

## **MATERIALISM AND COMMODIFICATION OF PARTY DELEGACY IN NIGERIA'S 2014 PRIMARY ELECTIONS: A PRIMA FACIE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The materialization of party politics in Nigeria has given rise to the phenomenon of ‘money politics’ (vote buying/selling) in the process of electioneering. In the 2015 primary elections in the country, the slot of party delegate-ship was in some cases ostensibly bidden, bought or sold. This cash-and-carry syndrome led to a scenario whereby party delegates traded their votes for money and/or other valuables in a manner that depicted commodification of delegacy. This paper seeks to make a *prima facie* investigation into this trend. Using a combination of primary and secondary research, anchored on the theory of prebendalism, the paper posits that commercialization of party delegate-ship in respect of the 2015 primary elections in Nigeria was a manifestation of materialization of party politics in that context. The paper observes that this electoral tendency detracts from the quintessential value of democratic election and is inimical to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The paper makes a case for de-materialisation and de-commercialisation of the electoral process as a panacea to the problem.

**Keywords:** Materialism; commodification; party delegacy; materialization; commercialization; money politics.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Capitalism is by and large the essence of the contemporary world order. It is characterized by the hegemony of market values. Under it, the market paramountly rules, and there prevails the “embedding of the market economy to a market society” (Polanyi in Okoli, 2014: 84).

Capitalism has its essence in commodification of production and social relations arising therefrom. In contemporary capitalism, the reality of commodification is not limited to the economic

domain or the market realm. As observed by Okoli (2014:84), “it has continually sought expression, dominance and paramountcy even in the wider societal spheres”. This trend has given rise to queer capitalist tendencies such as commercialism, prebendalism and crass materialism in the society.

In Nigeria, the commodification of social life has found copious expression in the conventionally non-market arenas of relationships, faith and politics. With reference to politics, the phenomenon has manifested in the form of commercialization and materialization of party politics or partisanship (see Iyayi, 2004). In this regard, partisan relations have been significantly embedded to market relations in such an absurd, awkward fashion that passes for commercial exchange or transaction. This is the *problematique* that has informed this paper.

The paper thus seeks to attempt a materialist expose` of the phenomenon of vote buying/selling in the context of the 2014 Peoples Democratic Party’s (PDPs) primary elections in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The paper is a by-product of a pilot study designed to stimulate scholarly thinking and discourse on the manifestations and implications of vote buying/selling in Nigeria’s 2014/2015 electioneering experience. The remainder of the paper is thematically organized as follows: point of departure, methodology, frame of reference, theoretical framework; the research case; political economy of vote buying/selling, implications of vote buying/selling in Nigeria; conclusion and recommendations.

## **2. POINT OF DEPARTURE AND FOCUS**

Primary elections otherwise referred to as party nominations, constitute a critical phase of the electoral process in all electoral regimes. The significance of this stage of the electioneering experience is underscored by the fact that it is at such stage that the candidates for the general elections are determined. In Nigeria, electoral contest tends to have been more critical and problematic at the primary stage. In effect, party nominations have often been bungled in a bizarre fashion that mocks the very essence of democracy. The bulk of the extant scholarly and policy literature on electoral politics tends to have focused rather disproportionately on the general elections. For instance, studies abound on the phenomenon of vote buying/selling in developing democracies; yet there hardly exists a focused work on the manifestations of same phenomenon in the context of primary elections in those contexts. This paper would, among others, seek to bridge this gap by examining the occurrence of vote buying/selling in the context of primary elections with particular reference to Nigeria’s 2014/2015 electoral calendar.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The study that has given rise to this paper was exploratory in nature. It was designed to be a pilot study on the manifestations and implications of vote buying/selling in Nigeria's 2014/2015 electioneering with focus on the party primaries held in 2014.

The study derived its data from primary and secondary sources. The principal primary instrument of field research was Key Informant Interview (KII). The field research focused on a cross-section of party delegates who voted in the primary elections in four (4) Nigerian States: Abia, Enugu, Benue, and Nasarawa. Selection of these states was largely determined by researchers' convenience. Unstructured interview guide was developed to pilot the field investigation. The interview guide contained a total number of five (5) questions carefully formulated to address the main issues necessitated by the research objectives. Data generated through the KIIs were complemented by additional anecdotal insights elicited through what is designated in this context as 'study chats'. The 'study chats' took the form of passive group discussion whereby the researchers interacted with a few party delegates at a meeting in Nasarawa State with a view to elicit their views on important aspects of the subject matter. Altogether, twenty-five (25) persons were interviewed in addition to the 'study chats' participants numbering about 8 - 10. The interviewees were purposively selected while participation in the study chats was based on chance-contact. Secondary data sources included library/desk materials, media reports, online resources, and official relevant documents.

