

FROM DEMOCRACY TO THUGOCRACY: THE IMPACTS OF POLITICALLY MOTIVATED WAGES ON THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

Political offices in Nigeria have juicy politically motivated wages and allowances attached to them, making them much sought after positions by all and sundry whether one possesses the requisite qualifications or not. This study therefore explores the impacts of the politically motivated wages on the political process in Nigeria and finds that the wages have turned politics into battle fields and investment areas where the use of private armies (thugs) and huge financial expenditure guarantee victories at the polls rather than the votes cast by the electorates. To restore sanity to the democratic process in the country, the paper advocates for the reduction of the politically motivated wages to be in line with the wages of the Federal Civil Servants in Nigeria. This will remove soldiers of fortune from the political process; eliminate or reduce corruption; political assassinations; violence and malpractices that have characterized the democratic process in Nigeria.

Key words: *democracy; thugocracy; politically motivated wages; good governance.*

INTRODUCTION

Democracy as a concept has been subjected to diverse definitions because it is defined in relation to the values and interests of those who seek to establish it (Dodson and Jackson, 1997). This notwithstanding, the liberal democratic view of the concept as Dodson and Jackson, (1997) also pointed out, revolves around two generally agreed principles. First is the principle of majority rule that guarantees universal adult suffrage - the means by which votes are aggregated and counted as the rules that define victory; and the second concept is the rule of law (Dodson and Jackson, 1997). The issue of rule of law is important in a democracy in that it can restrain the powers of the majorities when fundamental human rights are at stake. Thus, democracy is a system of government in which people choose their leaders in a free and fair election, and those leaders have effective power under the rule of law (Freedom House, 1998). While in practice these two concepts – majority rule and the rule of law - can be in tension with one another, most scholars see them as complementary features of a true constitutional democracy (Dodson and Jackson, 1997).

As Christenson et. al. (1974) observed, democracy depends on the participation of the people and the sincere commitment of their leaders. It depends upon, and is straightened by the participation of the citizens of any given country in the country's economic and political processes; by the general training of the people; by separation of powers in the arms of government; by the declaration of an independent judiciary; and by the dedication of democratic institutions to the identifying and training of leaders; and by the commitment of leaders to the upholding of democratic values especially, the rule of law and the fundamental human rights of the citizens; free, fair, and periodic elections;

transparency and accountability in governance; and free access to the political and economic processes of the country by all persons and groups in the country (Christenson *et al.*, 1974).

As Ake (2000) observed, the failure of democracy in Nigeria cannot be attributed to the failure of the nation to develop economically alone; or to the artificiality of western democracy itself with its sets of institutions and practices; or to the absence of supporting values for democracy, but on the effects of colonialism and neo-colonialism on the country. Democracy demands the total freedom and independence of the colonized peoples and regions from the colonizers. It meant both economic and political freedom. But this was not the case with Nigeria. The colonization of Nigeria as Ake (2000) noted, controlled the supply of labor and most often using force, made laws which were imposed on the people against their will. It also introduced taxation to break the traditional social relations of production and partitioned the society without regards to existing socio-cultural and traditional boundaries. Colonialism in Nigeria created a working class for its easy administration and went into education to produce the much needed administrative staff. It built roads, bridges, railways and seaports for the easy evacuation of the resources looted from the colonized lands. Colonialism was everything but democratic and had to be so in order to accomplish its exploitative goals – the political domination of the people and their economic exploitation. Thus, the colonization of Nigeria had tremendous effects on the nature of domestic politics in the country during and after colonization, which in turn had negative impacts on its economy.

During the colonization period as Ake (2000) also noted, the arbitrary use of state power prevented the colonial state from engendering any legitimacy in Nigeria and this made the idea of lawful political competition in Nigeria very impossible. Colonial politics hardly encouraged moderation and compromise and did not implant the much required values and culture necessary for the germination and growth of democracy in the country.

With independence, there were changes in the composition of the ruling elite, but the character of the state remained the same. It was authoritarian and presented itself as an apparatus of violence. The state, as it were, had a very narrow base and relied on coercion rather than authority for compliance to its rules as it embarked upon the “depolicization” of the nationalist movements to contain their frustrated but rising expectations. There were no restraints on the use of state power in all the regions in Nigeria. Though there were constitutions upon which the state should base its exercise of power, such legal frameworks were ineffective as their provisions were sidetracked or circumvented in the exercise of power.

