

**AN OPINION BASED STUDY OF VOTERS ON GODFATHERISM AND
POLITICAL CONFLICT IN NIGERIA**

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Elections are not merely procedural mechanisms for choosing leaders; they are complex social and economic contests shaped by the distribution of power, resources and information. In the political-economy literature, “money politics” refers to the use of private financial resources by candidates, parties, or brokers to influence political outcomes including direct vote-buying, patronage, campaign finance manipulation, and other material inducements that alter electoral competition and representation (Osinakachukwu, 2017). Vote buying and money-driven clientelistic exchanges undermine political equality, distort policy incentives, and can erode public trust in democratic institutions. International organizations and scholars emphasize that money in politics operates on both a *supply side* (why political actors purchase support) and a *demand side* (why voters accept material inducements), and that both sides interact with institutional rules, poverty, and social networks to determine outcomes.

From a global comparative perspective, empirical research shows that vote payments and clientelistic transfers have predictable political-economy effects (Omotola, 2018). When voters receive direct payments, their willingness to hold elected officials accountable for performance often diminishes, since short-term personal gains can overshadow programmatic or long-term policy considerations. Political finance systems that are opaque or weakly regulated create incentives for powerful donors and organized interests to capture policy agendas, producing a virtuous cycle in which access to state resources becomes concentrated among networks that financed electoral success. Scholars also document that clientelism can lower the quality of governance by redirecting public resources toward patronage rather than public goods.

Global governance and electoral assistance bodies therefore treat money politics as a structural threat to electoral integrity. Best-practice recommendations combine legal reforms (transparency, spending limits, reporting), institutional strengthening (independent electoral management bodies, oversight), and civic interventions (voter education, monitoring) to reduce the supply and demand for vote buying (Oshiomhole, 2018). However, the effectiveness of these measures depends on local political economy conditions poverty, weak service delivery, fragmented party systems, and social hierarchy can blunt formal reforms and sustain vote-buying equilibria.

Elections are widely acknowledged for its singularity and importance, particularly in nations like Nigeria. This is due to the fact that it is simple to establish a link between election procedures and the growth of democracy. Nigeria has had six national elections since the Fourth Republic, when democracy was restored, in the years 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2024. There are few factors that separate these elections, but they have many things in common. For instance, the elections were all held on schedule as anticipated, they were widely watched by national and international observers, they sparked a variety of debates among Nigerian politicians and voters, and some claimed that various forms of malfeasance were present (Osaghae, 2019). With the exception of the elections in 2024, the credibility and acceptance of the polls decreased with each passing election. The conduct and results of these elections suggest that electoral fraud which include money politics and vote buying undermines democracy's core values (Yagboyaju 2019).

However, elections are meaningfully democratic if they are fair, competitive, participatory, free, and legitimate. This is possible when they are administered by a neutral authority; when the electoral administration is sufficiently competent and resourceful to take specific precautions against fraud; when the police, military and courts treat competing

candidates and parties impartially; when contenders all have access to the public media; when electoral districts and rules do not grossly handicap the opposition; when the secret of the ballot is protected; when virtually all adults can vote; when procedures for organizing and counting the votes are widely known; and when there are transparent and impartial procedures for resolving election complaints and disputes (Diamond, 2018).

Vote manipulation by desperate politicians seeking government appears to show in poor administration and an increase in poverty. There are frequently risks to the protection of lives and property, and social and economic infrastructure development is neglected (Igbuzor, 2015). Elections in Edo State have continued to elicit more than casual interest by Nigerian scholars due to the fact that despite the appreciation that only credible election can consolidate and sustain the country's emerging democracy (Ekweremadu, 2018). Over the years, Edo State has witnessed growing disappointments and apprehension inability to conduct peaceful, free and fair, open elections whose results are widely accepted and respected across the country due to money politics (Ekweremadu, 2018).

All the elections that have ever been conducted in Edo State since independence have generated increasingly bitter controversies and grievances on a national scale because of the twin problems of vote buying, mass violence and fraud that have become central elements of the history of elections and of the electoral process in the country (Gberie, 2018). Despite the marked improvement in the conduct of the 2011 elections, the process was not free from malpractices and violence (Aniekwe, 2019). The security threats posed by the constant rigging of elections have been huge. It has further led to political party divisions which seem to be contributing to the malpractice for the sake of party affiliation and domination of territory (Osaghae, 2019). In fact, elections remain one of the leading notable sources of conflict which

often result to confrontations that continue to threaten the political stability and peace of the nation (Aniekwe, 2019). Based on the foregoing, the study sought to investigate the political economy of elections in Nigeria. Implications of money politics on voting behavior in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State in the 2024 Edo gubernatorial election.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

One of the major causes of money politics has been the desire to gain undue advantage over other credible candidates that propelled them to power without healthy competition thereby institutionalizing government that was not a representative of the choice of the citizens (Okeke 2015). A significant problem (one suspects) that confronted elections in Nigeria had been the absence of correct and genuine data. The accurate and correct population of voters was sometimes not provided. Also, the poor economic conditions of the majority of the citizens had caused an increase in social vices like corruption and cost the electorates their conscience (Omotola, 2018).

Observations from previous elections suggested that money politics had been lingering in Edo State electoral processes. During the 2024 elections for instance, reports by the Punch Newspaper warned that people were giving money to vote specific candidates in Ovia North East Local Government. Other similar stories in Esan Central suggested that people were divided over the ethnicity and tribe of the governor which compelled majority of people to cast their votes with tribal affinity in question.

In order to ensure that they won office and gained unrestricted access to public monies, unscrupulous citizens were willing to sabotage the electoral process and make elections a "do or die" situation. This was motivated by the lack of economic stability. Another cankerworm that has eaten deeply into the security forces is corruption. The majority of the time, the security

personnel tasked with guarding the polling places and ballot boxes were blatantly biased in favor of one candidate (Okeke 2015).

1.3 Objectives of Study

The objective of the study is to investigate the political economy of elections in Nigeria. Implications of money politics on voting behavior in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State in the 2024 Edo gubernatorial election.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. investigate the causes of money politics in Edo State Elections;
2. examine the effects of money politics on Nigeria's democracy;
3. determine the functions of the security agencies during election to curb money politics on vote buying behavior in Edo State;
4. find out the effect of money politics on Nigeria's global image;
5. ascertain the various ways through which money politics could be solved in Edo State elections.

1.4 Research Questions

The study answered the following questions which enabled the researcher make conclusions and bridge the study gaps:

1. What are the causes of money politics in Edo State Elections?
2. What are the effects of money politics on Nigeria's democracy?
3. Are security agencies able to curb vote buying in Edo State?
4. What are the impacts of money politics on Nigeria's global image?
5. In what ways can money politics be eradicated in Edo State elections?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between electoral processes, economic incentives, and voter behaviour within the Nigerian political landscape. Nigeria's democratic system has, over the years, been shaped by multiple structural and behavioural challenges, one of the most persistent being the entrenched phenomenon of money politics. The 2024 Edo State gubernatorial election, particularly in Ovia North East Local Government Area, offers a critical lens for examining how financial inducements influence voters' decisions, electoral outcomes, and the overall quality of democracy. This study is therefore essential, as it seeks to uncover how monetary exchanges, vote buying, material gifts, and other financial manipulations have shaped voter preferences, perceptions, and participation within the local context.

Furthermore, this study is significant because it provides insights into how political actors deploy economic resources as tools of persuasion or coercion to achieve electoral victory. By exploring the patterns, motivations, and consequences of money politics in Ovia North East, the research advances scholarly knowledge on electoral behaviour and political economy in Nigeria. It helps to highlight the socio-economic conditions that make voters susceptible to financial inducements, such as poverty, unemployment, and weak political socialisation. Understanding these underlying factors is crucial for developing long-term strategies aimed at strengthening democratic accountability and reducing undue financial influence in elections.

The findings of this research are particularly valuable for policymakers, electoral bodies, and political stakeholders who are committed to improving the integrity of Nigeria's electoral

system. By identifying the forms, drivers, and impacts of money politics in the 2024 Edo gubernatorial election, the study provides evidence-based recommendations that can guide reforms in electoral legislation, voter education, and campaign financing regulations. Such reforms are necessary for enhancing transparency, promoting responsible political participation, and reducing the monetization of electoral processes. This will contribute to building a more credible and inclusive democratic environment where electoral outcomes reflect the genuine will of the people rather than the influence of money.

In addition, the study holds practical relevance for civil society organisations and voter rights advocates who seek to promote civic engagement and democratic values. Through its analysis of localised voting behaviour in Ovia North East, the study equips advocacy groups with empirical data that can be used to design targeted sensitisation programmes aimed at discouraging vote-selling and encouraging issue-based political participation. These initiatives are essential in empowering citizens with the knowledge and awareness needed to resist financial temptations during elections and to hold political actors accountable for their actions.

Academically, this research contributes to the broader literature on political economy, electoral behaviour, and democratic studies in sub-Saharan Africa. It fills an important gap by offering a context-specific examination of money politics within a particular local government area during a recent and highly contested gubernatorial election. The originality of the study is evident in its focus on the 2024 Edo election, making it relevant for future researchers who may wish to compare electoral behaviour across time, regions, or political contexts. The study thus serves as a valuable reference point for scholarly discourse, stimulating further inquiry into how economic factors shape political choices in developing democracies.