The method of data analysis was descriptive and thematic. The thrust of analysis was schematically laid out under a number of themes and sub-themes designed to address the core research objectives.

#### **4. CONCEPTUAL FRAME OF REFERENCE**

Three basic concepts constitute the thrust of the subject matter of this paper. The concepts are materialism, commodification, and delegacy. To situate the contextual understanding of these concepts for the purpose of the present systematic discourse, it is germane to take a look at them in this section.

Besides, this section also attempts to tentatively state the theoretical nexus between the variables underlying the discourse. In this regard, the independent variable (materialism) and the dependent variable (commodification of delegacy) are assumed to be correlated. Hence the paper posits that commodification of delegacy in relation to Nigerian partisan relations are symptomatic of materialism- as well as the materialization- of party politics in that context (cf. Iyayi, 2004).

**4.1 Materialism:** This refers to a value system that favours excessive material acquisition, possession and aggrandizement. According to Okoli and Uhembe (2014:597), "It is both

psychological and socio-economic attribute that celebrates, if not deify, material acquisition or possession as the ultimate guarantor of human happiness and satisfaction”.

Materialism is ineluctably one of the untoward tendencies of contemporary capitalism. In this context, acquisition of material wealth is prided as ‘a pragmatic form of enlightened self interest’ and a hall-mark of socio-economic arrival (Okoli and Uhembe, 2014:597). Much as being an essential element of capitalism, materialism has also proven to be one of the worst undoing of the capitalist society. It is at the root of most social pathologies such as corruption, avarice, crime, inequality, and other forms of social vices (Okoli, 2003).

**4.2 Commodification:** A commodity is a material value created for exchange rather than use in the context of market relations (Ibeanu, 2007). Commodification, therefore, simply means production dedicated to the market. In other words, it is the process by which material creation takes on the form and substance of a commodity: the transubstantiation of a ‘use value’ into an ‘exchange value’ (Okoli, 2014: 78; Okoli and Uhembe, 2014:597).

Commodification is an essential feature of capitalism. According to Jessop (2012:140) capitalism is essentially dedicated to “commodity production and exchange”. This reflects the logic of the embedding of “the market economy to a market society” (Polanyi 1977; Okoli, 2014. 79). Commodification of delegacy is, thus, understood in the context of the present discourse as the transmutation of partisan relations into market relations, whereby electoral candidates and prospective voters engage themselves in exchange of votes for cash.

**4.3 Delegacy:** A delegate is a representative to a conference or convention, who for his mandate, is authorized to take decision on behalf of his principal. According to McLean and MacMillan (2003: 138), a delegate is:

a person on whom an individual or group confers the capacity to act on his or their behalf. The central idea of delegation is that the person who delegates passes authority or responsibility to the person who is delegated to carry out a task or assume a role.

A party delegate is a candidate elected or appointed by his political party to participate in the election of the flag-bearers for various elective positions where the party is interested in fielding candidates.

The notion of delegacy must be understood in relation to party conventions and nomination of flag-bearers. In this sense, delegacy implies the position and mandate of a party delegate in the context of party conventions and primary elections. The position and mandate are held in trust by the agent (the delegate) at the instance of the principal (the party and its faithful). The concept of commodification of delegacy presupposes that party agents have often compromised their

position and mandate in pursuit of self regarding motives as exemplified in the phenomenon of vote buying/selling: the exchange of vote for money or any other form of material value.

## **5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The paper adopts Richard Joseph's (1991) prebendalism as its theoretical framework. Joseph used the construct of prebendalism to characterize the pattern of politics whereof "state power is sought by all and sundry as a means of personal material aggrandizement (Okoli and Orinya, 2014: 1479). This obtains in a context where the state has usurped the role of the economy as the major wealth creator, employer of labour, and guarantor of socio-economic security (Okoli, 2009; Okoli and Otegwu, 2010; Okoli and Orinya, 2014).