Secondly the nationalists that took over the mantle of leadership on independence were more or less coalitions of disparate groups united by their common grievance against colonial oppression (Coleman, 1963; Sklar, 1963). Though they cooperated to fight colonialism, they had their own cleavages as they were networks of ethnic nationalities, religious and all other forms of secondary organizations (Sklar, 1963; Coleman, 1963). Thus there were constant struggles between groups over the control of state power wrested from the colonialists. The constant struggles created disunity, ethnic cleavages and wars. And due to these ethnic cleavages, the premium on power rose highly as the struggle for power took ethnic and communal lines among the elites and their supporters (Orjiako, 1989; Dudley, 1973; Coleman, 1963). The outcome of this power struggle was the weakening of the solidarity of the people; the tribalization of power struggle and the formation of dubious and unworkable alliances and coalitions among the elites of the various ethnic groups and political parties (Dudley, 1973).

The ethnic cleavages were deepened by the use of state power to accumulate material wealth by the rulers just like their colonial counterparts, though some of the suspected offenders were made to face investigative commissions (Coleman 1963; Ofiaja, 1979). The looting of the nation's scarce resources was basically due to the fact that the nationalists had very weak economic bases, and, perhaps due to the fact that they had been marginalized economically by the colonialists. Furthermore, when the nationalists came to power, they had little experience of entrepreneurial activities. They were very poor and had no capital; consequently, they saw the control of state power as means of strengthening their material bases (Ake, 2000; Coleman, 1963; Orjiako, 1981).

The need for more secure economic base drove the ruling elites to increase the statism of the economy as an increasing range of activities were brought under the control of the state and their involvement in all forms of corrupt practices aimed at enriching themselves and their collaborators. This trend alienated the leaders from their followers and made political conformity to be secured by coercion; and turned political competition into a warfare that paved the way for military intervention in the nation's political process (Ake, 2000; Orjiako, 1981).

Each military regime that came to power in Nigeria always said that it came to tackle the political and economic ills of the country (Ofiaja, 1979). But no sooner had they come to power than they become worse than those they had overthrown. The military abused human rights and the rule of law and used their offices to accumulate wealth on a scale that underdeveloped the nation's economy. The political environment of the country became very hostile to all forms of development especially the development of democracy and the economy as a result of the incessant military intervention in the nation's politics.

Since the military was not subject to any constitutional restraints or institutional controls in the exercise of power, its exhibition of power and its leadership in the country was everything but modest and democratic. This trend continued with the democratically elected civil administration in the country. Political power therefore became everything in Nigeria – access to wealth, means of security and the only guarantor of general well being of the citizens in power at all levels of governance in the country (Ake, 2000)

The civil administrations in Nigeria since 1999 have embarked on what may be called “the criminalization of state policies” by raising of cost of political participation through the Electoral Act (Amended) 2010; and the award of jumbo salaries and wages (politically motivated wages) that are based on political considerations only to political office holders at all levels of governance in the country. These politically motivated wages most Nigerians believe are responsible for the disharmony in the country's electoral process; infrastructural decay, unemployment, crimes, insecurity and the low level of socio-economic development of the country. The country's democratic and electoral processes have been characterized by violence, assassinations and all other forms of malpractices that elections in the country are always described as “lacking credibility”; and governments “irresponsible”, “unaccountable”, and “corrupt”. It is therefore the purpose of this paper to examine the effects of politically motivated wages on the democratic process and good governance in Nigeria.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The wages and allowances of Nigeria's political office holders are politically motivated. That is, they are fixed based on political considerations only. Because they are politically motivated, they are far and above the earnings of all other professional and occupational groups in the country. The Nigerian

Senator for instance is one of the highest paid legislators in the world, and earns thirty million naira a month (N30,000,000 =00), coupled with allowances far and above the annual salary of a university professor or a magistrate. This huge income at the disposal of a senator and other political office holders a month is large enough to upset and derail the democratic process in the constituencies to keep them in power perpetually since there is no constitutional restraint on the number of terms a senator or minister should stay in office, except for the Local Council Chairmen, State Governors and the President of the Federation who cannot serve for more than two terms. With this sort of disproportionate income at the disposal of the politicians and other public office holders, it is believed that the violence, insecurity and electoral malpractices in the country are caused by the desire of most Nigerians to earn the politically motivated wages (PMW), and or to remain perpetually in power to earn the wages. This study therefore examines what politically motivated wages are; how they differ from other wages in the country; to what extent they are responsible for the political instability, electoral violence and malpractices, violent crimes, unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria; and what should be done to reduce or eliminate the evils associated with it in order to have a transparent electoral process, stable democratic order, good governance, and a safe and violence-free society?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The need to understand and explain the occurrence of some social phenomena in a society has always moved social scientists to adopt a variety of approaches or theoretical frameworks for the analysis of the social phenomenon. This study could be viewed from various perspectives but the aggression theory and the games theory would be adopted in the study and for analysis. The aggression theory and the games theory emanated from the natural sciences and are applied in the social sciences.

Aggression theories see violence and aggression as being endemic in any given animal society, and are observed in every species which have the capacity to fight. Violence is a behaviour which inflicts some form of injury, and is much less common in the animal kingdom except in predator-prey relations; and is basically different among individuals of the same species (Southwick, 1970).