Finally, this study is significant to the residents of Ovia North East Local Government Area, as it sheds light on how their socio-economic realities and electoral decisions interact with the broader political system. By understanding how money politics affects their political experiences and governance outcomes, community members can better appreciate the long-term implications of their voting choices. This understanding may foster greater civic responsibility, community awareness, and demands for improved governance. Ultimately, the study underscores the need for a collective societal effort to combat the negative effects of money politics and to strengthen the democratic process in Edo State and Nigeria at large.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses primarily on the political economy of elections in Nigeria. Implications of money politics on voting behavior. The study area chosen for this research shall be Edo State (2024) Gubernatorial Election for reasons of proximity and relevance.

1.7 Operational Definition of Key Terms

Democracy: a system of government where elected officials represent the entire population or all of the state's eligible people.

Election: Elections are the official method by which a population chooses a candidate for public office.

Vote Buying: *Vote buying* occurs when a political party or candidate distributes money or resources to a voter in an upcoming election with the expectation that the voter

Politics: is a process used by groups of people to cooperate toward shared goals and settle disagreements in a formal way.

Political Participation: The amount of power that citizens possess depends on how actively they engage in politics. How much a person shares, participates in, or engages in the affairs of their society is referred to as their level of political involvement.

Corruption: A person or organization in a position of authority may engage in corruption, which is a form of dishonesty or criminal activity, typically in order to acquire an unfair benefit.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter concentrated on the review of relevant literature and the study's theoretical framework. In this perspective, the researcher discussed different conceptual studies, theories on which the study is based and identified gaps in the literature. The different concepts that were studied include: Effects of Money Politics on Nigeria Election, Effects of Money Politics on Edo State Global Image, electoral bodies, democratic consolidation, politics, types and causes of election rigging in Nigeria. On the issue of theoretical framework, the study adopted elite theory of politics because it corresponds with the subject which is election rigging.

2.1 Background Overview of Elections and Election Management in Nigeria

This section highlights clarifications for the concepts and sub-themes adopted in the study. It presents the definition, understanding and complete explanation to key words in the study.

2.1.1 Elections in Nigeria

Elections serve twin purposes in a democracy. First, it gives voters the freedom to choose candidates of their choice in order to manage their affairs and secondly, it affords the candidates the opportunity to canvass for the votes of the eligible voters in a free and fair contest (Obianyo & Emesibe, 2015). Elections in Africa, however, are far from accomplishing these goals; they are becoming more controversial and frequently split the nations along ethnic and religious lines.

Rising numbers of difficult elections in Nigeria have resulted in tense discussions, legal challenges, protests, and legitimacy problems. These election disputes have occasionally been resolved amicably by using the law and electoral reforms. They caused violence, devastation, and hindered the ability of other countries to have stable government, inclusive politics, and national cohesion. The 2015 general elections in Nigeria were not only the 5th quadrennial since 1999 but the most competitive and divisive in the annals of electoral democracy in the country (Nwangwu, Onah, & Otu, 2018).

This is mostly a result of Nigerian politics being zero-sum, which is frequently fueled by the predatory attitude of its ruling class. Up until the 2015 elections, the exceptional campaign that was run was full of dramatic turns and turns, hate speeches, and acrimony. It may have led to bitter confused elections known by divisions within the country. The elections were characterized by fear, hate campaigns, and pre-election violence that made the build-up explosive and contentious among electorates in Nigeria (Akeke & Awolusi, 2015). For instance, the former Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, Elder Godsdan Orubebe disrupted proceeding at the National Collation Centre of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for about 30-min while accusing the Commission's Chairman, Professor Attahiru Jega, of being biased (Akeke & Awolusi, 2015).

2.1.2 Election Management Bodies

The election management bodies have to do with the agencies that have been in charge of elections conducted in Nigeria over the years. This section presents a complete list of the electoral bodies since the independence.

2.1.2.1 Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) 1960

The Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN), which was founded to oversee the 1959 elections, is the first example of an electoral body in Nigeria. The federal and regional elections held in 1964 and 1965 immediately following independence were managed by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEC), which was founded in 1960 (Ugwuja, 2015). However, following the military takeover in 1966, the electoral body was disbanded. A new Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) was established in 1978 under General Olusegun Obasanjo's administration. The Second Republic, led by Alhaji Shehu Shagari, was established in 1979 as a result of the elections that FEDECO arranged. In addition, it organized the 1983 general elections (Ugwuja, 2015).

Functions of the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO)

- The creation of electoral constituencies for the purpose of holding elections is one of an electoral commission's duties.
- The electoral commission also has the responsibility of ensuring that the necessary laws, rules, and regulations are in place to enable the proper conduct of free and fair elections.
- The Electoral Commission is required to register every eligible voter. In other words, it enrolls voters who have become 18 or older but have never registered to vote.
- The Electoral Commission also compiles all the materials required for an election to be conducted legally. It must make sure that ballots are printed, ballot boxes are purchased, and trucks are put together to help with the timely delivery of election materials..
- The Electoral Commission must also hire officials and train them to perform certain tasks on election day.

2.1.2.2 National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) 1995

The National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) was founded in December 1995 by the military regime of General Sani Abacha, who had previously disbanded the NEC in 1993. NECON also held further elections, from local government councils to the National Assembly. However, the process of establishing these elected institutions was not completed before General Abacha's unexpected death in June 1998 (Makodi & Nwanegbo, 2014). The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was subsequently founded by General Abdulsalam Abubakar after NECON was disbanded.

Duties and Problems of National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON)

The Chairman of the Electoral Commission is chosen by the government. The Chairman is in charge of directing the Commission's and its members' actions. The Chairman oversees staff discipline and ensures that anyone who committed electoral offenses is prosecuted. At the conclusion of the election, the Chairman determines the winner after interpreting the electoral laws. Finally, the Chairman is in charge of the Commission's finances and approves the hiring and appointment of the commission's lesser officers. The Secretary of the Commission sits beneath the Chairman at the national level.

The following are the duties of the Secretary:

1. Responsible for correspondence
2. The commission's chief of personnel
3. Charged for overseeing the daily operations of the commission and reporting to the chairman
4. Investigates negligent employees and counsels the Chairman on suitable sanctions

Characteristics of Electoral Commission

The essential of a good electoral commission are:

Duties of National Electoral Commission (NECON)

Electoral Commission perform the following roles

1. Conduct elections
2. Registration of Voters
3. Constituency delimitation (division of constituencies)
4. Supervision of erection of polling booths
5. Appointment of presiding and returning officers
6. Registration of political parties
7. Compilation of voters' register
8. Screening and registration of political aspirants, (candidate) who will contest the general election from each of the political parties

2.1.2.3 Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) 1998

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was established by General Abdulsalam Abubakar's administration in 1998 after NECON was abolished. The organization oversaw all of the transitional elections that brought about the fourth republic on May 29, 1999. It is now in a stronger position to hold honest elections that will strengthen Nigeria's developing democracy (Olusola, 2010). The employees that the now-defunct National Electoral Commission (NEC) hired since 1987 are now an indelible part of INEC. It is present in all 36 states, the Federal Capital Territory, and the 774 local government units of Nigeria (Ugwuja, 2015).

Functions of INEC

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), whose responsibilities include overseeing elections for the country's numerous political positions, was established under the Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution. In accordance with Section 15, Part 1 of the

Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), and Section 2 of the Electoral Act of 2010 (as amended), among INEC's responsibilities are the following:

1. Coordinate, oversee, and conduct every election for the offices of President and Vice President, State Governor and Deputy Governor, Senate Members, House of Representatives, and House of Assembly of every State of the Federation.
2. Political parties must register in conformity with the rules of this Constitution and a law passed by the National Assembly.
3. Have complete control over the organization and functioning of political parties, including their financial operations.
4. Planning the annual accounting, audit, and review of the finances and accounts of political parties that submit reports, as well as the public's dissemination of reports on such an audit and review.
5. Register all eligible voters in order to create, maintain, and update the voter list in advance of any election conducted in accordance with this Constitution.
6. Monitor political campaigns to ensure that the rules and procedures outlined in the constitution are being observed.

2.1.3 Electoral Regulations in Nigeria

Regulations and guidelines were issued as a Decision Extract of the Commission on the 12th day of the month of January (Alabi, 2018). These Regulations and Guidelines supersede all other Regulations and/or Guidelines on the Conduct of Elections issued by the Commission and shall remain in force until replaced by new regulations or amendments supported by a Decision Extract of the Commission or an official journal/newspaper (Alabi, 2018).

Election facts (Akeke & Awolusi, 2015)

- In years with general elections, the third Saturday in February is when the presidential election is held.
- Two weeks later, elections for governors and National Assembly members are place.
- If a second round of voting is required in the presidential election, it must be held within 21 days of the results of the first round being announced.
- Within 21 days of the official results being announced, a petition must be submitted to challenge the election's outcome.
- Within 180 days of the petition's filing date, election tribunals, including the Court of Appeal for presidential and governorship elections, must issue their ruling in writing.
- The courts may choose to follow the practice of stating their ruling first and saving their reasoning for a later time.