The prebendal character of politics in Nigeria has significantly influenced how state power is sought and utilized. In this respect, politicking attracts inestimable premium and high stakes. As observed by Bratton:

Elections are struggle over the access to the resources controlled by the state, which are the biggest prize in society. Given these high stakes, politicians resort to a variety of means – whether fair or foul – to attain public office (2008:1).

The expediency of power struggles in the arena of electioneering necessitates and compels the adoption of extra-legal incentives to ensure electoral success and victory (Okoli and Iortyer, 2014). In this regard, politicians often resort to material inducement or intimidation in their desperate bid to gain electoral advantage. In this circumstance, vote buying becomes a competitive electoral strategic tactic.

The point being established in the foregoing is that prebendal 'political culture' in Nigeria has led to the commercialization and materialization of electioneering and partisan relations in the country. The exchange of votes for money as exemplified in the phenomenon of vote buying/selling is, therefore, a necessary consequence of the prebendal character of politics in Nigeria.

## **6. UNDERSTANDING THE PHENOMENON OF VOTE BUYING/SELLING**

Vote buying/selling is a pervasive phenomenon in many developing democracies (Hicken, Leider, Ravamilla, and Tau, 2004). Simply put, vote buying/selling is to "the exchange of cash for votes" (Vicente, n.d:2). It refers to "payments or gifts in exchange for voting in a particular way or for showing up to vote" (Aidt, Asatryan, Badalyan, and Heinemann, 2015:3). Vote buying/selling is a pattern of 'money politics' (Ovwasa, 2014), particularly in under-developed

electoral polities where electoral success and/or victory is/are often determined by extra-legal incentives such as vote purchase or vote compulsions (Bratton, 2008).

Vote buying/selling follows the logic of economic transaction and/or market exchange, although it is not really governed by open, free market norms (Ovwase, 2014). In this illicit trade, vote becomes an object of economic transaction and is actually bought and sold. Hence, candidates ‘buy’ and citizens/electorate ‘sell’ “votes as they (would) buy and sell apples, shoes or television sets” (cited in Ojo, 2008:111). In this regard, Schaffer, 2002 succinctly observes:

It is tempting to view vote buying (and selling) as a purely economic exchange. A vote is literally ‘bought or sold depending on whether one adopts the perspective of the candidate or the voter. The act of vote buying (and selling) by this view is a contract, or perhaps an auction in which the voter sells his or her vote to the highest bidder.

Vote buying/selling reduces electoral campaign and voter mobilization to a market scenario whereby votes are auctioned out to competitive bidders. In this regard, parties and candidates compete with one another to purchase electoral support by offering particularistic material inducements to prospective voters. The inducement can be in cash or in kind, or both. It is in kind when money is exchanged in prospect of electoral patronage. It is in cash when material goods (clothes, food stuffs, etc) are used in place of money (cf. Okoye, 1996).

Vote buying/selling is not solely an electoral phenomenon. There is a crucial dimension of vote buying/selling that obtains in the legislative arm of government whereby law-makers trade votes for money (Okeke, 2014). In this respect, legislators may collect money or other material inducements from the political executive or its agents in order to favour a particular bill or policy proposal. This is euphemistically understood in some climes as ‘executive lobbying’.

Vote buying/selling is an important determinant of electoral outcome, particularly in developing democracies. However, the extent to which vote buying/selling actually influences voter behaviour is dependent on a number of factors such as the level of civic/voter education of the electorate, the type of ballot system in operation (open or secret ballot system), as well as other relevant socio-economic and socio-cultural attributes of the electorate. The efficiency of vote buying/selling transaction is likely to be low in contexts where the act is widely perceived as an infraction of public morality and legality. More importantly, the transactional obligation of vote buying/selling is obviously problematic to enforce in electoral polities where proper secret ballot voting is in practice.

In any case, three alternative courses of action are available to the electorates in dealing with the temptation of vote buying/selling. According to Bratton (2008.1) the electorate stands the chance “to refuse, to defect, or to comply”. To refuse is to decline from entering into an agreement to

trade ones vote; to defect is to refuse to vote at all, or to vote as one pleases; to comply is to trade ones vote in keeping with the terms of the exchange (Bratton 2008). Refusal is most likely to obtain in a polity characterized by high level of civic orientation and sound political education. Defection is more likely in contexts where the electorates are cross-pressured from both sides of a partisan divide, or where the electorates are exposed to both vote buying and violence at the same time (Bratton, 2008:2).