Human aggression takes a wide variety of forms and much of which are socially organised than those of other animals. (Scot,1970). Storr (1970) believes that there is no instinct in man which forces him to be violent, to fight, kill and destroy others. However, there exist problems as to the sources of these aggressive instincts in a polity especially in the political process. Are such violent actions in Nigeria's political process for instance, intrinsically or extrinsically induced – that is, do such aggressive tendencies in the political process arise in response to an internal drive in man; or do they arise from some external provocations or some external sources? Definitely they arise from some external drives which are then expressed in the political process due to some pecuniary interests - the politically motivated wages, honour, prestige and values attached to political and public offices in the country.

As observed by McIver and Page (1969), conflicts are related to different types of interests in a society. Thus there are conflicts wherever like interests are inharmonious especially when two or more groups in a society want the same thing. Anything that is scarce relative to the competing desires of people to have and enjoy McIver and Page (1969) noted, sets conditions for conflicts and violence; and such things include economic commodities, honour, and political posts.

Some biologists and psychologists also believe that aggression is a product of external stimulation rather than an internal stimulation and that there is no evidence in support of an existence of a

psychological mechanism that could produce spontaneous internal stimulation for aggressive behaviour in animals (Scot, 1970). There is no such thing as a simple “instinct” for fighting as observed by Scot (1970). Scot (1970) also observed that the two hormones produced while fighting – adrenalin and cortisone are the results of fighting rather than its causes. The fact that fighting is a rewarding activity does not demonstrate the existence of spontaneous internal stimulation to fight. Aggression and or violence are therefore externally stimulated. If they occur in the political process as in Nigeria, it is due to the rewards and privileges attached to the political positions and offices.

On the other hand, Lorenz (1970) and Collias (1970) observed that many animals have the instincts or innate drive for aggression – for survival, territory and sex, for balanced distribution of their species over available environment, selection of the strongest by rival fights and for the defence of the young ones. But behind all forms of aggressive behaviour and violence lies motivation (Lorenz, 1970). It is this motivation that stimulates violence in the political process and this motivation for Nigerians is the politically motivated wages attached to political offices and the honour that goes with each office. If the wages and allowances attached to political offices in the country were meagre, politicians would shun the offices and engage their time and resources to other endeavours or occupations; and the electoral process would have been less violent and devoid of malpractices that characterise them in Nigeria. Governments would have been more responsible, transparent and accountable to the people.

The games theory on the other hand, is a mathematical method used for the study of some aspects of conscious decision-making in situations involving the possibilities of conflicts and or cooperation. It deals with processes in which the individual decision unit has only partial control over the strategic factors affecting its environment (Shubik, 1967; Benson, 1967). And decisions are based on expectations (Schelling, 1967) and there must be some consistency not only on the choices of actions and expectations, but among expectations of each player. The decision must be “rational”, “consistent” and non-contradictory” (Schelling, 1967). This would therefore involve the adoption of strategies or general plans of action (Shubik, 1967); or patterns of decision involving the acquisition, retention, and utilization of information that serve to meet certain objectives, that is, to insure certain kinds of outcomes (Bunner, 1957).

Within the Nigerian political process, political offices or positions are limited; the pay-offs are very high; the elections are sum-zero games or “winner takes it all games” because of the adoption of “the first pass the poll system” rather than the “proportional representation system”; and violators of the electoral laws will be sanctioned and penalised. Since the pay-off is very high, the number of contestants is unlimited irrespective of the limited positions. The pay-off (politically motivated wages and allowances) and the rule of the game (sum-zero game where the winner takes it all); and the sanctioning of violators of electoral rules would make the contestants to employ “extraneous hands” (thugs to unleash terror and violence; and engage in the bribing of electoral and judicial officers) to bend the rules for them to win since contestants would want to remain anonymous and or, “innocent”. These “extraneous hands” would make the elections fierce, violent and deadly. The extraneous hands will kill political opponents and rivals, snatch electoral boxes, stop voters from voting and stop the electoral officers from doing their jobs and thumb print ballot papers for their employers.

The “extraneous hands” are paid in advance from monies borrowed from banks – (which has of course led to the failure of many banks in Nigeria since borrowers that lost the elections could not repay); funds from politicians and businessmen who would recover the funds through over-inflated

contracts if their candidates win; funds from political investors (political god-fathers (usually ex-politicians) who have stolen so much while in office and would want protection from prosecution, and or new political appointments or contracts in the new regime. These are done in anticipation of politically motivated wages yet to be earned.

It therefore seems that if politically motivated wages are reviewed to be in line with the wages of the civil servants in Nigeria, political offices would be less attractive to politicians and investors in politics; political offices would cease to be avenues for self enrichment; the electoral process would be more credible and less violent; funds would be available to solve some of the socio-economic problems of the nation; and governments would become more accountable and responsible.

ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA'S POLITICAL PROCESS

Human aggression takes a variety of forms in a human society and much of it are socially organised. In Nigeria, this aggressive behaviour has manifested so much in the political process than in all other social processes put together (Anifowose, 1982; Akinwunmi, 2004; Enejo, 2010). During the October 24, 1959 general elections in Nigeria, violence manifested so much in the electoral process in all the three geo-political zones in the country. These were caused by allegations of bribery and intimidation of voters and political opponents across the country. The actions of the then Inspector General of Police Mr.K Bovell in deploying 5,000 members of the Nigeria Police Force, 1,200 members of Local Authority Police; 6,000 members of Native Authority Police and 6,000 members of the Special Constables to ensure a free and fair election, did not stop the elections from being violent (Orjiakor, 1981). The violence in Bida for instance, was so fierce that the Government of the then Northern Region blamed it on the bad manners of the Action Group Party in the area and the party's use of abusive language in its campaign for votes; and the Action Group's use of helicopter for her campaign ("helicopter offensive"). The leader of the National Council of Nigeria and Camerouns (NCNC) Nnamdi Azikiwe made a very good observation about violence that characterised the colonial and first republic politics in Nigeria. According to Orjiakor (1981), Azikiwe said that: "--the violence and hooliganism that characterised the electoral process within the periods were claims by political opponents in all the areas where violence had taken place".

During General Ibrahim Babangida and General Sani Abacha,s reigns of terror, violence manifested in the killing of citizens who were critical of the regimes especially those that urged them to hand over to democratically elected political leadership; and those that questioned their use of public funds. All military regimes in the country ran the nation as appendages of their households and no one dared question them and their styles of political leadership of the country.

When the military finally decided to hand over political power to a democratically elected civil administration in 1999, most Nigerians hoped that the violence that characterised the political process would end and that the entire citizenry had learnt its lesson and would enter into the civil order with a democratic temper. Eventually, the political process became characterised by violence and electoral malpractices ⁽¹⁾ (CLO, 1999; 2000; 2004; 2008); political assassinations (Ajero, 2006; Obasi, 2006; Onyekwere, 2006; Mohammed et.al 2006; Agbaegbu, 2006; Asoya, 2004; Onyemaizu, 2006; Azike, 2006; Dibiana, 2006); and kidnaps (Agbo, 2010). Many saw these crimes and violence as part of the political transition process that would end after the elections and hoped that governmental or regime transitions would be less violent as the newly established democratic order would usher in the much needed democratic temper and practices needed for the consolidation of a nascent democracy. But

violent crimes, electoral violence and malpractices still continued to mark the nation's electoral and political processes till present.

The violence in the country's political process has scared many worthy and competent Nigerians with the zeal to serve the nation honestly from venturing into politics, for them politics is a dirty game. It is generally believed that most of those in public offices in the country today are people who otherwise would not have been there were the electoral process democratic, credible, transparent and less violent. Many political office holders were identified to have joined the political process with forged certificates⁽²⁾ and many have lost their "elected" offices for various forms of electoral malpractices and dishonesty⁽³⁾; and many politicians and innocent Nigerians have been killed by unidentified gunmen based on political factors (Igbinovia, 2003) ⁽⁴⁾ .

It is the belief of Nigerians that the electoral process has been characterised by all forms of violence and malpractices because of the wages, economic and social incentives attached to the political offices in the country. This has made the financial earnings of the nation's political office holders to be shrouded in mysteries and highly controversial. The fact that the members of Nigerian National Assembly are one of the highest paid legislators in the world and do not perform consumerate duties to justify such wages made the former Head of State, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (2010) to advocate for a downward review of the emoluments of politicians in the country especially those of the members of the National Assembly. According to Chief Obasanjo, it costs Nigeria more to maintain a Senator than it costs the United States of America (Obasanjo, 2010). This statement from an ex-head of state has made several Nigerians to pry into what a senator in the country earns⁽⁵⁾. Recent investigations reveal that a Nigerian Senator earns N29,479,749: 00k a month for "making laws for the good governance of the country" besides the allowances that accompany their public holidays, recess, and oversight functions that get them immersed into dubious financial deals and scandals across the country ⁽⁶⁾.

These politically motivated wages (PMW) earned by the politicians in the country have made most Nigerians to look at the political arena as the easiest place to get rich quick. Therefore, the only barrier between every Nigerian and the huge politically motivated wage is winning an election. And to win an election, the Nigerian politician would do "anything and everything" humanly possible to secure a victory at any election. Because each politician would do "anything and everything" to win an election, the electoral process in the country has attracted all shades of characters into the electoral process and this has made the electoral process to become a battle ground where "might is right", and "the end justifies the means".

WHAT ARE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED WAGES?

