

THE COST OF RUNNING FOR ELECTIVE OFFICE IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC: 2007-2015 IN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

While the 2015 general election in Nigeria has been acclaimed to be the most transparent since the advent of the Fourth Republic in 1999, political evenness is still at great peril because of the unwholesome monetary requirements in the electioneering process. Deploying individual wealth or donations to fund electoral campaigns put richer contestants at higher political lead over those with lesser resources. It distorts the candidate's selection process, rumples political judgment, gives undue advantages to some citizens over others as well as makes mockery of the treasured slogan of 'one man one vote' - a core principle of representative democracy. Political financiers take advantage of the presiding role of money to gain access to state treasury with the motive of an investment that must yield profit. The work adopts the investment theory of politics and interrogates the contravening role money plays to stripping political recruitment of integrity as well as allow for diverse manifestations of abuses in governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Findings are that political power revolves around the 'big' minority and electoral victories are decided within the leaves of raw cash with dire consequences for political recruitment and governance. This trend undermines the development of democratic practice in the country by creating legitimacy crisis. The overbearing influences of cash in politics needs to be eliminated by restricting and monitoring private money in politics.

Keywords: Elective office, Money politics, Investment theory of politics, Political education.

Introduction

While there may be no contesting the fact that money is indispensable in the running of any political activity, the corrupting influence of money for better chances in political selection and recruitment, has assumed prominence in Nigeria's political lexicon. Reason being that candidates and parties have signified by their attitude at campaign exercises that outstanding or celebrated manifestos and

rectitude of aspirants pushing to occupy one public office or the other are somewhat incompetent to secure victory in elections; as a result they rely on raw cash in order to perpetuate acts such as vote-buying and lobbying to triumph in the election. The electorates on their part have apparently show cynicism in their electoral inclination by their promptitude to sell their vote. Time is

money to the electorate. Ears are rented. They chant aloud and sing praises when they clearly can't understand or hear the campaign speech being delivered by the candidate (Ejiofor, 2015). These malignant practices evoke a dent on established guiding principles and portents threat to the democratic process of selecting officers as well as hinder good governance (Ovwasa, 2013). This became the order of the day in the Nigerian political lexicon, with its pejorative connotation resulting in a pivoted political recruitment processes and dysfunctional governance.

Democratic process of selection is not an inexpensive enterprise. It is time, intellect and human capital demanding. In a competitive democracy, finance is needed to access the electorates and also indulge other electioneering engagements such as organizing rallies, mobilizing for political campaigns and producing party emblems and other symbols, manifestoes and posters printing and so on. To be able to handle these demands politicians pay lots of regards to raising money and resources. The deficit in organized system of raising party funds and selections of candidates make parties predisposed to elite exploit and consummate dominance. Owing to lack of viable source of funding for parties make it easy for party financiers to exercise power over candidate selection process, which in turn is equivalent in piloting the engine of party organization and instruments of government. The unprecedented advent of money politics in Nigeria sees where money is employed to promote and finance patron-client network and maintain the relation all through the election (Kura, 2014). Therefore political funders consolidate as investors who would secure reach to public resources after elections (Amaefula, 2015). Villarreal Héctor (2016) has it that the many of those who would not have their appointments attributed to the large number of electorates is a

problem for research which can be lend explanation by the theory of political recruitment in relations to unraveling the rationale for their attainment of power, why, who, and how they have it sustained. The unwholesome hijack of the entire recruitment process create room for worry owing to the corrupting influences of money and its negative impact on good governance in Nigeria. There's no gainsaying that it is overbearing influences in politics needs be eliminated by restricting campaign expenditures, shrink the place of private money in politics and other measures.

Laying the Turf

Money is indispensable in politics. Reaching out to the citizenry to exercise their voting right through whatever medium requires money. Campaigns, focused group meetings, setting up party offices, the task of political education, media advertisements and even door to door strategy of reaching out to voters require financial expenditure of varying magnitude. Nevertheless, in both new and old democratic systems, the mounting strain on political parties and individuals contesting for elective positions to meet the increasing cost of campaigns in the face of decline in subscription by party members, diminished public trust arising from the unenviable conduct of politicians with regard to how they have bastardized the political arena with money politics have made the situation very desperate. The amount of money spent by political parties and contestants for elective political offices is a cause profound worry not only to the political class, but also to everyone who is deeply concerned with democratic consolidation, especially in a fledgling democracy such as Nigeria. The cause for concern is predicated on the high potentiality of unregulated use of money in politics to create distortions in the democratic process.

The objective of this paper therefore is to examine the election funding scenario in Nigeria with intention of distilling how elections are funded, regulated, monitored and excessive use of funds sanctioned to checkmate the potential dangers to the country's democratization process.