Compliance is a likely option in polities with a more or less open ballot system, or among primordial systems where the electorate hardly acts objectively and independently, or in patrimonial systems wherein partisan relations are quite instrumentalized. Table 1 highlights the various types of compliance in the context of vote buying/selling.

**Table1: Types of Compliance in Vote Buying/Selling**

TYPE	REMARK (S)
Instrumental compliance	When the recipient complies in exchange of tangible reward
Normative compliance	When the recipient morally feels obligated or convinced to comply
Coercive compliance	When the recipient is coerced or bullied or intimidated into compliance

Source: Schaffer (2002)

Bye and large, compliance or otherwise is largely a morality issue that is best determined by individual conscience.

Vote buying/selling in Nigeria obtains at two important levels of the electioneering process, namely the party nominations (primaries) and the general elections. At the primary elections, votes are usually purchased by candidates or their godfathers through cash transfers to the participating delegates. The monetary prices ranges from hundreds of thousands to millions Naira, depending on the competitive nature of the electoral struggle as well as the financial powers of the candidates or their financiers.

At the general elections, the electorates are often approached with monetary and non-monetary inducements in an attempt to sway their patronage in favour of a particular candidate. Consequently, cash, food stuffs, clothes and other material goods are handed out to prospective voters at campaign rallies and other contact points. This practice is widely acknowledged in the Nigerian contemporary public parlance in the notion of ‘stomach infrastructure’.



## **7. POLITICAL ECONOMY INTERROGATION OF VOTE BUYING/SELLING**

The structural materialism of Nigeria's socio-economic formation provides ample incentive and cover for 'queer capitalist syndrome' (Okoli, 2014; Okoli and Uhembe, 2014). This is prominently exemplified in the prevalence of unorthodox market relations and practices such as corruption, prostitution, human trafficking, kidnapping, and so on. In this regard, the illicit, the illegitimate, and even the sacred become amenable to commodification and commercialist tendencies. Literally, each of these passes for a business, albeit on the illegal side of it.

The aforementioned tendency is a necessary contradiction of capitalism in its stage of hegemonization. As capitalism seeks to assert its dominance on contemporary society, it tends to penetrate and penetrate even the non-economic, non-market spheres thereof. A crucial dimension of this trend is the annexation and usurpation of the non-market domain (and relations thereof) in such a manner that depicts 'marketization' of the wider society (Jessop, 2012). The materialization and commercialization of partisan relations in the fashion of vote buying/selling is a logical consequence of this trend.

The material conditions of life in Nigeria encourage and promote vote buying/selling behaviour. The acute livelihood crisis of many Nigerians, exemplified in poverty, unemployment and material destitution, make them susceptible to material inducement in the arena of electioneering. For instance, a jobless, poor fellow who cannot afford his daily meals on predictable basis would hardly resist any temptation to trade his vote. He needs to feed after all. Whether he votes in keeping to the inducement is another issue altogether.

The vulnerability of the poor to material inducement in elections is related to his disadvantaged socio-economic standing. It is a matter of survival - survival at the least subsistence level. But the rich is also involved in vote selling. For instance, most delegates who vote at party primaries are appreciably well to do. Yet they are known to have equally often traded their votes for cash. In this respect, what is at issue is not desperation for survival but quest for capital accumulation. The delegates in this endeavour are only trying to raise capital (investment fund) in support of their private business or political career.

Vote buying/selling is typically an economic exchange. It involves the buyer, the seller, the market, the price, the bargain, and the transaction. However, to avoid mischaracterizing this pattern of exchange, it is important to state that it typifies what is known in some climes as 'black market'. As a black market phenomenon, vote buying/selling transaction can be described as an exchange whereby the market is imperfect, dealings are illicit, terms are subjective, and outcome is unpredictable. It is a kind of exchange, nonetheless. Perhaps, the only difference is



that it obtains on the wrong side of the law and market norms (Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014; Ovwase, 2014).

**8. RESEARCH CASE: VOTE BUYING/SELLING IN 2014 PDP GUBER-PRIMARY IN NASARAWA STATE**

The PDP governorship primary in Nasarawa State held on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2014 at the State Secretariat of the Party in Lafia. It was overseen by a Panel led by the Distinguished Senator Adolphus Wabara. Four candidates contested the election (see Table 1 below).