Several scholars in management have identified several factors as being responsible for wage differentials among occupational groups in an economy. According to Davis (1976) these include the length of training for the particular labour; importance of the sector that employs the labour to the economy; government policies; and the number of persons available for employment in that sector of the economy. As Flippo (1976) observed, other wage determinants are the demand and supply of labour; the firm's (employer's) ability to pay; productivity of the firm in the economy; cost of living; and government's policy. When the wages and salaries in a society are based on political considerations or policy of ability to pay only, rather than on a combination of some other factors above, then such wages and salaries are politically motivated. Politically motivated wages and salaries when compared with those of others doing different works in an economy create feelings of inequity in the reward system and within the social system.

The Salaries and Wages Commission in Nigeria whose duty it is to determine the wages and salaries of various occupational groups in the country would neither make public what our politicians earn, nor the factors upon which their wages are fixed. A civil society organization in Nigeria due to the controversies generated by the wages of Nigerian politicians filed a suit against the National Assembly asking the Clerk of the National Assembly to make public what the law makers earn (The Nation; 2012). Justice Aliyu Balkis who presided over the case delivered judgement on 25 June 2012 ordering the Clerk of the National Assembly to give detailed information of salaries, emoluments and allowances paid to all the federal legislators from June 2007 to May 2011. But the Clerk Salisu Maikasuwa on 29 June 2012 filed a motion on notice asking for stay of execution of the judgement on the grounds that he had filed a valid appeal challenging the judgement (The Nation, 2012). The question is: what is wrong in knowing what our legislators earn that would make the clerk to challenge a high court order to make public the wages and salaries of the law makers in Nigeria?. The simple answer to the question is that what the law makers earn is outrageously high and criminal and not consumerate with the jobs they do for the nation. An investigation shows that a senator's monthly salary in Nigeria is composed of:

1. Basic salary:(BS)-----	N2,484,245.50k
2. Hardship allowance (50% of BS) -----	N1,242,127.75k
3. Constituency allowance (200% of BS) -----	N4,968,509.00k
4. Furniture allowance (300% of BS) -----	N7,452,736.50k
5. Newspaper allowance (50% of BS) -----	N1,242,122.70k
6. Wardrobe allowance (25% of BS) -----	N 621,061.37k
7. Recess allowance (10% of BS) -----	N 248,424,55k
8. Accommodation allowance (200% of BS) -----	N4,968,509.00k
9. Utilities allowance (30% of BS) -----	N 828,081.83k
10. Domestic staff allowance (35% of BS) -----	N 863,184.12k
11. Entertainment allowance (30% of BS) -----	N 828,081.83k
12. Personal assistant allowance (25% of BS) -----	N 621,061.37k
13. Leave allowance (10% of BS) -----	N 248,424.55k
14. Severance gratuity (300% of BS) -----	N7,452,736.50k
15. Car allowance (400% of BS) -----	N9,936,982.00k
<u>Grand Total</u>	<u>N29,479,749.00k</u>

The total monthly collection of a Senator in Nigeria is N29,479,749.00k. This sum is 59 times the monthly salary of a university professor in Nigeria (N500,000 a month); and 3 time the professor's gratuity on retirement after serving the country for 35 years or attaining seventy years of age while in service. The senator's salary is 1,735 times greater than that of the least paid worker in Nigeria on the minimum wage of Salary Grade Level 1, Step 1, which is N17,000 a month. The senator would earn this sum (N29,479,749.00k) for each month of the four years he/she would be in office. The great disparity between the salary of the senator and that of the least paid worker in government employment clearly shows that the senator's salary which is politically motivated is both criminal and sinful since the same senator legislated for the least paid Nigerian to earn N17,000 per month.

POSSIBLE DETERMINANTS OF THE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED WAGES

The politically motivated wages may have been based on huge investments by the politicians on the political process. In the real business world, financial investment considerations revolve around spending capital on assets that will yield the highest return for an individual or a corporate entity

over a defined period of time, such considerations are: expected risks and return on investments; and SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis result. Strength and weaknesses are internal factors to an investor, while opportunities and threats are external to the investors (Otegbade, 2008; Pandey, 2006; interpedia.com 2013).

The internal factors are management quality and structure; investor's history; historical financial performance (earnings per share; dividends per share; dividend yield; dividend cover; interest cover; returns on equity; capital structure; and asset turnover). And the opportunities and threats that are external includes market share controlled by an investor, and expansion opportunities; competitors in the industry; government regulations (if any); and market psychology – the overall sentiments or feelings that the market is experiencing at any particular point in time. This includes fears, greed, expectations and circumstances or social, economic and political environments. (Otegbade, 2008; Pandey, 2006; interpedia.com, 2013). All these factors are translated into the political sphere and taken into consideration before investments in the political process. Politicians are rational human being. Being rational, they would try as much as possible to create the conditions and adopt the strategies that will ensure their victories at the polls, strategies that will ensure that their investments are safe, and that returns on their investments are high. Part of this rational decision involves going against the electoral rules; distorting the internal democracy clause that parties should follow in the selection of party candidates and officers; killing of political opponents and rivals; blackmailing some political opponents and rivals; rigging of elections; bribing judicial officials sitting at electoral tribunals; bribing the electoral officials; engaging political opponents and rivals in physical confrontations and in armed battles; kidnapping members of the opposition or members of their families; and playing the game outside the rules.