Secondary data and relevant scholarly materials on campaign finance in learned journals, books and reports of reputable international organizations were utilized in this study in interrogating the dynamics of money politics and how it has affected governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Literature Review and Theoretical Perspectives

Money politics is the occurrence in the electoral process in Nigeria whereby political contestants for elective offices indulge in the use of money to influence support not based on the inclination of the electorates to exercise their voting right in tandem with their wishes and convictions but on the influence of financial inducements they have been subjected to (Kwaghga and Tarfa, 2015). Thus, while aspirants seeking for political office "buy" the votes of the electorates, the electorates "sell" their votes as a commodity. In essence, money politics entails an undertaking where electorates auction their votes for maximum particularistic benefits offered by politicians. It involves an economic exchange of money for outright votes or support in candidate's selection process. Its practice is anything that involves money to influence or change the minds of voters to favour the giver.

Although money politics is basically defined as an act of changing people's minds through the use of money, anything that involves some form of inducements, promises and even threats in the polls are considered election offences and money politics (Gilardi, 2010). Even if it is only a pledge, it can be

viewed as a corrupt practice as it is being done through promises or trades that may change the outcome of an election (Edger, 2013). Cash for access is the use of money to gain political power either by being elected or nominated. It means the enablement to earn power via money instrumentality which forces is cantankerous to the candidate selection process to one's advantage. There is a symbiotic nexus between political power and economic power. Money is the common denominator. Thus, in this vain, cash for access implies the possible influences of how political financiers gain ascendancy to state treasury by sponsoring political contestants.

Political recruitment denotes the process by which individuals are selected for inclusion among political elites. It is a procedure where persons having certain characteristic attributes and occupying defined social status are selected through screening by political institutions for the purpose of filling an elective office (Gilardi, 2010). It entails candidate selection for occupying all forms of political offices. Candidate recruitment is a basic screening activity by which the party in office is continuously revitalized. The question of ideology and social identity of the individual are of fundamental importance. The procedures engaged in nomination and selection of candidates has irrefutable implication on the individual's selection as well as how they behave in public office (Kura, 2014).

Governance essentially refers to the mechanisms, processes and institution for determining and managing public affairs and society. More specifically, it refers to how societal problems are identified and addressed; resources extracted, allocated and utilized; how policies are made and implemented and how societal progress and development are managed (Ikelegbe, 2013). Governance entails the exercise of economic, political, and administrative power in the

course of directing a nation's activities and particularly as it involves the way in which a government or other authorities exercise political power (Wohlmuth, 2000:7). For USAID (2005), governance entails the capability of governments to develop an efficient, effective, accountable public management process in which the citizenry have access to participate and which invigorates rather than weakens democracy as a system of government.

Furthermore, good governance which aches as a result of the occurrence of money politic entails the entire institutional and governmental structures in a polity which are run on the ground of precise adherence with the practices and principles of democracy. There must be strict compliance to the principles of equitable access to economic empowerment, quality education, the rule of law, good health-care delivery system, in addition to other basic social services by all stakeholders involved (Kwaghga and Tarfa, 2015), to further the progress and development of society.

There is also the business dimension to politics. Ferguson's, (1983) investment theory of politics is apt here. Businesses invest in candidates and political parties, and expect a return on their investment. Since they have conflicting interests, the public gets to throw its weight unto one side or the other, but proposals that are adverse to business as a whole do not get on the public agenda. For Ferguson, money power normally outweighs public power, and that candidates and issues without the backing of big money do not normally come before the public (Ferguson, 1995).

The theory further argues that while money propelled politics is costly and onerous to the average voter, in the policy making process the voter is marginalized with contending coalitions of entrepreneurial investors playing dominant roles. Politicians

and their parties have been reduced to the political branch of big business groups all parties canvassing issues that formulated wholly by business concerns instead of canvassing issues that will be benefit to the generality of the people. For the investment theory economic changes causes shift in power (change in political power) since parties tend to be subordinate to contributions for campaign (campaign donations) that ultimately are made or given by wealthy corporations and investors unlike the cases where voters alter their political perception and vote in a another direction arising from their assessment how well the political party has performed. The investment must yield corresponding benefit because any such investment motive is directed at profit making.

Politics of Money in the Nigerian Political Spectrum

In Nigerian politics, there is the prevalence of money over the issue of ideology which has been relegated to the background in party formation and politicking (Ikelegbe, 2013; Yagboyaju, 2012). Political parties in Nigeria are often funded by exceptionally rich individuals and wealth determines the strength of opinions of party members. Political capacity and credentials are subsumed in financial muscle flexibility (Umoru, 2013).