**Table 1: List of Contestants for Nasarawa PDP Guber-Primary**

S/N	CANDIDATE	DESIGNATION
1	Labaran Maku	Immediate Past Minister for Information
2	Solomon Ewuga	Serving Senator representing Nasarawa North Senatorial District
3	Yusuf Agabi	Retired Civil Servant and Businessman
4	Akwe Doma	Former Governor of Nasarawa State

**Source:** Field Research, December, 2014.

The election was characterized by some organizational challenges such as abrupt cancellation and change of venue, improper and dubious accreditation, and delayed commencement. In view of the challenge of improper accreditation, the list of approved delegates for the election was at best inconclusive and controversial. Consequently, the actual number of delegates to vote in the election remained largely uncertain, even at the time of this research.

The outcome of the election saw Yusuf Agabi emerge as the flag-bearer with a total of 214 votes. Other contestants made varying degrees of impact as follows: Maku (160 votes), Doma (129 votes), and Ewuga (031 votes). In the aftermath of the election, there have been diverse narratives pertaining to the integrity (or otherwise) of the processes that determined the conduct and outcome of the party primary. A prominent perspective of the narratives held that money exchanged hands between the party delegates and the aspirants (or their agents) and that could have influenced their voting preferences in the election. To what extent are these claims true? This question forms the crux of the research.

In a bid to come to terms with the cognate issues embedded in the research case, five probing questions were formulated to guide the research. Table 2 below highlights these questions alongside the respective responses they elicited based on the outcome of the field study.

**Table 2: Analyzing Vote Buying/Selling in the 2014 PDP Guber-Primary in Nasarawa State.**

S/ n	Research Question	Total Frequency	= Response =					
			Yes		No		Undecided	
*	-	-	F <sup>0</sup>	%	F <sup>0</sup>	%	F <sup>0</sup>	%
1	Did you buy your delegacy slot?	50	0	00	0	00	0	00
2	Were you offered something to vote somebody?	50	42	84%	0	0	08	16%
3	Did you accept the offer?	42	21	50%	11	26%	10	24%
4	Did you vote in keeping with the terms of the offer?	42	15	36%	6	14%	21	50%
5	Did you satisfy your conscience in the voting?	50	8	16%	17	34%	25	50%

**Source:** Field Research, November–December, 2014.

Question one elicited a zero response across board. It sought to verify the popular claim to the effect that delegacy slots are sometimes sold to the highest bidder. Affirmation of this claim would have opened a vista for yet another dimension of commercialization and commodification of partisanship in Nigeria.

Question two yield a response that suggest that majority of the delegates were advanced with an offer of inducement prior to the election. 84% of the respondents claimed that they were approached with an inducement offer while only 16% were undecided. The implication of this is that vote buying overtures were prevalent in the election. This agrees with the findings of Bratton (2008) that vote buying is a major determinant of electoral success in Nigeria.

Regarding whether the delegates that were approached with an inducement offer accepted the offer, question three elicited varied responses. 50% of the respondents claimed that they accepted the offer; 26% claimed that they rejected the offer; and 24% were undecided. This indicates that most of the delegates participated in the partisan exchange by accepting an inducement offer. The reason for this may not be unconnected with the popular thinking that such an exchange is

an opportunity for the electorate to get their own share of power booties and loots from the politicians (Okoli, 2014). This position was affirmed by the outcome of our study chat.

As regards whether the delegates actually voted in keeping with the terms of the inducement deal, question four generated the following outcome: 36% affirmation, 14% negation, 50% indecision. This distribution is a bit curious in that a preponderant percentage of the respondents (50%) claimed to be undecided as to whether they voted based on material inducement or not. However, a fairly significant percentage of respondents (36%) affirmed that they voted in compliance with the inducement deal. It is possible that some of the respondents that claimed to be undecided might have ‘defected’ (Bratton, 2008) by renegeing on their tacit obligation to their vote buyers. It is also possible that they actually voted based on inducement without wishing to own up; after all it is a matter of conscience.

Question five sought to find out if the delegated satisfied their conscience in the course of voting. In this regard, 16% of the respondents claimed that they were satisfied while 34% claimed otherwise. Curiously again, 50% of the respondents claimed to be undecided on the issue. On the whole, it is apparent that a good number of the respondents were not really pleased with the conduct and outcome of the election. The complementary field study chat revealed vital insights to this effect.