The salaries of the politicians and the methods they adopt to ensure their victories at the polls create feelings of inequity in the Nigerian society because despite the huge amount being received by the law makers, they have lots of pending bills; are interested in oversight functions because of the allowances associated with the functions and other pecuniary interests of the members in the functions.

Apart from the Federal Capital Territory probe that affected several law makers in the country, no other probe has been properly conducted to its conclusive end by the National Assembly. The Power Probe was killed in house politics (Sunday Trust, 2009); Oladimeji Bankole (former Speaker of House of Representatives) Contract case went unpunished; Iyabo Obasanjo Bello's case of N300 million scandal went with the winds; so also did Senator Jibril Aminu's Eu10 million Siemen's bribery case end. The Rural Electrification Agency N5.2 billion scam involving Senators Elumelu, Ugbana and others ended without solution. El-Rufai could not refund N3.5 billion he was called to refund neither did the Safe Tower Project inflated by N3.5 billion by Femi Fani Kayoed and Bablola Borishade see the light of the day; and the Senate rejects the ban on politicians found guilty of stealing public funds from holding public offices (Daily Trust, 2009). Because every politician has had his/her fingers soiled one way or the other, no one can call the other to order. Money must be earned and stolen wherever it is found and by whatever means (Thisday, 2009 May 14; Ajayi, 2009; Abubakar and Hassan, 2009; Sunday Trust, 2009).

IMPLICATIONS OF POLITICALLY MOTIVATED WAGES ON THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

EXCESS INCOME IS USED IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF THUGS AND CRIMINALS

Because the political office holders earn so much money than other occupational groups in the society, they have so much money to throw about; they raise local armies in the names of “youth wings” and “supporters” to further their causes in the political process. They employ and arm political thugs most of whom are established criminal elements and unemployed youths in the society who are handsomely and regularly paid and used to further their political interests. Because each politician and party has a “youth wing”, the multiplicity of these youth wings in the constituencies heat up the polity leading to constant clashes, assassinations, intimidations and a whole lot of unwholesome acts including destruction of lives and property, ballot box snatchings and prevention of elections to hold in certain areas vital to the interests of their employers. After elections, the groups reorganize themselves into criminal gangs and engage in armed robberies and kidnapping of innocent citizens for ransoms. Because these groups work and act freely in the society with the law enforcement agencies standing by and watching, it is believed that there is a conspiracy between the groups, the politicians and parties, and the law enforcement agencies. Hence electoral observers describe our elections as lacking credibility.

BRIBING OF ELECTORAL OFFICERS

Most electoral officers are civil servants whose annual salaries are not up to one-tenth of the monthly salary of the political office holders. Because money means everything to the average Nigerian, most of them sell their consciences to the politicians in return for money and aid the politicians to cheat and win at the elections. Some of them are offered a hundred times their annual salaries as inducements to make a particular candidate win a particular election. The sum is not only tempting but is worth the pains since they are assured of protection by the politicians. They compromise, hence the refusal of the electoral body to make available electoral records to politicians challenging electoral results in courts or tribunals. If the civil servants and the politicians earn equal and or identical wages and salaries, the politicians would find it extremely difficult to attempt offering bribes to the electoral officers, or organising and arming “youth wings”.

BRIBING OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

It is a fact that the law enforcement agencies are not well paid in Nigeria, hence the culture of corruption is rife amongst their ranks and files especially members of the Nigerian Police Force. A piece of the politically motivated wages offered by the politicians to the members of the armed forces would be highly welcome. Because the members of the forces sit and watch the politicians and their thugs make meaningless the electoral process and commit crimes with impunity without doing anything about it, the members of the public strongly believe that there is a culture of connivance between the forces and the politicians and this connivance goes to satisfy the pecuniary interests of the members of the forces involved as they are always “acting on instructions”.