In aspiring for elective offices in Nigeria, the financial demands range from party demands and campaign expenditures amongst others. The aspirants are mandated by the party to pay fees that ordinarily exceed their capacities financially, like the procurement of party nomination forms, formalization of Intent as well as other bills duly stipulated by the party including fees imposed by the election management body (Okoye, 2007). These various aspects for which candidates expend funds transcend campaign and party

contribution as money is required for meet political commitments in several other ways. Expenses involved in lobbying political office holders; cost pertaining to media coverage to advance a partisan course; and litigation expenses where the validity of election results are been contested account for substantial chunk of money spent by political office seekers (Obiorah, 2004). Distinctly, the numerous avenues through which funds may be required and plowed into politics do not only result to the challenge of financial handicaps of some aspirants, the proliferation of business oligarchs as political investors (to 'liberate' and deliver them to power at all cost as much is at stake), but results in making political financing harder to regulate as a practical matter.

This cost is actually enshrined in existing laws. An aspirant vying for the Presidency can spend as much as ₦1billion, a gubernatorial aspirant can spend as much as ₦200million, ₦40million for the Senate position, ₦20million for aspirants to the House of Representatives, ₦10 million in the case of Legislative seats in Assemblies at the State level/Chairmanship of Local Governments, while ward councilors can

spend as much as ₦1million (Odunsi, 2014). Despite the limits, there is paucity of enforceability from the Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC), which reserves the authority to oversee campaign finance, audit of political party's accounts with the sole aim of making such reports accessible to the citizenry in consonance with Section 153 of the 1999 Constitution. Unfortunately, this vital provision has not been implemented with the required vigour and this led to the uncontrolled flow of funding of the political parties; leading to governance being hijacked by a few to the disadvantage of the citizenry. This resulted to pervasion of political discourse, undeserved control on government policy by unseen hands, and a diminution in political participation (Oji, et al. 2014).

In the 2007 elections, aspirants that intended to vie for political offices using the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) platform were required to pay N10, 000 for formalization of intent fee in addition to the fee for nomination form, with respect to whatever office one is interested in as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Fees for nomination form for 2007 elections (PDP)

Position	Fee for nomination form
Presidential candidate	₦5million
Gubernatorial aspirants	₦3million
Senatorial aspirants	₦1million
Aspirants for House of Representative	₦500, 000
Aspirants foe House of Assembly	₦100, 000

Source: Okoye, 2007:9

Table 2: Fees for nomination form for 2011 elections (PDP)

Position	Fee for nomination form	Fee for Expression of Interest (EOI) form
Presidential candidate	₦10million	₦1million
Governorship candidate	₦5million	₦500, 000
Senatorial candidate	₦2million	₦200, 000
House of Representative Aspirants	₦1million	₦100,000
House of Assembly Aspirants	₦500, 000	₦100,000

Source: Adopted and modified from Pukkah, 2010:n.p

Table 3: Fees for nomination form for 2015 elections (PDP)

Position	Fee for nomination form	Fee for Expression of Interest (EOI) form
Presidential candidate	₦20million	₦2million
Governorship candidate	₦10million	₦1million
Senatorial candidate	₦4million	₦500, 000
House of Representative Aspirants	₦2million	₦500,000
House of Assembly Aspirants	₦1million	₦200,000

Abubakah, 2014 in Vanguard Oct 10 ppA4

Table 4: Fees for nomination form for 2015 elections (All Progressives Congress)

Position	Fee for nomination and Expression of Intention (EOI) forms
Presidential candidate	₦27 million
Governorship (Incumbent governors)	₦10.5 million
Governorship (fresh aspirants)	₦5.5 million
Senatorial candidate (sitting senators)	₦5.3 million
Senatorial candidate (fresh aspirants)	₦3.3 million
House of Rep candidate (returning)	₦3.2 million
House of Rep candidate (fresh aspirants)	₦2.2 million
House of Assembly (sitting lawmakers)	₦800, 000
House of Assembly (fresh aspirants)	₦550, 000

Source: Adopted and modified from Odunsi, 2014.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 clearly shows geometric increase in the cost of nomination forms by the PDP for various elective positions in three consecutive general election years. What is justification for the geometric increase in party financial demands on aspirants from ₦5million to ₦11million and to ₦22million for nomination forms for Presidential aspirants between 2007 and 2015 in the PDP? Is it that party responsibilities and scope of reference have expanded in like manner between the said periods? Is it that elective public offices are now more enriching, or is it to strengthen the culture that public offices in Nigeria is not for the common people? This ploy is directed at forestalling others from the fray and creating a scenario where political power resides with a minority, forming a pattern of dynasty where only political entrepreneurs control the political base and apparatuses in perpetuity. Therefore, political power directly or indirectly revolves around same elite individuals, as either a family business or a business of committee of friends. Most political parties in Nigeria's present democratic dispensation could either be classified as cadre or elite parties that manipulate machineries and the sentiments of the masses for the selfish objective of acquiring the economic base (Omodia, 2009).