In effect, the study chats, which complemented the field survey, probed more deeply into the prevailing narratives and perspectives on vote buying/selling as it relates to the election under review. It revealed that much as most delegates partook of the partisan transaction of vote buying/selling, only a few of them “were gullible enough to vote according to plan (Study chat, December, 2014). The inefficiency of the transaction in terms of apparent low level of compliance must have been aided by the secret ballot nature of the election. This system of voting must have enabled some of the delegates to defy the inducement obligations and vote according to their conscience. Nonetheless, it is also apparent that some delegates must have voted just according to plan: trading their ‘votes for cash’ (Vicente, n.d:1).

## **9. VOTE BUYING/SELLING AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION: IMPLICATIONS**

Vote buying/selling “is a simple economic exchange” (Ovwasa, 2014:2). But unlike a normal market transaction, its terms are illicitly negotiated in such a manner that makes their enforcement problematic. As succinctly observed by Ovwasa:

On the objective side, seller compliance is uncertain, as vote buying (selling) is an illicit business and as such does not take place within a normal market protected by social and legal norms (2014:3).

As an economic exchange, vote buying/selling transactions involve trading votes for money or commodities. Less often than not, the transaction entails the exchange of vote for non-material goods such as jobs, contracts, and the likes (Bratton, 2008). In the instance where non-material goods are exchanged for votes, vote buying/selling assumes the characterization of clientelism (Joseph, 1991; Okoli and Atelhe, 2008; Ovwasa, 2014).

Vote buying/selling is more pervasive during primary elections. In this context, political aspirants and their godfathers pay party delegates huge sums of money in order to win their votes. Sometimes, the payment is not necessarily in cash. Cars, estates and shares have also been used in lieu of cash. In general elections, vote buying/selling takes the form of exchange of money, food stuffs, clothing or other articles for votes.

The negotiated give-and-take of cash or non-cash offer between the politician and the voter defines the political economy of vote buying/selling. Acceptance of such an offer may impose some moral obligations on the beneficiary to comply. Nonetheless, a good number of voters would rather take the offer and refuse to be compromised. In a situation like ours where the average politician is seen by many as a selfish opportunistic money-bag who has no business with the electorate except during an election season, the vote seller may see the opportunity as an avenue to take his own share of the booties of power (Okeke, 2014). As observed by a commentator:

We do like vote buying. It is essential. That is the only way we have to see anything good coming from the politicians. Anyway, I can vote for whoever I want (cited in Vicente, n.d:2).

Vote buying/selling obligations are more or less a matter of conscience. Narrative around the subject tends to suggest that many voters would pretend to be playing along without necessarily being influenced. The fact that they can afford this leverage reduces vote buying/selling to mere gambling. In any case vote buying/selling is not helpful to democracy; it makes caricature of democratic electioneering by compromising the integrity of elections and vitiates the prospect of good governance (Ovwase, 2014). As observed by Hicken et al:

Vote buying and vote selling are pervasive phenomena in many developing democracies. While there is some debate about the consequences of buying and selling of votes, there is a consensus that transactional politics brings with it a host of costs (2014:1).

Such costs include:

- I. It can undermine or reverse the standard accountability relationship that is central to democracy;
- II. It hampers the development of and trust in the political institutions necessary to democratic development and consolidation;
- III. It is associated with larger public deficits and public sector inefficiencies (Hicken, 2014:1).

## **10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The outcome of the analysis in this paper has two important dimensions: theoretical and empirical. Theoretically, the paper indicated that the phenomenon of vote buying/selling in Nigeria reflects the logic of prebendalism, which has been a dominant attribute of party politics in the country. In this regard, the paper posited that vote buying/selling is consistent with the continued materialization and commercialization of party politics in prebendal Nigeria wherein electioneering and partisan relations are commodified in a manner that translates to economic exchange.

At the empirical level, the outcome of the analysis revealed that vote buying/selling is an important feature of electioneering in Nigeria. With reference to the research case, it was found that a good number of delegates were approached with varying amounts of money offers with a view to induce them into voting for a particular candidate. Even though most of the delegates claimed that they collected the money without complying, extant pseudo-empirical narratives and anecdotal observations tend to affirm that some of them must have been compromised in the process. More systematic studies are required in other parts of Nigeria to further empirically validate the outcome of this study.

The implications of transactional politics for democratic sustenance and consolidation are untoward. To be sure, it erodes the integrity of the electoral institution and vitiates its effectiveness. It also promotes political corruption and lack of accountability in governance. As a panacea to this problem the paper recommends as follows:

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