2.1.4 Electoral Malpractice in Nigeria

It is one thing to hold elections as part of the democratic transition, or even to continue holding regular elections for some time after the change. A credible election that is universally recognized as free and fair by the public and the international community also means something else. Therefore, the likelihood of democracy's consolidation would improve if election results were accepted by key constituencies. We have categorized the two main approaches that scholars have used to identify and characterize actions that undermine the electoral process as inclusive and restricted (Elaiwu, 2016).

Scholars like Makodi and Nwanegbo (2014), Olusola (2010), Emerua (2020) conceived inclusive (fraud, malpractice and manipulation) to be as broad as possible, no matter the imprecision. Olusola (2010) situate his definitions normatively, finding that electoral wrongdoing violates domestic norms or internationally accepted standards for free and fair

elections. This enables a context-specific approach to combating various kinds of electoral wrongdoing, and it makes obvious sense for the election management body to use a country's domestic laws as benchmarks in its fraud or malpractice control activities (Ugwuja, 2015). Electoral malpractice has been categorized into three types, pre-election, election period and post-election period (Elaigwu, 2016; Ugwuja, 2015).

By manipulating rules, electoral laws are distorted so as to favor one party or contestant in an election. For example, when the rules administering candidacy prevent certain political forces from contesting elections, or when large sectors of the adult population are excluded from voting (Ugwuja, 2015). The manipulation of voters is either to distort voters' preferences or to sway preference expression. The first one involves illicit forms of campaign tactics that are deceptive and that violate campaign finance laws or severe bias in media coverage of the election (Olusola, 2010). The second form consists of alteration of how preferences are expressed at the polling station, through vote-buying or intimidation in the aim of increasing the vote of a specific political force (Makodi & Nwanegbo, 2014).

Voting manipulation consist of electoral maladministration, such as ballot box stuffing, misreporting, under-provision of voting facilities in opposition strong-holds, lack of transparency in the organization of the election, bias in the way electoral disputes are adjudicated in the courts, and so on (Ugwuja, 2015). Right to vote is rather a public function conferred upon the citizen for reason of social expediency (Elaigwu, 2016).

There is strong relationship in Africa's electoral malpractices with the type and forms of historical system practiced by each society, coupled with the class structure, social stratification, aestheticism and religious differences (Ugwuja, 2015). Thus, Makodi and Nwanegbo (2014) conclude that until elections become completely competitive and the electorates are free to make

a choice between alternatives and that a liberal political system is put in place, there will always be electoral malpractice (Makodi & Nwanegbo, 2014). In Africa, the scenario is a curse to the electorate and a gimmick played by politicians who seek to legitimize the illegitimate practice of coercing citizens into voting for them on the backdrop of rampant electoral rigging (Obadare, 2019).

2.1.5 Forms of Electoral Malpractice

The major types of electoral malpractice result in the following forms of illegal practices in elections: Putting pressure on people who wish to vote freely to make them vote how you want; numerous registrations and votes by the same person; voting by underage people (whose age is below the one officially allowed by law); stealing important documents during elections (for example, ballot papers, registration lists of voters, etc.); diversion of documents (for example, votes, ballot boxes, etc.); partisanship by Electoral officials (officers, secretaries, observers, etc.); falsification of the final results of the elections; paying money to officers to influence the results of the elections; carrying ballot boxes outside the elections room or areas; taking electoral documents into personal custody and any other illegal actions performed during elections that can influence their flow/results (Alabi, 2018).

2.1.5.1 Pre-Election Manipulations

These are simply the manipulative activities carried out before the election is conducted. The pre-election manipulations could be in form of registering underage voters and carrying out forms of election buying before the polls are casted. Governments are more likely to win re-election in economic good times (Akeke & Awolusi, 2015). Pre-electoral manipulation

(spending more or taxing less prior to an election) is a powerful tool for governments to increase the strength of the economy in the run-up to an election.

Studies by Makodi and Nwanegbo (2014), Alabi (2018) Akeke and Awolusi (2015) find persistent pre-electoral manipulation in developing countries and argue that this results from a low likelihood that voters will punish governments for manipulation. However, despite widespread recognition of the impact of the international environment on developing countries' fiscal policies, scholars have paid little attention to how developing countries' international economic ties constrain governments' decisions to engage in manipulation (Obadare, 2019).

2.1.6 Effects of Money Politics on Nigeria Election

Money Politics have been one of the major challenges to the growth and development of the country and these has grown steadily worse and more daring (Obayelu, 2017). It is sad that some of the elections have been described by both the local and international observers as the worst ever elections conducted and these have made it difficult in consolidating the nature and significance of democracy (Ebirim 2018). Money Politics has been identified as one of the major obstacles to democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Gyekye (2017) defines money politics as an illegal, unethical and unauthorized exploitation of one's political or official position for personal gain or advantage. Thus, this means that the most prominent victims of money politics include the citizens of a political community and public interests in general. Drawing from the above explanations, it will be appropriate to state that money politics includes electoral fraud, favouritism, nepotism and even illegal seizure of political power (Mbah, 2017).

On the other side, poverty is viewed as a barrier to Nigeria's democratic consolidation. This is due to the fact that the country's high level of corruption has reduced many residents to a

state of extreme poverty and increased the prevalence of money politics during the conduct of elections (Omosho, 2018). According to a United Nations declaration, poverty violates human dignity by denying individuals options and opportunities (UN, 2018). Because of this, according to Ake (2018), a society of bandits and parasitic beggars cannot flourish.

Ake (2018) said that a society like this is incapable of experiencing stability or peace, let alone democracy. This demonstrates how a person who lacks the necessities is unable to engage successfully in a democratic democracy. The process of consolidating democracy in Nigeria has been negatively impacted by a lack of internal democracy and party defection. However, one of the main obstacles to Nigeria's democratic consolidation is the lack of free and fair elections (Kwasau, 2018). This has deterred a significant proportion of eligible persons from voting in any election. This is due to the fact that participation is meaningful when participants' votes matter, but it is not meaningful when participants' votes are tainted to serve the interests of a select few (Osinakachukwu, 2017).

2.1.6.1 Denial of Social Amenities

Many locals, particularly young people, have bemoaned the miserable living circumstances in the rural area over time, citing the absence of access roads, drinkable water, power, health care facilities, and other social amenities as causes (Ebirim, 2018). Due to the harsh living conditions, the population has been living in a primitive state for generations. Many individuals have died young because there are no medical facilities nearby and a great distance between the nearest ones in the state and the rural village.

Modern citizens expect their leaders to provide them with the fundamental social services that will not only ensure their pleasure and wellbeing but also advance the security and socioeconomic advancement of the country or state. To be clear, when we talk about social

infrastructure, we're talking about the fundamental services that are necessary for people to survive, for society to advance, and for the economy to flourish (Kwasau, 2018). In addition to homes, access to potable water, power, security, and decent roads, bridges, and canals are all included.

According to a recent National Bureau of Statistics estimate, Nigeria has a relative poverty rate of 69%, or 112,518, 508 Nigerians. The North-West and North-East geopolitical zones in Nigeria, with 77.7% and 76.3 percent poverty rates, respectively, according to the report (Abatudu & Obakhedo, 2019). In essence, there are numerous economic undertones to the nation's current security concerns. Extremists can exploit ready-made battalions of potentials in areas with widespread young unemployment and poverty.

2.1.6.2 The Electorates and Masses Suffer

The sector of society that suffers the most from government and societal failure makes up the majority of voters in Nigeria's elections. They include those with low incomes, the unemployed, employees without formal education or training, those in rural areas, and troublemakers. They comprise the most marginalized and defenseless group in society (Adetula, 2018). The contradiction is blatant. This "voting majority" is indeed their own tyrants through the decisions they make during elections, despite the expectation that they will make wiser decisions given their social situation.

These choices sometimes include active participation in electoral malpractice and, more rampant in recent times, the outright selling of votes. Unfortunately, this decision comes back to haunt the poor masses since the elected candidates often reject the same poor masses that allowed their frustrations to determine their choice of leaders. Thus, suffering of the masses is one of the germane effects of election malpractice (Mbah, 2017).

2.1.6.3 It Delays Grassroots Development

Grass root development by and large, yields development dividend from representatives by election than by selection. A selected representative cannot be held accountable by the people who did not vote him/her into that position. His/her loyalty is hundred percent to the person that appointed/selected him/her. Election desperados and political power acquisition in Nigeria have impacted negatively on the electoral process and threading the foundation of an enduring democracy (Omodia, 2018). Elections have been bedeviled by widespread fraud, multiple voting, ballot box snatching, masses or grass root disfranchisement, intimidation, violence, Judicial miscarriages, political Scheming/maneuvering etc. The electoral process is characterized by ethnicity, personalization of parties and religion.