It is worthy of note that to further consolidate the manipulative tendency is the short duration of time the aspirants are expected to make the monies available. For example, the All Peoples Congress (APC) rolled out guidelines for the 2015 general elections starting with the sale of expression of interest forms on October, 6th to close on October, 19th according to the stipulations of the party's time-table, while the procuring of nomination forms would start the same day to end November 16th (Ukase, 2015). A period of about one month; how many aspirants can meet this deadline without recourse to borrowing or sponsorship, particularly when

there are no prior notice of the deferential in past and present fees as seen in Anambra state 2014 gubernatorial polls primary election.

The directives of the Peoples Democratic Party in the run up to the governorship election 2014 in Anambra displays that the ticket of the party was up for sale to the apex bidder and was a due time to raise funds for the party. The process was described as "Ojanta", by some PDP officials meaning "Market is Booming" (Umoru, 2013). On commencement, each male aspirant went to the Secretariat hurriedly to get the formalization of intent form at the rate ₦1million as against ₦500,000, and the Nomination Form for ₦10million against the initial ₦5million publicly proposed. Therefore, sum up to ₦11million. The female candidates collected the Expression of Interest Form at ₦1 million and ₦5million for the Nomination Form, amounting to ₦6million as different from the initial structure of free Nomination Form and ₦500,000 for a female candidate who wishes to express her intention to run. At the procurement of the forms before the primaries, 26 candidates collected the formalization of intent forms to compete for the position of governorship while only 17 candidates tendered both forms at the end of the submission. This implies the backing out of nine (9) candidates from the contest, and this is not untied to the increase from ₦5million to ₦10 million for the Nomination Form. Outside the hike for the fees for Nomination Form to ₦10 million from ₦5million, the party increased the fee to be paid by every ward delegate (three ad hoc delegates per ward) from ₦100 during the previous gubernatorial primary elections to ₦10,000. Anambra State has 326 wards (Umoru, 2013), meaning about ₦9, 780,000 entered the party's purse by this increase by the time the exercise came to a close.

Some of the aspirants kicked against the ₦10, 000 each delegate on the ground it will de-enfranchise those candidates without solid financial base and favour those wealthy ones who can easily buy-over rural delegates under the pretext of assisting them. One intrigue candidates found fault with was the decision to enlist all those who had served as members in the erstwhile State Working Committee as delegates. There as many as thirteen erstwhile Executive Committees and their involvement are perceived as a ploy to give particular candidate for the election an hedge (Umoru, 2013).

What is the faith of a candidate the masses likes that possess unexceptionable character and cannot make available ₦11 million to secure the forms and also bereaved of financiers to engage in the business of sponsoring him? What chances does a novel graduate have to contest for such elective position? Peradventure an individual tenders the ₦11 million and secures candidature, how does he manage his budget not to get above ₦1billion as the campaign exercise progresses. Also, after an aspirant earn electoral victory, will regaining expenses incurred during electioneering not be his primary priority before tendering the gains of democracy to the populace? With regards to the exuberant fees aspirants pay for the PDP governorship tickets and for other levels, so many questions are begging for answers. It is against this backdrop that several analyst of the election in Anambra opined that the ticket seems to be sold to the highest bidder (Umoru, 2013). Besides the fee paid to formalize ones political intentions and that for nomination are levies for administration and other diverse charges culminating to make election a venture which victory is earned by the apex bidder. There is no gainsaying that; having been selected the primary or initial aim of an officer on assumption of office is to recover all the investments made in respect of his party and

during his political advertising, replacing not just his resources alone but also those of his supporters who earnestly await benefits. The perpetual thriving of corruption in the country is being attributed or accounted for by the restraining expenses of acquiring elective public offices (Oji, et al. 2014). The implication of the questions raised here is that capable and credible candidates are constrained and shut out from thriving in the country's political space because of the dominance of money politics. Those aspirants who win elections with the help of financial sponsors become subject to their whims and caprices to the detriment of the masses they have pledged to serve.

The APC presidential aspirant for the 2015 General Elections, Rtd. Maj.-Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, in Abuja, paid the required ₦27.5m for nomination form and the party's National Chairman; John Odigie-Oyegun handed over the form to him. This was after a cheque of ₦27.5m of Union Bank was given to the National Organising Secretary of the party, Senator Osita Izunaso by Timipre Sylva; the Bayelsa State former Governor as payment for the nomination for Buhari. Speaking after collecting the form, Buhari said but for the fact that he was a member of the party at its highest level, he would have complained about the high cost of the form. In this regard he noted that it is most unfortunate that he is unable to do anything about the very high cost of procuring nomination no one seem to see it as a problem. He further noted that even the Chairman of the party, Odigie-Oyegun did not perceive the high amount fixed for obtaining nomination form as anything to worry about and advised that every interested in contesting should find a way of collecting the nomination forms by whatever means and move unperturbed. For the Chairman, the high cost of picking up nomination for exalted political offices was device that will be helpful

separating the “boys” from the “men” (Alechenu, 2014).