SCRAMBLE FOR POLITICAL POSTS WHETHER ONE IS QUALIFIED OR NOT

Because of the politically motivated wages, many Nigerians aspire for political posts whether they possess the needed qualifications or not. Hence, many resort to the use of forged certificates or use the certificates of friends or close relatives. Popular cases in point are the cases of Salisu Buhari of Kano State; Orji Uzor Kalu former Governor of Abia State who used his political thugs to kill the suspected owner of the certificate he was using (Charles_Obi 2006; Agbo Anayochukwu 2006); Ibrahim Idris, former Governor of Kogi State; Governor Adams Oshimole of Edo State; Governor

Gabriel Suswan of Benue State; and a host of other politicians accused of using forged certificates or certificates obtained for them by others, to run for offices. This has further raised the craze for certificates in Nigeria and has rubbished the country's educational system as grades and certificates in our schools have price tags.

MULTIPLICATION OF UNVIABLE POLITICAL PARTIES

To avoid the political assassinations and personality clashes associated with the scramble for political posts, most Nigerians have resorted to the formation of political parties which however do not find enough followership because such political parties cannot under the present circumstances win any seats in any election and in any of the constituencies across the country. Thus Nigeria has more unviable political parties than viable parties. Such parties have neither the huge sums associated with Nigeria's electoral process nor the nerves associated with thugery and electoral malpractices.

INTERNAL SQUABBLES IN VIABLE POLITICAL PARTIES

In the viable political parties, there are internal squabbles for posts and positions among the politicians which sometimes motivate some to assassinate their rivals and associates to consolidate their positions within the parties. Such internal squabbles are seen during parties' congresses for nomination of candidates and for the control of the parties' machines. The most notorious of these squabbles was that between President Olusegun Obasanjo and his deputy Alhaji Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP); that between Governor Orji Uzo Kalu and his deputy Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe in Abia State; Governor Orji Uzo Kalu and his late deputy, late Dr. Chima Nwafor; and those between a host of other governors and their deputies across the country. Though the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) in Nigeria has been able to manage her internal crises especially during party nominations through dialogue, and "horse trading", the other political parties as All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) has been a regular customer at the courts of law in the country in the settlement of her internal crises. The list of internal crises amongst candidates in each of the political parties is so great that it cannot be catalogued in this study. The latest is that between members of the All Peoples' Congress (APC) a political party formed by a coalition of disgruntled elements from the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and those of other political parties in Nigeria. The crises centre on the leadership of the party and distribution of posts within the party.

ABUSE OF THE LEGAL PROCESS AND THE RULE OF LAW

Most legal officers aid and abate, and abuse the electoral process and the legal process through unworthy association with politicians and the granting of injunctions and judgements that border on the miscarriage of justice in their determination and resolution of political conflicts. These are not genuine mistakes but are decisions made for some prices. This perhaps led to the conflict and crises that engulfed the Courts in Nigeria. The worst of these abuses was the case of Mr Ibori, the former Governor of Delta State whom a court had convicted and sentenced for robbery a few years before the general elections, who had not stayed the mandatory ten years after the service of a sentence as stipulated by the Nigerian Constitution before contesting in an election. Ibori contested as a governor under the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Delta State and won in the general elections. While a court identified Mr. Ibori as the same person convicted for stealing, (Gummi L.H. 2003) another court discharged him saying that it was not the same Onanefe Ibori formally convicted for robbery by a court of law (Okomu, 2004). A court judgement in Nigeria set the same Mr. Onanefe Ibori free of stealing public funds while serving as a Governor of Delta State in the country; and the same Mr. Onanefe Ibori was found guilty and imprisoned in Britain for money laundering while on seat as the Governor of Delta State (Ezeoke, 2010). Cases of the abuse of the legal process abound in the country

and the actions of the Bar and the Bench in Nigeria have nailed the coffin of the independence of the judiciary in Nigeria (Agbo, 2010). Were the salaries and wages of politicians in Nigeria same as those of the civil servants, it would have been easy to know when they are living beyond their incomes and easier to check corruption in the country.

ELECTORAL VIOLENCE AND ELECTORAL MALPRACTICES.

Electoral violence is a common phenomenon in Nigeria's political process. Almost all the elections in the country are characterised by violence between members of opposing political parties and supporters of opposing candidates. The Civil Liberties Organization in Nigeria made a good record of some of the violent clashes and acts of terror leashed out on the citizens by political thugs during general elections in the country (CLO, 1999; 2004, 2008). The violence is to deter voters from turning out to vote, or to scare the voters to snatch the ballot boxes from the voting centres where the sponsors of the violence are most likely to lose. The most disturbing aspects of the violence and terror is that the perpetrators are known and nothing ever happens to them. The law enforcement agents see them and associate with them. The fact is that if the politicians do not have so much funds that allow for the payment for such violence and acts of terror, elections would be free and fair, and each citizen's vote would count in the determination of who occupies a position of power and authority in the country, and governments would have been responsible and accountable. Electoral violence allows for electoral malpractices and the installation of unpopular governments, mediocre and criminals in political offices. It leads to the abuse of power and corruption and the abuse and intimidation of political opponents.

