

# Curbing Election Violence and Vote Buying In Nigeria: Theoretical Approach

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**Abstract:** This article portrays the theoretical framework applicable and assesses the impact of the several mentioned irregularities, especially if they were of sufficient magnitude or scope to curb election violence and vote buying in all elections conducted in Nigeria. Controversies and uncertainties over allegations of irregularities reflect the problematic role of the State bureaucracy, serious inadequacy and lack of transparency in the election administration process in Nigeria. Therefore, election, voting, violence, and vote buying issues examined in this article include- the theoretical framework applicable; electoral malpractices as restrictive registration of potential voters; the training of citizens on minimum concepts of civic responsibility; voter intimidation and other sources of suppression or distortion of voter will and recommendation on the mechanisms to increase popular participation, transparency, credibility and integrity of the electoral process in Nigeria. It was discovered that the impact of vote buying was difficult to demonstrate with empirical evidence. Our analysis indicates that the incumbent may have benefited marginally from vote buying, but his benefits were nowhere nearly as salient as some observers have perceived. We also find that the stability, legitimacy and effectiveness of the government may be undermined if it fails to develop mechanisms to ensure free, fair and transparent elections.

**Keywords:** Election, violence, vote buying, state irregularities.

## Introduction

Election is an irreducible feature of democratic governance. Democracy here is defined as a social system of administering a nation – state where political parties and independent candidates compete for elective positions in a free and fair election atmosphere, and in which the citizens are legally empowered to choose those who will run the affair of the state in a given period (Obakhedo, N. 2011)

According to Wikipedia (2009), such election are supposed to be competitive, free and fair both substantively and procedurally; and in which the ability of the elected representative to exercise decision- making power is subject to the rule of law, and usually moderated by a constitution that emphasizes the protection of the rights and freedom of individuals, and which places constraints on the leaders and on the extent to which the will of the majority can be exercised against the right of minorities. Despite the legal framework that guide the electoral process, there is usually a contest between those who want to acquire power and those who are likely to lose power. The contest normally put the toga of violence because some politicians usually want to cut corners. A cursory look at democratic history of Nigeria reveals that of electoral cum political violence that sometimes threaten the country to its very foundation. This development in part had made democratic consolidation somehow problematic, and on the other hand has made it difficult for Nigeria to be referred to as a democratic state even though operators vehemently lay claim to it.

The point has to be made that historically, violence is a major features of political life everywhere around the world. Only that politics-related violence varies in intensity, trends and dimensions from one political system to another. As a matter of fact, comparative political scientists agree that from time immemorial, violence has been a constant of human societies all over the world, and in particular, today's world is awash with violence. (See Ayeni-Akeke, 2008). Despite the fact that several theories could be used to explain the phenomenon of electoral violence in Nigeria's political landscape, transparent electoral system that helps to put in place a transparent political transition is what Nigeria's are seeking after experiencing several years of harrowing military dictatorship. As matter of fact, high premium has been globally placed on democratic governance attained through successfully conducted elections that meet international standards set by democracy inclined citizens, and multilateral organizations

Since electoral violence with concomitant effect had been the bane of Nigeria's democratic transition, there has been the need to set in motion a machinery to curb this menace. How can Nigeria curb electoral violence and all that is wrong with the electoral process? How can Nigeria consolidate democratic rule and limit the fissiparous forces that war against it? A major way out of this malaise is political education. To this end, this paper is set out to answer these and other questions (Obakhedo, N.2011)

## Statement of problem

Electoral violence and vote buying are common in Africa election campaign. According to survey-based estimate, almost one out of five Nigerians is personally exposed to vote buying and almost in ten experiences threat of electoral violence. But when, as commonly happens, campaign irregularities are targeted at the poor.

Violence reduces turnout and vote buying enhances partisan loyalty. But perhaps because most citizens condemn campaign manipulation as wrong, compliances with wishes of politicians is not assured.

How can Nigeria curb electoral violence and all that is wrong with the electoral process? How can Nigeria consolidate democratic rule and limit the fissiparous force that war against it? To this end, this paper is set out to answer these and other questions.

## Objective of the study

The following are the objective of this study:

1. To ascertain the ways Nigeria can curb electoral violence and vote buying during election period.
2. To examine the implications of vote buying and electoral violence on the electorate in Nigeria.

## Research questions

The study is guided by the following questions:

1. How can Nigeria curb electoral violence and vote buying?
2. What are the implications of vote buying and electoral violence on the electorate?