In a bid to meet electoral expenses, aspirants resort to borrowing hoping that when they are elected, the benefits of political office will help settling whatever debt that has been accumulated. This again clearly shows the extent to which seeking for political office is seen as an investment with high yield returns. Even Mohamudu Buhari was criticized for taking a loan to the tune of ₦27.5 million to obtain nomination and intent form from his party to run for 2015 General Elections; an action which is seen as indefensible, emphasizing that it amounts to monetizing the politics which should be condemned by all, describing Nigerian politics as too expensive (Falana, 2014 and Balogun, 2014).

Campaign Finance

In the area of campaign finance, there are also various legal instruments guiding the operations of political parties. They are the Nigerian Constitution, 1999 as amended, Electoral Acts 2002, 2006 and 2010, as well as INEC statutory regulations. The rules provide largely for political parties with regards to the limits and extent of party financing and campaign. The Electoral Act 2006 has the limit of electoral expenses distinctly spelt out in Section 93(1-12). These laws are aimed to reduce the effect of money in political electioneering. The Act in section 93(9) places the contribution of corporate bodies and individuals to an aspirant at ₦1million (Ukase, 2015). To a large extent, the provisions of these statutes are never adhered to.

Table 5: Candidates Spending Limits for 2007 General Elections

Offices	Expenditure Limit (in Naira)
Aspirants for President	₦500million
Gubernatorial aspirants	₦100million
Senatorial aspirants	₦20million
House of Reps aspirants	₦10million
House of Assembly aspirants	₦5million
LG Chairmanship aspirants	₦5million
LG Councillorship aspirants	₦500 Thousand

The Electoral Act of 2006, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Table 6: Candidates Spending Limits for 2011 General Elections

Offices	Expenditure Limit (in Naira)
Aspirants for President	₦1billion
Gubernatorial aspirants	₦200million
Senatorial aspirants	₦40million
House of Reps aspirants	₦20million
House of Assembly aspirants	₦10million

Source: The Electoral Act, 2010, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

As seen from tables 5 and 6, the 2010 Electoral Act doubles the campaign spending limit of the 2006 Act via its upward review. The 2010 Act confer in the Independent Electoral Commission the authority to fix ceiling on the financial volume or resources that persons or bodies can donate for political party, it also specify candidate spending limits at section 90(1-5). In section 92(3), the Act mandated the separate submission of audit of electoral expenses of each political party within a period of 6months after elections. INEC also reserve power to have all political party's accounts audited and the statement of accounts submitted to the National Assembly

provided for in Section 225, sub-sections 1-5 of the 1999 Constitution. In the event of a political party breaching the dictates of section 92(3) is guilty of an offence, such political party will be subject to conviction to a fine of ₦1 million. Failure of a political party to comply with the provision of submitting an audited report as prescribed within the specified period to the Electoral Commission, will attract fine of a maximum penalty of ₦200,000.00 for every day of non-compliance. These legal mandates are disregarded with flagrant impunity as individuals and corporate donations exceed the stipulated amount of ₦1million as shown on Tables7 and 8 below:

Table 7: Selected Donations to Individual Political Aspirants

Aspirants	Offices	Political Party	Cost (N)
Obasanjo/Atiku	Presidency	PDP	₦5.500,000,000
Governor James Ibori	Governorship	PDP	₦2.300,000,000
Governor Bola Tinubu	Governorship	AD	₦1.300,000,000
Bukola Saraki	Governorship	PDP	₦160,000,000
Ugboru	Governorship	AD	₦200,000,000
Lucky Igbenedion	Governorship	PDP	₦500,000,000
Ghali Na'Abba	House of Reps	PDP	₦150,000,000
Chibodum Nwuche	House of Reps	PDP	₦500,000,000

Source: Kura, 2011

In the run-off to the 2003 governorship elections, party raised fund through various individual donations as seen in table 7, which amounts surpasses the zenith limit placed by the Electoral Act of 2002. This implies a flagrant abuse of the legal instrument by parties and their candidates. It is worthy of note that outside Ogboru and Saraki, every other aspirant was incumbent office holders and vying for governorship for a second tenure (Ukase, 2015), so one could envisage the source of such funds. Other election campaigns such as Obasanjo/Atiku Presidential Campaign had Aliko Dangote

Contribution of ₦250million, Emeka Offor, ₦200million, Construction Companies in the Country ₦200million and several others. For the Gubernatorial Campaign of James Ibori, Vice President Atiku Abubakar contributed ₦34million, Chief Lucky Igbinedion, Chief Tony Anenih and others made a contribution of ₦26million, etc. In the case of Bola Tinubu Governorship Campaign, friends of Atiku contributed ₦1billion, 21 PDP Governors contributed ₦210million, as well as several other contributions from ministers, legislators, and top ranking businesses (Kura, 2011).