An elected representative of the people into position is prone to thinking of what project to execute for the people that elected him/her. A selected person on the other hand only feathers the nest of the person/persons that selected him/her to that position. Some sponsored persons by the elite group do perform poorly by narrowing down their sense of development to providing funds for the private pockets of the traditional ruler (Ibrahim & Aturu, 2019). Thus the development the traditional ruler now replaces the development of the people. However, there are instances where some selected persons assist in grass roots development using it to build their future political future careers. Their performance is meant to be a bait to capture votes in future elections or selection for second tenure.

About 70% of grass roots representatives in Nigeria are ‘selected’ not elected (Osetelu, 2019). Even when elections are held most of the candidates were originally selected and not elected by some few powerful individuals in the parties. In most cases the flag bearer of political parties in election in Nigeria commonly emerge through selection against the wish of many party

members other than the powerful leaders imposing the selection. It is worthy of note that when citizens have the belief that their elected representative or leader operates well on their behalf in an open and accountable manner, they will willingly, support, co-operates and mobilize resources with him for economic development (Bello-Imam & Obadan, 2014).

2.1.6.4 Absence of Free, Fair, Credible and Acceptable Election

A free and fair election is the one that is free from all forms of electoral fraud or malpractices. Such election is characterized by freedom from violence, intimidation or coercion by political parties, candidates and media, freedom to challenge and raise objection to issues without negative consequences, freedom to vote in secret and freedom to hold political rallies (Ibrahim & Aturu, 2019). However, the Nigerian election processes are often filled with lots of fraudulent practices which in turn prevent free and fair election. The need for free and fair election is based on the following societal needs and essential conditions:

- Fair elections are a prerequisite for good government.
- Because no one will be taken advantage of, there will be peace in society.
- It sends the ideal candidate to the presidency.
- Developed nations will show respect for any nation that manages to hold free and fair elections.
- It satisfies the prerequisites for democracy.

2.1.6.5 Loss of Confidence and Trust in Government and Democracy

In Nigeria, the reasons for voter apathy are no mystery. The stress of the process of voter registration and voting in elections, lack of faith in the process or security of the process, and general lack of confidence in government, are amongst the leading reasons why people do not participate in the electoral process (Abatudu & Obakhedo, 2019). In earlier years, there was evidence of the outright fabrication of election results, and the credibility of official voter records was highly suspect.

The problems of the electoral process that deter the more exposed or comfortable members of society are heightened by politicians of questionable morals and character, in league with vulnerable individuals who assist them to pervert the process (Ibrahim & Aturu, 2019). Therefore, the perversion of the process discourages widespread participation while the lower voter turnout encourages systemic manipulation, trapping our democratic system in a vicious cycle.

2.1.7 Democracy and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

Although many definitions have been given but there is no agreement on definition. According to Aniekwe (2017), democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to govern them. By this, democracy implies conducting elections and choosing leaders that will represent the majority. Adams and Agomor (2015) see democracy as the power of the people as it manifests in ways of thinking, behaving, and organizing that enhance participation in and influence over the decisions affecting their everyday lives. This kind of process can come through, public debate, election and representation-building of consensus and formidable decision-making. Precisely, democracy is seen as a political system that is characterized of periodic and free elections in which politicians arranged into political parties that engage themselves in a competitive poll to ensure a standing government, where the

political right will enable all adult citizens (18 years and above as it applied in Nigeria) to vote and be voted for (Akeke & Awolusi, 2015).

In addition, Obadare (2019) defines democracy as a political system in which the most popular candidates are chosen through transparent, regular elections in which candidates compete freely for votes and almost all of the adult population is eligible to cast a ballot. This encourages all adult members to participate in politics. The new government has a valid basis for governing thanks to the people's active engagement in electioneering. In light of this, no government will be considered legitimate, which is what grants every government political backing from the populace because this support comes from them. Elections are a crucial means to choose, though, as democracy is all about choosing who will represent the people (Akeke & Awolusi, 2015)

A democracy that has undergone democratic consolidation is one that can withstand the test of time. If the principles that made democracy valuable are completely institutionalized, this can be ensured. According to Auwal (2015), a democracy can only be sustained when there is a viable opposition that is capable of unseating the current administration by presenting a different set of policies and tactics that are likely to win over the electorate. A intentional political process in which democracy is "so broadly and profoundly legitimized among its citizens that it is very unlikely to break down" (Ovwasa, 2013) is what is meant by the concept of democratic consolidation. This is democracy that will come and stay and which cannot come to an end suddenly or abruptly through unconstitutional acts such as military coups or dictatorships.

Changes in institutional and behavioral norms that normalize democratic politics and reduce their unpredictability are necessary to strengthen democracy. A byproduct of effective governance, which includes accountability, the protection of human rights and civil liberties, the

devolution of authority, and respect for local autonomy, democratic regimes are challenged by democratic consolidation (Ebirim, 2018). In fact, the proportion of voters who view democracy as a necessary way of life and are willing to go to any lengths to defend it can be used to gauge the degree to which a democracy has been consolidated.

Consolidation of democracy consists narrowing of democratic uncertainties through normalization of behavioral and institutional changes. The normalization “requires the expansion of citizen access, development of democratic citizenship and culture, broadening of leadership recruitment and training, and other functions that civil society performs. But, most of all, and most urgently, it requires political institutionalization” (Idowu, 2018). Thus democracy is consolidated whenever political and economic situations of a particular system of institutions “become the only game in town, when no one can imagine acting outside the democratic institutions, when all losers (of political contest) want to try again within the same institution under which they have just lost” (Idowu, 2018). It is argued that a democracy is consolidated “when power is alternated between rival parties, support for system is continued during time of economic hardship, rebels are defeated and punished, the regime remain stable in the face of restructuring of the party system, and there exists no significant anti-system” (Ojo, Adewunmi & Oluwale, 2013).

2.1.8 Impact of Democracy on the Development of Nigeria

Lipset (2018) alludes that perhaps the most widespread generalization linking political system to other aspects of society has been that democratic leadership is related to the state of economic development. Ebirim (2018) believes that more democratic political rights will reinforce economic rights and therefore will be beneficial to economic development; on the other hand, the assurance of the individual's economic freedom results in, and is predicated upon, the

maintenance of a free-enterprise exchange economy that constitutes an ideal economic arrangement for a free society. Although he also made clear that some democratic government practices, such as wealth redistribution, have a tendency to impede economic growth, these practices are not unique to democracies.

In Friedman's opinion, what retards economic development is not democratic leadership, but governmental interference; Ibeh (2019) view the favorable effects between democratic leadership and economic development as single-directional; that is, economic development leads to democratic leadership, but democratic leadership retards economic development. Since wealthy countries may have attained high economic levels for other reasons, but would slow down once democratic leadership is established, democratic leadership would therefore be directly correlated with economic level but inversely correlated with economic growth, whereas poor countries would also benefit from economic growth that is not slowed by democratic leadership because their economic development has not created a favorable environment for democratic leadership.

Almost all the advanced economies of the world, including the United States, Japan, Germany, Great Britain, Russia, etc., and also almost all the emerging economies in contemporary world, made their initial take-off and fastest growth under non- democratic leadership, unlike the kind of democratic leadership practiced at present (Ebirim, 2018). Ibeh (2019) asserts that there is a non-linear or curved relationship between democratic leadership and economic growth. In other words, democratic leadership would be detrimental to economic development at lower economic levels, whereas at higher levels, democratic leadership would be more effective than non-democratic leadership at promoting economic development.

Simply put, democratic leadership provides a non-violent means for a county to regularly

change its mind about direction (Akeke & Awolusi, 2015). This offers some stability because people can vote to change course if they don't think something is working. But because the climate might change every few years, it also causes instability. Thinking that a new government would usher in new laws or roll back old ones can create uncertainty and prevent businesses from making long-term plans and investments.

2.1.9 Causes of Electoral Conflict and Violence in Nigeria

Orderly transfer of power from one government to another in accordance with democratic norms has been problematic in the Nigerian polity (Makodi & Nwanegbo, 2014). The fact that electoral violence invariably appears at all three stages of the election process—pre-election, election, and post-election has made it a hindrance to democratic progress. The tumultuous transfer of political power from one regime to another, however, is caused by a variety of causes (Akeke & Awolusi, 2015).

Electoral violence in the country is primarily due to the perception of politics and political office as investment and as an avenue for the acquisition of extraordinary wealth through corruption, which is otherwise not possible through any form of legitimate vocation and enterprise (Akeke & Awolusi, 2015). As a result of this perception and reality, Nigerian politicians turn electioneering and elections into warfare in which violence and ethnic, religious and other forms of primordial sentiments and prejudices are employed. It is against this background that former President Olusegun Obasanjo counseled his party members to see the 2007 election as a do or die affair (Alemika, 2011).

Since the colonial era, violence has been a part of the nation's electoral process. However, because to the form and extent of involvement, traits of the politicians and electorates, and the nature of colonial dominance, they were easily restricted throughout the colonial era (Akeke &

Awolusi, 2015). However, as the quest for political influence grew more fierce following independence, election violence increased significantly. According to Professor Billy Dudley's 1961 observation, politics in Nigeria offers the fastest route to wealth and power. Being a member of the Government party opens the door to government favoritism, business agreements, and the like (Alabi, 2018). Politics is about money, and money is about politics.

