, electorate and the civil society must cultivate the right attitudes and commitment to make democracy work in the country.

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