Table 8: Goodluck Jonathan 2015 Presidential Campaign: List of Donours.

Donours	Amount
Tunde Ayeni	₦2,000,000,000
Jerry Gana & Associates	₦5,000,000,000
National Automotive Council	₦450,000,000
21 PDP Governors contributing N50,000,000 each	₦1,050,000,000
Bala Shagaya on behalf of the Oil and Gas Industry	₦5,000,000,000
Construction Industry	₦310,000,000
Road Construction	₦250,000,000
Didi Ndimou on behalf of Transport and Aviation Industry	₦1,000,000,000
Oluchi Okoye on behalf of The Real Estate Industry	₦4,000,000,000
Ominife Uzeogbu on behalf of Food and Agricultural Industry	₦500,000,000
Cizally Limited	₦250,000,000
Tunde Ayeni on behalf of the Power Industry	₦500,000,000
National Association of Stevedores	₦25,000,000
Shelter Dev. Ltd.	₦250,000,000
SILAX Group	₦100,000,000
Rivers State PDP	₦50,000,000
Niger Delta Development Commission	₦15,000,000
Sam Egwu	₦1,000,000
Halima Jibril	₦5,000,000
Ajuji Best Hotel	₦1,000,000

Source: *Ukase 2015; Adetayo, 2014.*

In Nigeria, candidates and political parties have flagrantly abused the various legal provisions guiding campaign finance as they exceed far beyond the stipulated financial ceiling placed by the Electoral Acts. The experience during the 2015 elections is not different from that of previous elections where no dependable data is found on the amount of money expended (Ukase, 2015). As soon as INEC lifted the ban for commencement of the 2015 elections the PDP for example arranged for its presidential aspirant a dinner for fund raising where it raised over N22billion as shown in Table 8

(Adetayo, 2014). Secondly, when parties declined compliance to the stipulated ceiling, INEC has failed to implement proper sanctions as no indication shows that those defaulters of submission of electoral expenses to INEC were penalized as provided for by the Acts. What explains how a political office holder as Atiku Abubakar (Vice President), ministers, governors, legislators and so on in our analysis above pull together such large amount of money for donation for electioneering campaign fund of aspirants when their monthly emolument is well known to the public? Major chunk of the contribution is

raised from individuals that relish or likely wants to relish government favouritism (Ukase, 2015). Suffice to say that these instances only capture grants and donations made public. Probably, several of these types of donations have gone undocumented. It is to forestall these frightening financial phenomena that the Electoral Acts of 2006 placed the contribution of individuals on just N100, 000. This explains the rationale behind all parties refusal, particularly the PDP to neither have their treasury audited nor submit her yearly account to the commission (Kura, 2011).

Influence of Money on Political Recruitment and Governance: the Congruence

Money is controversial in politics; it is seen as a corrupting rather than a positive influence as it tends to distort political judgment. In Nigerian political system, it is becoming difficult to detach political amorality from governance. Individuals aspiring for public offices are tied to the existing norms as defined by the 'rules of engagement' set by the political entrepreneurs who are ready to deliver up the state. This accounts in part for the extent to which the individual gains relevance in the political contest. The ways and manner political parties fund their activities have been subjected to growing investigation usually with disconcerting outcomes making many to wonder if public offices in Nigeria are now for sale. This may not be a burden to those aspirants who had earlier corruptly-enriched themselves as participants in previous governments or as contractors to government. This suggests that occupying a public office then became an avenue to amass wealth for future political representation.

The size of a politician's campaign ground can be an effective yardstick for measuring his wealth and influence but not for estimating how much people believe in his leadership

abilities and potentials. Time is money to the electorate. Ears are rented. They chant aloud and sing praises when they clearly cannot understand or hear the campaign speech being delivered by the candidate. This doesn't make them different from Nollywood actors (Ejiofor, 2015). The alarming financial cost involves at various levels of public offices drives aspirants to seek assistance often under conditions that tend to enslave them to their sponsors who in turn see themselves as political businessmen and investors whose investment must yield profit and therefore, power must be delivered at all cost and if possible resides with them in perpetuity. Elections have become war to be fought and won, a 'do or die' affair and winner takes it all as seen in the 2003, 2007 and 2011 elections in Nigeria where the electorate is not seen as a prerequisite for the attainment of office but money and influence. So why then would they constitute the focal points for service on attainment of office? Rather attention will be on the 'much' that brought them to power, raising the question of 'buying to serve?'