The implications of this are as follows (Akeke & Awolusi, 2015):

- a. The vast majority of politicians and electorates tend to be preoccupied with prebendal politics, in which obtaining political office is done primarily for the benefit of one's own, family, friends, and associates;
- b. patron-client relationships become entrenched in the polity and economy;
- c. the logic and desire to be a member of the ruling party undermine the sustainability of viable opposition in the political system; and
- d. the intentional use of violence by both parties and individuals.

Thus, the causes of electoral violence and conflict would be highlighted and discussed to further explain the components of election malpractice in Nigeria.

2.1.9.1 Ineffective Security

One of the main contributing factors to tumultuous elections is ineffective law enforcement. Due to a lack of political will on the part of the political class, rules are not enforced and are not followed during the electoral process (Gberie, 2018). Due to the inability of the government and other law enforcement organizations to ensure compliance, political actors, players, party supporters, and political thugs break the legislation governing the rule of politics with impunity. It is important to remember that when political process administrators refuse to uphold the law, many potential for violence are created, and if the law is upheld, it is equivalent

to the lack of regulations guiding the conduct of elections. 2019 (Obadare). Therefore, the weak legal framework in Nigeria forms the fulcrum upon which the culture of violence is built and sustained resulting in violence, arson and assassination. According to Alemika (2017), a fragile and corrupt system is created when the rule of law is weak, the judicial system is rendered inefficient, and poor punishments make it unlikely that offenders will be punished.

2.1.9.2 Rigging

Another predisposing element that quickly turns the entire process aggressive is rigging (Bekoe, 2015). Election tampering by widespread organized fraud results in violent unrest before, during, and after elections, according to prior election experience. If the opposition or the populace resist, the deployment of political thugs by politicians to manipulate the voting process in a supposedly unflavored area does result in violence. Violence has also always followed the news of an unpopular candidate winning an election (Akeke & Awolusi, 2015). An example would be the wanton devastation of life and property during the Western Regional Election in 1965–1966. Additionally, there was rioting in various states of the federation following the announcement of the 2007 gubernatorial elections because of claimed rigging that led to burning and the destruction of lives and property. Parts of the states of Edo, Osun, Ondo, Oogi, and Kano were placed under curfew in order to quell the unrest (The Punch, 17 April 2007). In Edo and Osun states, elections were later annulled.

2.1.9.3 Poverty

Poverty pervasiveness is another factor that hastens the occurrence of electoral violence in Nigeria (Umaru, 2018). To Smah (2018) the scourge of poverty in Nigeria is an incontrovertible fact which results in hunger, ignorance, malnutrition, diseases, unemployment as well as general level of human hopelessness. Politicians greatly benefit from the extreme poverty

that permeates the entire country. Youth are exposed as eager weapons for the commission of violence with little or no financial incentive due to the alarmingly high unemployment rate.

In the words of Obayelu (2017) the high spate of deprivation and human hopelessness of the Nigerian youths force them to take the readily available “job opportunity” –implementers of electoral violence. The endemic poverty easily plays the gullible youths into the hands of unscrupulous politicians, who manipulate them by dangling irresistible baits for the youths to undertake electoral violence (Umaru, 2018).

2.1.9.4 Corruption

Nigeria's efforts to consolidate democracy are hampered by corruption since, during the fourth republic elections, political office holders manoeuvre their way into those posts by any means necessary, with corruption being an integral component of such manipulations. As a result of corrupt behaviors, public office holders frequently neglect government accountability, transparency, and service delivery. (Akeke & Awolusi, 2015). Political corruption, which is the misuse of trusted power for personal benefit by political leaders, is one of the main aspects of corruption that has hampered the formation of democracy in Nigeria. Since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, it has grown to scandalous proportions.

Between 1999 and 2007 Nigeria reportedly lost \$4–\$8 billion annually to corruption (Human Right Watch, 2017; Akhaine, 2015). Since the start of the fourth republic, corruption has pervaded Nigeria's political system, as evidenced by the country's consistent inclusion on the list of highly corrupt countries by Transparency International (TI) and the shocking revelations made by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Nigeria's anti-corruption watchdog, that billions of dollars in state funds were allegedly stolen by politicians and political leaders.

As accurately shown, corruption has been widespread, public, and shameless under the new democracy. The effects of such an act are shown in the continued degeneration of the nation's infrastructure and widespread extreme poverty in Nigeria (Ojo, 2018). In actuality, the misuse and embezzlement of government investments in the industry were a major cause of the electricity sector crisis, which was blamed for shocking the economy. It was discovered that Nigeria produces less than the pitifully meager 1,000 megawatts that South Africa, a nation with 42 million people, produces (Oni, 2014).

The main types of violence preventing the formation of democracy in Nigeria are political and electoral violence. Political violence inhibits political involvement and stifles free enterprise, but it encourages mediocrity. The potential disaffection, venom, and animosity that results from doing this heats up the political system (Akeke & Awolusi, 2015). Terrorism and violence were prevalent during the general elections in 1999, 2003, and 2007. This pattern suggests that democracy in Nigeria is not only expanding at a very slow rate but also veers backward and forward, degenerating into a crisis level where democratic ideals are threatened and governance is privatized, if not personalized, by the wealthy (Akinsiju, 2015).

Therefore, election-related violence is a significant source of democratic instability with real dangers of deconsolidation. While elections act as the tether that joins democracy and peace together, the two idealistically reinforce one another. On the other side, elections allow for political rivalry, participation, and legitimacy in addition to allowing for a peaceful transfer of power, making it easier to hold the powerful accountable (Omotola, 2018).

2.1.10 Effects of Money Politics on Nigeria's Democracy

Vote buying, Rigging, ballot stuffing, violence, hooliganism, and other malpractices have an impact on Nigeria's reputation abroad. When individuals believe they were mistreated during

the electoral process, chaos, bloodshed, and anarchy can break out in the political arena. This position was supported by observations from the post-election crises in Osun, Ondo, Oyo, Kano, Bauchi, and some other states between 2007 and 2011 (Ejigbile, 2015). Political unrest related to electoral fraud results in the loss of life and destruction of property worth millions of naira. In addition, there may be looting, eviction of families, and unrest among the populace. Blood relatives may view one another as enemies (Omotayo, 2019).

All of them have the potential to pull a state away from its prioritized growth and development plan in the long run. In addition, it is possible to damage election resources such as voting booths, ballot boxes, and voter lists, as well as electoral forms and ballots (Ibeh, 2019). You can either ruthlessly tear them apart or completely set them on fire to destroy them. A number of electoral materials were reportedly vandalized by hoodlums in numerous polling places during the 2019 gubernatorial and National Assembly elections in Lagos state (Ojo, 2019). Votes that had already been cast, ballot boxes, tables, and unused ballot papers and forms were all burned during the procedure. Those supplies would need to be replenished for later usage, therefore this is undoubtedly a waste of the public budget (Nwabueze, 2019).

The establishment of a stable constitutional democracy in Nigeria is hampered by electoral fraud (Nwabueze, 2019). The criminals who are hired to commit election fraud, such as thugs and hooligans, may use their guns to commit other crimes, such as arm robbery, which has led to terrorism and banditry. All of these impede progress since instability and violence do not promote development (Nwankwo, 2019). This implies that Nigerians' attitudes toward violence are deeply rooted, which has a regressive effect on Nigeria's growth. The use of young Nigerians in thuggery and hooliganism is detrimental to Nigeria's development, progress, unity, and peaceful coexistence. It is not an understatement to say that in some regions of Nigeria,

recruiting for electoral malpractice is closely tied to terrorism, militias, and insurgency (Obadere, 2019).

Given the nature of party politics during election seasons in Nigeria, the desire for power, and the degree of poverty, insecurity, and unemployment, it is imperative that this study develops the results in order to establish a strategy to avoid the threat. Nigeria is currently submerged in poverty with more than 67.3% of its population living in extreme poverty (Adelley, 2020). For the time being, Nigeria's worrisome wave of poverty across all age groups necessitates financial support from the government. This suggests that the nation must obstruct any attempts to prevent the holding of elections twice.

2.1.11 Effects of Money Politics on Edo State Global Image

The question of money politics and its effects on the global image of Edo State cannot be overemphasized. This is because; despite every effort by the government to curb or eliminate the several forms of election malpractice in the country, elections have remained generally filled with controversy as a result of malpractices (Shortall, 2019). On this evidence, international election observers have been invited over the years during election activities in Edo State. Electoral administrators, politicians and national observers can learn to better understand international standards for free and fair elections by engaging in cooperation with international observers and studying their reports (Osetelu, 2019).

Election administrators can compare and exchange professional expertise with other specialists through international observer missions, notably on integrity mechanisms. As a result,

having foreign observers there to witness the election process may assist thwart attempts to interfere with or disrupt it. There is a public perception in most countries that international observers will be able to uncover fraud on Election Day (Medee, 2019). In a similar direction, election observation can strengthen democratic institutions, build public confidence in electoral processes and help deter fraud, intimidation and violence (Shelly, 2019).