ABUSE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

The impact of politically motivated wages is most felt when the various political parties hold their party congresses. The congresses are more or less bazaars where the highest bidders for the various elective posts are endorsed as the parties' candidates for the elections and serving politicians make the highest biddings in the congresses because of the huge sums of money at their disposal. The highest bidder for any political post at the congress is selected to run for the bided post in an election whether the candidate possesses the requisites qualifications for the post or not. The congresses are more of abuse of the parties' internal democratic process than free and fair selection processes which they ought to be. This abuse of the parties' internal democratic process is more glaring at the ward, local governments and the states congresses than at the national congress. While the biddings at the ward, local government and state congresses are openly done, it is done behind closed doors at the national level before the congresses or at the congress venues. The highest bidder is not usually the best candidate.

WHAT IS THE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

To check the negative impacts of politically motivated wages on the democratic process in Nigeria, there is the need to harmonize all politically motivated wages with wages in the civil service. This will help to remove the financial powers of politicians to influence the democratic process and civil servants involved in the electoral process negatively, and stop the undue influences over judicial officers sitting on election tribunals to thwart the course of justice. The harmonization of wages and salaries would also eliminate soldiers of fortune from the electoral process and attract genuine patriots to serve the country. This harmonization would also reduce the cost of seeking to be selected to run for a particular political post in an election and the cost of campaigning by candidates. It will also demystify the wages and salaries earned by our political office holders and to check corruption and lifestyle of the citizens in the country.

It would reduce the disposable income of politicians and curb funds being devoted to crime and criminal activities in the electoral process and thereby reduce political violence, assassinations and electoral malpractices. It would reduce ostentatious living on the part of public office holders and force them to make more judicious use of their incomes. It would reduce the impression and or the reality that public offices are avenues to loot and enrich one illegally, and reduce corruption. It would make political posts less attractive to fortune seekers. It would attract people with integrity into politics, that is, people who would see their offices as callings to serve the nation honestly. It would make funds available for the development of the economy – for infrastructural development, employment, education, health, sports and for poverty alleviation. It would help to reduce crime and politically motivated killings and kidnapping of innocent citizens, and help to detect crime, arrest criminals, and prosecute corrupt public office holders as it would be easy to detect those living beyond their earnings.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

Notes:

1. In the 2007 general elections for instance, a total of 124 incidents of electoral violence and malpractices were officially reported by electoral monitors and news correspondents across the south-south geo political zone in Nigeria comprising Edo, Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, Akwa-Ibom, and Cross-River States. Security agencies, political parties and Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officials were deeply involved in the incidents. Akwa-Ibom State had 40 incidents; Edo State 32; Rivers State 25; Cross River State 11; Bayelsa State 5; and Delta State 11. Political party “supporters” and criminal elements or party thugs were responsible for 83 incidents; INEC officials and the police were responsible for 41 cases. There were 84 cases of diversion and hijacking of electoral materials and 40 cases of physical assaults and brutalisation of persons. These actions involved the agents of the candidates and parties contesting the elections in the geo-political zone; and these exclude cases of murder and brutality during the nomination processes and political campaigns. The post election violence in Kano, Kastina and Kaduna States after the 2011 presidential election also left trails of blood and woes in the states.
2. The cases of Alhaji Salisu Buhari of Kano State who was sent out of the House of Representatives for fictitious claims of having attended Toronto University in Canada; Mr. Orji Uzor Kalu, ex governor of Abia State who also has fictitious educational qualifications, attended the Abia State University while a governor and was the only candidate in his graduating class, whose certificate has recently been withdrawn by the Abbia State University, Mr. Gabriel Susswan the present Governor of Benue State who has allegations of possessing forged certificates; Alhaji Ibrahim Idris, ex-Governor of Kogi State had similar accusations while in office; and so many political office holders especially law makers across the country have similar cases of possessing forged certificates or are using certificates that do not belong to them.
3. A Supreme Court verdict removed Mr. Celestine Omeha as the Governor of Rivers State because he was not the winner of the PDP’s primary election for the gubernatorial position during the party’s state congress. The rightfully selected candidate for the Governorship

position for the Peoples' Democratic Party in River States elected candidate in the governorship election in Rivers State was Mr. Chibuike Amaechi. Mr Chibuike Amechi was declared as the rightful candidate for the election and as the duly elected Governor of Rivers State in the election; so also was Chris Ngige who was elected as the Governor of Anambra State removed from office through a court verdict that instituted Mr Peter Obi as the State Governor; and the court verdict that removed Mr. Andy Uba from office as the Governor of Anambra State and instituted Peter Obi as the Governor of the State. So many similar cases abound across the country.

4. Igbinovia (2003) gave a catalogue of names and dates of some cases of unresolved politically motivated assassinations in the country from 1985 to 2005. This list has tremendously increased with the years. A fact is that most of the assassinations are never reported and when reported, they do not see the light of the day.

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