The influx of money into politics must be controlled by every democratic system as uncontrolled political funding portends challenges for modern liberal democracy and wanes the assurance that parties and aspirants contest on even grounds. Contesting for political office in an uncontrolled political funding scenario is synonymous to engaging two persons in a marathon, and one contestant employing the services of a sport car and the other a bicycle (Walecki, 2008). This potent a scenario of uneven playing ground in the election contest as some candidates or party possess undue advantage over others as reported by the European Union (EU) about the 2007 general elections in Nigeria (Isekhure, 2010). In many cases, candidates with more financial muscles carry the day in elections or the process of nomination in parties. Broad disparity in level

of funding capacity among aspirants and political parties constrain opportunity for political struggle and to have challengers disenfranchised. This results in political shutting out of those who do not have the means on the one hand, and the elected public office holder being answerable to those who bankrolled their electioneering expenses (campaigns) than to their constituents on the other hand (Eme, and Anyadike, 2014). This poses huge threat and constrains to the entire electoral process; the cardinal variable of democratic survival. The logic do not only have the capacity of diverting public resources to serve private interest rather than enlightened interest, but can undermine policy design as well as implementation and thus, contribute to deviation from policy agenda as well as celebrate mediocrity (Osumah, 2013).

The ethical deterioration of politicians in Nigeria today, is depicted by the use of commonplace phrases and household slogans such as vote buying, money politics, 'share the money' and godfatherism. These practices suitably portray the exploitative attitudes of political actors and the voters. As a result the political space is fast wildering with the incidence of money politics as it becoming a major prerequisite in ascertaining how and who partakes in electoral politics (Adetula, 2008). Only the opulent and intrepid political aspirants are able to vie for elective offices because of highly exuberant cost of participating in party primaries. For example, in 1992 presidential aspirants expended over ₦1 billion during the primaries while other less financially buoyant contestants spent as much as ₦120,000,000 on the exercise (Odunsi, 2014). This trend still persists.

General T.Y. Danjuma in an interview conceded he helped to fund the first term election of President Olusegun Obasanjo; asserting that he raised \$7 million in conjunction with his business allies. He stated that there are several of the aforementioned

cases in the Nigeria's political apocryphal and on the conscience of many political entrepreneurs (Adetula, 2008). Ebohon and Obakhedo, 2010 has it that the in Nigeria, money submerges voices and votes as patrons audaciously discloses dubious deals, financing elections for clients and purchasing or acquiring electoral victory.

Political investors that give lavishly to funding political parties absolutely dominate the political landscape and manipulate the process of selecting their favoured aspirants at both the party primaries and national elections. The political investors' influence in the process of candidate selection is outlined expressly in approximately every state of the Nigerian federation (Ebohon and Obakhedo, 2010). Aspirants ploy huge volume of their individual resources to contest in the elections, it further implies that only the crop if individuals ready to invest huge sum of their money becomes candidate. The selection process of candidates within parties is distorted by money and it majorly determines who carries the day during elections. Electoral rules regulating the procurement and expenditure of party finances are inefficient with limited enforceability (Eme, and Anyadike, 2014).

Today, candidates as individuals run corresponding campaign offices which usually have divided loyalty as a resultant consequence. Candidates now engage the services of people who are not card carrying members to work in their respective offices during electioneering campaigns thereby waning the hold and influences of party secretariats in electioneering campaigns. After elections those working in campaign offices usually get more recompense compared to party members. Political parties now engage in implementation of its programmes as aspirants attribute their selection and re-selection to variables outside their individual parties (Adeyi, 2008).

Money excites in politics and this further plays out when the elected person takes up the elective position which provide him access to public funds and policy making. An example of this is what occurred in the United Kingdom (UK) where the 1997 'Formula One Affair' sustained allegations that the Prime Minister, Tony Blair of the elected Labour government altered its programmes and started compromising the advertisement of tobacco on television during Grand Prix auto-racing events so as to advance a donors commercial interest who had donated \$1.55 million to his campaign. Although it remained unclear whether the contribution had effect on the Labour government's alteration of policy, but the contribution was regained (Obiorah, 2004). There is the common reasoning among the political class in Nigeria that competition for political office is akin to high risk financial investment. It follows therefore that the greater the risk the higher are the returns. This line of thinking was supported by an erstwhile President of the Senate in Nigerian when he asserted that since getting a voters' vote is not free, contesting for elective offices is considered by politicians as an investment and that several of them have had their substances invested and sustained debt and even sell their personal property such as houses to get elected (Ovwasa, 2013). The formal senate president passed a clear message that if large amount of fund is being plowed for electoral contest it becomes inevitable that the investor strive to recoup his fund in whole or part through diverse ways. While this an unhealthy practice of this nature constitutes grave impairment and a great affront to the democracy, the possibility that politicians who have invested massively in the electoral process will not fest their nests when they occupy political offices with access to public funds (Ovwasa, 2013).