In a way, the issue of money politics still implies on the state's insecurity and thus affects the international image heavily. The Nigerian government decimates expenditure on securing lives and property of Nigerians when tackling electoral malpractice and this discourages the majority of international relations who may wish to engage in several foreign trades with the country (Adelley, 2020). It then implicates that instead of making the check a corrective effort, it should be preventive. As remarked by Osetelu (2019), reasonable arms that the Nigerian government deployed for successive elections in the past erroneously ended up in wrong hands. Many desperate Nigerians compete for weapons to rig the polls. If we adopt the aforementioned stance, any attempt made to address electoral-related security amounts to arming thugs with state-issued weapons and ammunition, which frequently causes concern among members of the international community. It's time for the Nigerian government to get ready in case there are any attempts to rig the election in any way. In this regard, stakeholders, including partisan politicians and the electorate, need to set a clear example (Shelly, 2019). Therefore, maintaining the country's good standing abroad is essential for containing the repercussions of electoral fraud.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This section presents the theories that are guiding the study. The proponents of the theories, criticism, arguments and applications to the study are highlighted herein.

2.2.1 Elite Theory of Politics

Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941) and Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923) were the two early social scientists who first proposed the elite theory of power. The idea of elite is sometimes credited to Mosca, although Pareto popularized the term. Pareto said, "Let us make a class of people who have the highest indices in their branch of activity and give that class the name of elite." Consequently, a population is divided into two strata: (a) the non-elite or common men, and (b) the elite.

Elite is therefore the highest social class in a society. The people who are regarded as remarkable and the leaders in a certain field of competence make up this stratum. The two subgroups of this elite class (highest stratum) are the governing elite and the non-governing elite. The members of the ruling elite are those who directly influence government policy. They dress in attire appropriate for the many political positions they hold, such as those of ministers, lawmakers, presidents, secretaries, and so forth. The "non-governing elite" consists of those who are not involved in governmental affairs.

A theory of the state called elite theory aims to understand and characterize the power dynamics in modern society. The term "political elite," whether used to describe the ruling or governing class, describes a group of very eminent individuals who are distinguished by outstanding political performance, effective use of or monopolization of power, and the presence of a commensurate esprit de corps. The ability of the political class to cling to power and control has always been exceptional. The concept, organization, and use of power are all covered by the elite theory, which can be characterized as a body of thoughts, precepts, and assumptions. It is a theory that explores and clarifies how power dynamics operate in contemporary society.

According to the thesis, the state's military, economic, and policy-making institutions are all controlled by a tiny number of individuals. Thus, the notion, organization, and exercise of

power are based on two basic sets of ideas, concepts, or assumptions that form the foundation of the elite theory. First of all, that power resides in positions of authority within important political, military, and economic institutions. The second psychological distinction between political elite and non-elite is that the former have access to personal resources including intelligence, talents, and a stake in politics (Obadare, 2019).

A theory of the state that aims to characterize and clarify the power dynamics in modern society is called elite theory. According to the thesis, a small minority, made up of members of the financial elite, networks for formulating public policy, and military institutions, controls the majority of power in every country. The political elite is a term used to describe the tiny group of individuals who possess absolute power in accordance with the elite theory. It is a group of people with outstanding political skills and a strong hold on power. All communities are home to this so-called power elite, who consistently possess the unique ability to seize, maintain, and govern over power (Obadare, 2019).

The apparent premise of the elitist worldview is that the average citizen is insufficient. Therefore, rather than the broader public, democratic institutions must rely on the expertise, allegiance, and talent of its political leaders. The elite, or political entrepreneurs, who have strong ideological convictions and are adept manipulators, make up the political system. The general public, also referred to as the masses or "apolitical clay," is a much bigger class of unactive, indifferent followers.

This viewpoint contends that what distinguishes democratic from authoritarian systems is the possibility of limited, peaceful competition among the elite for official leadership positions inside the system. The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for reaching political

decisions in which individuals obtain the authority to decide through a competitive effort for the support of the people, as summarized by Joseph Schumpeter (Obadare, 2019).

The elite gives the public a kind of indirect access to the creation of public policy by anticipating public reaction, even in the absence of the existence of any official institutions or even of direct communication. Residents who choose not to vote or who, for some other reason, do not interact with voters significantly have no indirect impact. However, because elected officials frequently take into account constituents' actual or perceived preferences when deciding which policies to support or reject, the majority of voters do have a moderate level of indirect influence.

A power elite exists in every culture, no matter how small or large, no matter how old or young. For instance, the military, political, and economic sectors of any nation, including the United States of America, have been referred to as the power elite. The Hausa-Fulani elite and their friends from other ethnic groups control the country's economy, politics, and military.

When seen in the context of Nigeria with the aid of the elite theory, the notion, structure, and exercise of power as well as other notions like oligarchy, power brokers, mafia, etc., and its connotations are all much easier and better understood. The elite theory can be used as a framework to clarify politics and other related concepts like elite circulation, the revolving door in leadership, and regime extension or longevity in Nigeria. According to the elite idea, those in positions of power do not want to give them up easily; instead, they cling to them with tenacity while others actively try to usurp or gain control.

Particularly in explaining the significance of legitimate elections and the strengthening of democracy in Nigeria, elite theory is extremely essential. This is so because it helps to explain why Nigeria's political elite recruitment process has historically been marked by a fierce struggle

between politicians and those who seek political power, which is typically characterized by godfatherism, militarism, thuggery, election rigging, ethnicity, corrupt practices, and delayed decisions from election tribunals.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study research design, study population, sample frame, sample unit, sampling procedure, sample size estimation, method of data collection, research instrument, and method of data analysis were the main focuses of the research methodology used in this chapter, which is responsible for it.

3.1 Research Design

The survey research design approach was used for this study's objectives in order to evaluate the political economy of elections in Nigeria. Implications of money politics on voting behavior using Edo State 2024 Gubernatorial Election as a case study. The survey approach made use of a questionnaire as a research tool.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population is the scope of the sampling. Polit and Hungler (2019) define it as the sum or totality of all the things, people, or things that adhere to a set of requirements. Because the study's participants must be resident of Edo State and Nigeria citizens who may cast ballots, the population is dependent on eligibility requirements. As a result, 2,249,780 registered voters make up the population of this study (INEC, 2024) Edo State Gubernatorial Election.

3.3 Sample Size

A basic random sampling process will be used to choose a sample size of 100 Edo State voters who are currently registered to vote. The study choose the appropriate sample size. According to the sampling process developed by Kierje and Morgan in 1975, a sample size of 100 was considered to be representative of any Edo State population which is 2,249,780 (NPC, 2006).

3.4 Sampling Technique

From the study population described above, it can be inferred that the intended respondents include 2,249,780 population from Edo State. Thus, Taro Yamane's method will be applied in the second stage of sample size determination with a 5% error margin (Amugune, 2014).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Nb^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2,249,780}{1 + 374,671 (0.10)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2,249,780}{1 + 2,249,780 (0.01)}$$

$$n = \frac{2,249,780}{1 + 22497.80}$$

$$n = \frac{2,249,780}{22499.80}$$

$$n = 99.973$$

$$n \approx 100$$

Therefore, the study shall utilize 100 respondents to determine the result of findings. This correlates with the Kierje and Morgan (1975) sampling procedure used earlier.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

In order to help with answering research questions and refuting research hypotheses, the researcher has created a well-organized questionnaire. A questionnaire is the main method of gathering data that enables the researcher to get input and participation from the case study participants. portions A and B will make up the two portions of the research instrument.

The demographic portion of the questionnaire will be in Section A, and the questions that allow the researcher to reply to the study's and the research's inquiries will be in Section B. As a result, the following Likert scale will be used: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly disagree (SD).

3.6 Validity and Reliability

The researcher must provide the questionnaire to the supervisor for editing and adjustments in order to ensure the validity of the research instrument. However, every duplicate

of the research tool that is returned must be used as a legitimate source of data. The test-retest reliability approach shall be used for the investigation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

The term "presentation of data collected" refers to the manner in which various types of data are organized and presented to allow for analysis and the extraction of new meaning by the researcher. The data gathered will be displayed in a straightforward table. The core question's responses from the many departments surveyed served as the foundation for the data analysis.

Simple percentage analysis will be used to examine the important questionnaire items. There were 100 questionnaires issued, and all of them were returned.

These questionnaire replies are tabulated, percentage-analyzed, and reported on a scale of 1 to 5 in a rating format.

Bio-Data Statistics

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	40	40
Female	60	60
Total	100	100

From the above table 4.1, it could be depicted that for gender, male were 40%, while 60% are females. This is owing to the fact that there were more female respondents among the participants and thus it can be concluded that this study is gender sensitive and data collected through it can be regarded as responsive.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 25 years	33	33%
26 – 40 years	22	22%
41 – 50 years	25	25%
Above 51 years	20	20%
Total	100	100

From the above table, it is shown that for age, 20% were above 51 years, another 22% were between 26 and 40 years, 25% of the respondents were 41 to 50 years while 33% were 18 to 25 years. The above table showed that majority of the respondents were old enough to accurately give information for a research of this nature.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	40	40
Married	60	60
Total	100	100

From the above table 4.3, it could be depicted that for marital status, single respondents are 40%, while 60% are married. There was no respondent with the status of divorced or separated and none was widowed/widower. This is owing to the fact that married participants are more among the respondents and thus it can be concluded that the outcome corresponds with the age distribution earlier reported.

Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents by Religious Affiliation

Religious Affiliation	Frequency	Percentage
Christian	75	75
Muslim	25	25
Total	100	100

From the table of distribution on religious affiliation displayed above, it was found that more than half of the respondents (75%) were Christians while another (25%) were Muslims. This result shows that a greater population of the participants are Christians which tallies with the study area which is a Christian University environment.

Table 4.5: Are you a registered voter

Voter	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	75	75
No	25	25
Total	100	100

From the table of distribution on registered voters displayed above, it was found that more than half of the respondents (75%) are registered voters while another (25%) were not registered voters. This result shows that a greater population of the participants are registered voters who are eligible to participate in general elections in Nigeria and as a result can provide sufficient response to the subject of election rigging and security in Nigeria.

Table 4.6 Did you participate in any of the last four (4) presidential elections?

Participation	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	75	75
No	25	25

Total	100	100
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From the table of distribution on participants in any of the last four (4) presidential elections displayed above, it was found that more than half of the respondents (75%) acknowledged that they had participated in any of the last four president elections while another (25%) did not take part in any of the last four presidential elections. This result corresponds accurately with the total population of registered voters who participated in this questionnaire and thus represent a reliable result.

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Table 4.7 What are the causes of money politics in Edo State Elections

S/N	Statement	SA	A	SD	D	UD	Mean
1.	Poverty among voters increases the likelihood of accepting money for votes	32(32%)	40(40%)	10(10%)	18(18%)	Nil	4.83
2.	Politicians use money politics because it is an effective way to secure votes.	35(35%)	37(37%)	18(18%)	10(10%)	Nil	4.83
3.	Lack of voter education contributes to money politics.	25(25%)	50(50%)	12(12%)	13(13%)	Nil	4.55
4.	Political parties encourage money politics to win at all costs	29(29%)	42(42%)	20(20%)	9(9%)	Nil	4.35
5.	Electoral bodies are not doing enough to curb vote-buying.	35(35%)	40(40%)	10(10%)	15(15%)	Nil	4.80

The above table 4.7 shows that majority of the respondents 72(72%) having a mean score of 4.83 accepted that poverty among voters increases the likelihood of accepting money for votes. Also 72(72%) having a mean score of 4.83 accepted that Politicians use money politics because it is an effective way to secure votes.. It was also revealed from the table that majority of the respondents 75(75%) having a mean score of 4.55 accepted that Lack of voter education contributes to money politics.. The table further shows that majority of the respondents 71(71%)

having a mean score of 4.35 accepted that Political parties encourage money politics to win at all costs. The study further shows that majority of the respondents 75(75%) having a mean score of 4.80 accepted that Electoral bodies are not doing enough to curb vote-buying. The results of the survey indicate that money politics is cause by lack of voter education, poverty and politicians

Table 4.8 What are the effects of money politics on Nigeria’s democracy

S/N	Statement	SA	A	SD	D	UD	Mean
1.	Money politics undermines free and fair elections in Nigeria	32(32%)	41(41%)	17(17%)	10(10%)	Nil	4.75
2.	Politicians often buy votes to win elections in Nigeria	35(35%)	37(37%)	18(18%)	10(10%)	Nil	4.75
3.	Money politics discourages honest and capable candidates from running	33(33%)	39(39%)	14(14%)	14(14%)	Nil	4.70
4.	The use of money in politics reduces public trust in democratic systems.	29(29%)	42(42%)	20(20%)	9(9%)	Nil	4.35

From the table presented above, it was found that majority of the respondents 73(73%) having a mean score of 4.75 accepted Money politics undermines free and fair elections in Nigeria. It was also revealed from the table that majority of the respondents 72(72%) having a mean score of 4.75 accepted that Politicians often buy votes to win elections in Nigeria. The table further shows that majority of the respondents 72(72%) having a mean score of 4.70 accepted that Money politics discourages honest and capable candidates from running. The table further shows that majority of the respondents 71(71%) having a mean score of 4.35 accepted that The use of money in politics reduces public trust in democratic systems.. One can deduce that the respondents agreed majorly that there is a significant effects of money politics on Nigeria’s democracy (an average of 91%).

Table 4.9 Are security agencies able to curb vote buying in Edo State

S/N	Statement	SA	A	SD	D	UD	Mean
1.	Security presence at polling units discourages vote buying activities.	35(35%)	40(40%)	10(10%)	15(15%)	Nil	4.80
2.	Security agencies are neutral and unbiased in handling vote buying cases	32(32%)	41(41%)	17(17%)	10(10%)	Nil	4.75
3.	Security agencies collaborate effectively with electoral bodies to curb vote buying	35(35%)	37(37%)	18(18%)	10(10%)	Nil	4.75
4.	Security agencies respond promptly to reports of vote buying.	33(33%)	39(39%)	14(14%)	14(14%)	Nil	4.70
5.	Security agencies provide protection for electoral officials during voting and counting process	35(35%)	37(37%)	18(18%)	10(10%)	Nil	4.83

The above table 4.9 shows that majority of the respondents 75(75%) having a mean score of 4.80 accepted that the Security presence at polling units discourages vote buying activities.. Also 73(73%) having a mean score of 4.75 accepted that the Security agencies are neutral and unbiased in handling vote buying cases. It was also revealed from the table that majority of the respondents 72(72%) having a mean score of 4.75 accepted that Security agencies collaborate effectively with electoral bodies to curb vote buying. The table further shows that majority of the respondents 72(72%) having a mean score of 4.70 accepted that Security agencies respond promptly to reports of vote buying.. Also 72(72%) having a mean score of 4.83 accepted that Security agencies provide protection for electoral officials during voting and counting process.

Table 4.10 What are the impacts of money politics on Nigeria's global image

S/N	Statement	SA	A	SD	D	UD	Mean
1.	Money politics makes foreign countries avoid Nigeria	35(35%)	40(40%)	10(10%)	15(15%)	Nil	4.80

	during elections						
2.	Nigeria's image is affected because of Money politics	32(32%)	41(41%)	17(17%)	10(10%)	Nil	4.75
3.	Money politics highlights insecurity in Nigeria	35(35%)	37(37%)	18(18%)	10(10%)	Nil	4.75
4.	Money politics reduces international relations and foreign trade for fear of losing investments during elections	33(33%)	39(39%)	14(14%)	14(14%)	Nil	4.70
5.	Money politics affects the Nigerians in diaspora and foreign transactions	35(35%)	37(37%)	18(18%)	10(10%)	Nil	4.83

The above table 4.10 shows that majority of the respondents 75(75%) having a mean score of 4.80 accepted that Money politics makes foreign countries avoid Nigeria during elections. Also 73(73%) having a mean score of 4.75 accepted that Nigeria's image is affected because of Money politics. It was also revealed from the table that majority of the respondents 72(72%) having a mean score of 4.75 accepted that Money politics highlights insecurity in Nigeria. The table further shows that majority of the respondents 72(72%) having a mean score of 4.70 accepted that Money politics reduces international relations and foreign trade for fear of losing investments during elections. Also 72(72%) having a mean score of 4.83 accepted that Money politics affects the Nigerians in diaspora and foreign transactions. One can deduce that the respondents agreed majorly that there is a significant effect of Money politics on Nigeria's global image (an average of 91%).

Table 4.11 In what ways can money politics be eradicated in Edo State elections

S/N	Statement	SA	A	SD	D	UD	Mean
1.	Proper education and sensitization of electorates to avoid bribery	30(30%)	40(40%)	17(17%)	13(13%)	Nil	4.58
2.	Electoral reforms that controls	33(33%)	39(39%)	15(15%)	13(13%)	Nil	4.70

	the activities of political officials						
3.	Strict rules for everyone during elections with penalty for rigging	29(29%)	46(46%)	11(11%)	14(14%)	Nil	4.80
4.	Use of forensics during election counting and ballot box handling	29(29%)	40(40%)	21(21%)	10(10%)	Nil	4.55
5.	Introducing election regulations in schools for adequate understanding of money politics	33(33%)	39(39%)	14(14%)	14(14%)	Nil	4.70

The above table 4.11 shows that majority of the respondents 70(70%) having a mean score of 4.58 accepted that proper education and sensitization of electorates to avoid bribery. Also 72(72%) having a mean score of 4.70 accepted that electoral reforms that controls the activities of political officials. It was also revealed from the table that majority of the respondents 75(75%) having a mean score of 4.80 accepted that strict rules for everyone during elections with penalty for rigging. The table further shows that majority of the respondents 69(69%) having a mean score of 4.55 accepted that use of forensics during election counting and ballot box handling. The table further shows that majority of the respondents 72(72%) having a mean score of 4.70 accepted that introducing election regulations in schools for adequate understanding of election rigging.

4.3 Functions of Security Agencies during Election to Curb Money Politics

The security agencies are mapped out for the guarding and protection of citizens during elections. Oftentimes, their work descriptions include ensuring free and fair elections in the different polling units. However, observations have proved that some security agents often defile these instructions and aid the malpractices conducted during elections and as a result, electorates are overwhelmed and fairness is disregarded (Emeruwa, 2020).

The Coordination of election by security agencies is very poor due to fact that there was no inter connectivity between the agencies as a result of gratification giving to them (Emeruwa, 2020). The very fact that most of the securities are getting bribe from politicians which affecting the coordination of the program, there are many instance where by securities overlooked cases of violence and election malpractices. For instance, a woman slapped one of the voters in Aba South Abia state to create confusion during election instead of securities to intervened they were just looking at them (Emeruwa, 2020).

The security agents are there to curtail any violence act, but because of one problem or the other, maybe because you are given money, you are only there to see but not to take action, there are certain instructions they can give to you that your own role is not to supervise but to see the happenings that was going on there (Nwankwo, 2019).

Before it was the security agencies that play a vital role in guarding election materials during election, but due to injustice people themselves plays a vital role in that now, the whole election conducted people themselves are sick of manipulation that is why they don't take chances in allowing the government to influence things (Ibeh, 2019). For instance, the Police, Immigration, Civil Defence, prisons any one of them that you carry to the polling booth is working for the government (Omotayo, 2019).

Securities are not playing any paramount role in protecting lives and properties of especially the opposition party. Most of the elections experience has shown they are supporting the government in power instead of maintenance of law and order (Nwabueze, 2019). Sometimes even if the security is willing to protect you, their superiors will not allow them due to the nature of their hierarchy, some of them even if they intend doing the right thing they will just receive phone from the top, directing them not to do it (Ibeh, 2019).

It is useful for the purpose of this discourse to include that the roles of security agencies as explained above are the crux of the Guidelines for the Conduct of Police Officers on Electoral Duty in Nigeria released by the Police Service Commission in 2015 (Nwankwo, 2019). The guideline specifies six functions as follows:

1. Ensuring the safety of citizens' lives and property during elections and campaigns so that people won't feel threatened because they have, or are associated with, a political opinion.
2. Ensuring electoral officials' security prior to, during, and after elections. securing candidates throughout campaigns and elections.
3. Ensuring and upholding an environment that is free, equitable, secure, and legal for all parties and candidates to campaign in.
4. Ensuring that the area around the voting and counting locations is lawful and orderly.
5. Ensuring the safety of election materials throughout their transportation to and from voting and counting centers, as well as providing protection for electoral officials, polling places, and both. The police have a responsibility to make sure that no election materials are taken, misappropriated, destroyed, or fraudulently altered.

4.4 Ways to Curb Money Politics in Edo State

Only the major changes in minds, thoughts and strong desire for positive and democratic future can make the difference. It also takes a long time and hard work to reduce and prevent malpractices during the elections (Emeruwa, 2020). The following are suggested ways to curb election malpractice in Nigeria.

- Sanctions attached to electoral malpractice should be strictly enforced by relevant authorities. Thus, politicians will think twice before getting themselves involved in electoral malpractices.

- There should be regular political education on the media (print, electronic and social) on the effect of electoral malpractice on Nigeria Democracy.
- There should be electoral reforms that will help curb money politics.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The results of the study demonstrated that electoral irregularities in Edo State communities have been detrimental to progress. The more Nigeria treats election fraud and violent crime with child gloves, partisanship, religious, ethnic, and tribal sentiments, the more it fails to put up the mechanisms to take the cases seriously and the more of a barrier there is to destroying the democracy's fledgling procedures and electoral systems. Since Nigeria's restoration to civilian control in 1999, political violence has become an integral aspect of a larger epidemic of violence that has wreaked havoc on the lives of tens of thousands of citizens.

The study proved however that money politics was heavily experienced in Edo State in form of ballot box snatching, denial of election access to electorates, bribery and coercion of electorates and exhibition of no confidence in the candidates. All these are obvious evidences of money politics.

5.2 Conclusions

The political economy of elections in Nigeria, particularly in Edo State, reveals a deeply entrenched culture of money politics that continues to shape voter behavior and influence electoral outcomes. This study highlights how financial inducements, vote-buying, and patron-client relationships undermine democratic principles and weaken the integrity of the electoral process. In Edo State, voters are often swayed by immediate material gains rather than long-term governance performance or policy agendas, creating a cycle where political office is secured through financial power rather than public service commitment.

Money politics has led to the commercialization of the electoral process, where political parties and candidates invest heavily in financial mobilization instead of ideological engagement. This not only marginalizes credible candidates with fewer resources but also fosters political apathy and cynicism among the electorate, who may perceive elections as mere transactions rather than opportunities for meaningful change.

To address these challenges, there must be comprehensive electoral reforms, including stricter enforcement of campaign finance laws, voter education initiatives, and stronger institutions to monitor and penalize electoral malpractices. Civic awareness and grassroots mobilization are also crucial in shifting the political culture from one of financial dependency to informed, value-based participation. Ultimately, transforming the political economy of elections in Edo State—and Nigeria at large—requires collective action from stakeholders including the government, civil society, electoral bodies, and the citizenry. Only then can the cycle of money politics be broken, paving the way for a more transparent, accountable, and participatory democracy.

5.3 Recommendations

1. The government should introduce a balanced method of financial aid to the general masses that will deter the process of candidates coercing electorates with money. Since

poverty has been identified as a major cause of election malpractice, there should adequate provision of basic amenities to the populace.

2. There should be sufficient measures put in place to ensure thugs, hoodlums and other vices are controlled during elections. The government should create a security agency charged with controlling election activities.
3. Laws and regulations are changed based on equal opportunities via an electoral process that is natural and objective. A change that gives the electoral body control over its budget and the ability to hire its own employees in order to reduce the body's reliance on the government.
4. The government should make sufficient and adequate election preparations to enable them carry out elections at the scheduled dates and time. This shall ensure that elections are conducted at the right time with less irregular practices experienced.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Studies

Based on the conclusions and recommendations of the study, the following have been put forward for further studies to focus in the future:

1. The subject of election malpractice is very broad and could not have been exhausted in this study; therefore, it is recommended that further research be carried out to determine the roles security agencies play in curbing the menace of electoral malpractice and violence.
2. It was identified in the course of this study that oftentimes political leaders fail to address the issues of malpractice in elections which lead to a host of ugly incidents during

elections. As a result, it is recommended that further studies be carried to examine the impact of political leaders in election malpractices in Nigeria.

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**THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS OF
MONEY POLITICS ON VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN EDO STATE**

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am carrying out a study on “**The Political Economy of Elections in Nigeria: Implications of Money Politics on Voting Behaviour in Edo State**”. I am happy to request for your participation in the study by responding to the attached questionnaire.

Kindly note that the research is purely for academic purpose and the questionnaire is simply for information collection. Your name or identity is not required and all your responses shall be used strictly for research purpose and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Section A: Demographic Indicators

Instruction. Please complete the items listed below by ticking the box applicable to you.

1. Gender: Male [] Female []

2. Age in years: 18-25 Years (); 26-40 Years(); 41 – 50 Years (); 51 Years and Above ()
3. Marital Status: Single [], Married [], Divorced [], Widow/Widower [], Separated []
4. Religion: Christian (), Muslim (), ATR (), Others ()
5. Are you a registered voter? Yes (), No ()
6. Did you participate in any of the last four (4) presidential elections? Yes (), No ()

Section B:

Pls fill the box of the option that best applies to you.

- 1- Strongly Disagree (SD), 2- Disagree (D), 3-Undecided (U), 4- Agree (A), 5- Strongly Agree (SA)

	SA (5)	A (4)	SD (3)	D (2)	U (1)
Causes of money politics in Edo State Elections					
Poverty among voters increases the likelihood of accepting money for votes					
Politicians use money politics because it is an effective way to secure votes.					
Lack of voter education contributes to money politics.					
Political parties encourage money politics to win at all costs					
Electoral bodies are not doing enough to curb vote-buying.					
Effects of money politics on Nigeria's democracy					
Poverty among voters increases the likelihood of accepting money for votes					
Politicians use money politics because it is an effective way to secure votes.					
Lack of voter education contributes to money politics.					

Political parties encourage money politics to win at all costs					
Electoral bodies are not doing enough to curb vote-buying.					
Are security agencies able to curb vote buying in Edo State					
Security presence at polling units discourages vote buying activities.					
Security agencies are neutral and unbiased in handling vote buying cases					
Security agencies collaborate effectively with electoral bodies to curb vote buying					
Security agencies respond promptly to reports of vote buying.					
Security agencies provide protection for electoral officials during voting and counting process					
Impacts of money politics on Nigeria's global image					
Money politics makes foreign countries avoid Nigeria during elections					
Nigeria's image is affected because of Money politics					
Money politics highlights insecurity in Nigeria					
Money politics reduces international relations and foreign trade for fear of losing investments during elections					
Money politics affects the Nigerians in diaspora and foreign transactions					
Ways to Solve Election Money Politics in Edo State					
Proper education and sensitization of electorates to avoid bribery					
Electoral reforms that controls the activities of political officials					
Strict rules for everyone during elections with penalty for rigging					
Use of forensics during election counting and ballot box handling					
Introducing election regulations in schools for adequate understanding of money politics					

Please Give your general comments