These phenomena also implicates on the economy. For example, the 2015 elections in

Nigeria had a reverberating negative effect on the economy as a whole putting it in grave state. Before the election year, the Nigerian economy had a promising outlook, and despite questionable rosy statistics posted by the Economic Management Team, there was no denying the fact that the rebased economy, adjudged the largest in Africa was on a path to progress. Now, the reverse is the case with key economic indications signaling doom, gloom and despairs for Nigerians. The financial pull from the system by virtue of the 2015 elections battered the economy in diverse manifestations, such as the devaluation of the naira/inflation and foreign exchange arises with the naira crashing to an all-time high exchange rate to the dollar and other foreign currencies though largely blamed on the fall in oil prices, but the abuse of the dollar by the political class, especially government officials worsened it (Olechi, 2015).

Several national and international non governmental organizations have attributed the sluggish economic development in Nigeria partly to the menace of huge election spending (Ukase, 2015). With the stock market losing trillions, investment panic spreading, drop in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), banks battling liquidity issues, Real Stock Depreciation, staff retrenchment, governance shutdown and national reputation/image deficit, the drive for stomach infrastructure is driving an axe through the heart of the economy. The elections equally robbed-off on standard of living of Nigerians. In the area of productivity decline, the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) threaten to quite business by reaction to high cost of production occasioned by government's allocation of scarce resources to politics (Olechi, 2015).

Conclusions

The injection of uncontrolled finances in the Nigeria's political system by money bags does not only give them unfair advantage over

others, it makes mockery of 'one man one vote' which is a core principle of representative democracy. It negatively affects political recruitment and undermines governance in Nigeria as it is counterproductive to any political recruitment and governance saddled with integrity.

In Nigeria, aspiring to capture and control power is more inclined in the direction of how to assemble resources for the course which stake and magnitude is more of an investment (that must yield profit) as well as how such investment would be recoup on assumption of office. Therefore an elected officer's primary motive on assumption of office is to regain his/her entire resources plowed in the party and during electioneering campaign, recouping his funds and those of his supporters who eagerly await benefits. The losses weighs heavier on the common masses whose dependability on the system is usurp and thrown overboard as not their wishes nor will, but money is made the prerequisite variable in elections. The electorate is not seen as a prerequisite for the attainment of office but money and influence. So why then would they constitute the focal points for service on attainment of office? Rather attention will be on the 'much' that brought them to power, raising the question of 'buying to serve?' The ploy is directed at forestalling others from the fray and creating a scenario where political power resides with a minority, forming a pattern of dynasty where only political entrepreneurs control the political base and apparatuses in perpetuity.

Handing out cash for the purpose of influencing a political selection process is not healthy as it holds strong implication for democracy and governance. Private money should not be condoned by any group as a matter of principle. Although, money cannot be eliminated from politics but its overbearing influence can be put at bay. Campaign finance must be practically regulated with a ceiling on

donations to parties and candidates maintained and kept transparent by having such reported to the appropriate bodies and authorities. By this, political competition can be made fairer by leveling the playing field among contestants. Such enabling environment for even opportunity for all, be they poor or rich as long as they meet other measuring index that would not give room for aspirants to hijack the entire strength of an election contest should be encouraged. Individuals of ordinary means must be given the means to launch competitive campaigns and have electoral outcomes been decided from the ballot boxes and not within the leaves of raw cash.

Recommendations

The use of money in politics in Nigeria is debilitating to the development of the democratic process in the country. There is therefore the need to take far reaching steps to stem the tide. In this regard, the following recommendations will be in alleviating the sorry state of affairs.

Civil society organizations in the country should champion public orientation and awareness on the perils of monetizing the political terrain, keep them alert and further make them watchdogs of tendencies that are inclined to the conduct of such mercantilism. The sensitization of the public on peril of selling their vote must be canvassed tenaciously to instill in minds of the populace of the need to be uncompromising in taking advantage of imperative instrument in a democratic dispensation that endow them (electorate) the power to determine those who occupy position of authority in government. No amount of "pay" is commensurable to the long term gains of retaining the privilege for decision making, checks and control in and beyond the electoral system through the 'expensive' instrumentality of the electorate mandate. It is

a truism that the leaders are restrained less by the laws and regulated more by the character of those they lead.

The wide gap between seemingly good electoral laws relating to unwholesome use of money in the electoral process and their actual enforcement has to be bridged. INEC should take steps to effectively enforce the power conferred on it to audit and issue reports as required by law on the finance of political parties.

It is important to put in place efficient laws to guarantee full disclosure of all

expenditures incurred and donations received during the electioneering process. Non compliance should attract appropriate sanctions. While it may be conceded that if penalties are too severe, it may dampen the zeal of concerned authorities to enforce them, it is critical to give appropriate sanctions that will serve as a deterrent to check financial impropriety on the part of candidates seeking for elective political offices as well as the political parties.

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