## Review of Related Literature

### Election

Elections are unarguably the most critical elements of democratic process. Essentially, election constitutes the strategic might to and of the democratic process; hence, the widely held view that election is the major midwife of the democratic process. Thus, the fundamental principle of representative government is that the people should be governed by officers of their own choice. In a democratic centralism, citizens are expected to take part in the work of the government by voting at polls. Idealistically, election is the process whereby an electorate chooses, by voting, officers either to act on its behalf, or to represent it in an assembly, with a view to governing and making good administration (Nkwede, 2014; Nwobashi, 2015 and Garuba, 2007). Election are one type of social mechanism, amongst others, for aggregating preferences of a particular kind. An election is therefore, a procedure recognized by the rule of an organization, be it a state, a club, a voluntary organization, or whatever, where all, or some, of the members choose a smaller member of persons to hold an office, office of authority within that organization. From the above, it is quite obvious that elections are the means by which a wider body of persons chooses a smaller group of representatives to undertake specific tasks; and that elections can take place in a wide variety of organization, formal and informal as well as government and non-government. However, our primary concern here is those elections by which representatives are chosen to occupy those governmental positions or offices that may be designated as elective. Simply put, election is very important in a political process because without the process of election, there would be the struggle for power which could either be in form of coup d'etat or radical change of government. Consequently, there is no need to enthrone credible election in any democratic environment where election is taken to be a cardinal feature of a democratic process. Ejue and Ekanam (2011) stated that election is free, fair and credible and popular candidates emerge as winners, for this reason, they opinionated that election remains the only gateway to establish majority rule and legitimacy of government. Implicitly, this suggests that the integrity of election is paramount in a democratization process and should not be compromised by stakeholders in the system

## **Electoral Violence**

There is agreeable of electoral violence. This is because of the contentious issue of “violence begets violence” developed by Fanon in the era of anti-colonial struggles. The Fanonian argument is predicated on the fact that ‘violence provokes violence’. So those who retaliate to the first violence of political opponents do not agree that they are perpetrating violence. They might. They simply argue that they are countering violence. From the array of definitions available, one can glean an operational definition.

Operationally, electoral violence connotes all forms of violence (physical, psychological, administrative, legal and structural) at different stages engaged in by participants, their supporters, and sympathizers (including security and election management body staff) in the electoral process (Balogun, 2003). These forms of violence take place before elections, during and after or post, and could also be intra- or inter-party.

Many scholars have given a variety of interpretation of vote-buying according to their perception and orientations. Scholars like Fredrick and Adreas (2005), Ologbenla and Waziri (2012), Callahan (2002), Matenga (2006), Wright (1985), Beetseh and Akpoo (2015), Ovwasa (2013) and Dixit and Londregan (1996) argue that the act of vote-buying is an economic exchange, a contract or perhaps an auction in which the voter sells his or her vote to the highest bidder. For Fredrick and Andrea (2005), vote-buying is a situation where candidates buy and sell votes as they buy apples, shoes, or television sets. In this connection, parties and candidates buy vote by offering particularistic material benefits to voters. Vote-buying, therefore, is an inducement offered to electorate in an election situation with a view to garnering popular vote. In the context of this study, vote-buying can safely be seen as an act of exchanging one's own vote for material gains. Contemporaneously, it includes notions of clientelism, whereby voters support candidates who have provided them with particularistic forms of redistribution (Finan and Schechter, 2012; Canare, Mendoza and Lopez, 2018). Beetseh and Akpoo (2015) maintain that vote-buying propositions may target either electoral choices or electoral participation. They may be intended to persuade individuals to vote in certain ways or to vote or not in the first place. They further argue that strategies to alter turnout may focus on demobilizing active opponents or on mobilizing supporters. Comparatively, vote-buying as a phenomenon is neither system specific nor space bound as it is common to all political systems, be it advanced or developing, medieval or contemporary. It therefore, exists in all regions and climes, and differs in magnitude or contemporary. It therefore, exists in all regions and climes, and differs in magnitude and manifestation from one polity to the other (Kwanghga and Tarfa (2015). The phenomenon of vote-buying therefore portends danger in a democratization process.

## **The anatomy of the causes of electoral violence in Nigeria**

Suffice it to say that contingent upon the debilitating effect of electoral violence on the nation's political landscape, a galaxy of questions and posers about the causes of electoral violence had been raised/ a cursory look at the literature reveals suggest a number of reason. The answer can be found in the array of causes of electoral violence that have been identified in the literature, some scholars contend that the causes are: greed; electoral abuses, and rigging of elections; abuse of political power; alienation, marginalization and exclusion; and the political economy of oil (Igbuzor, 2009). Yet, other scholar adduce the following as the causes of the phenomenon, poverty/unemployment (Maslow, 1954) cited in igbuzor 2009; ineffectiveness of security force and culture of impunity; weak penalties; weak governance and corruption and proliferation of arms and ammunitions. In the same vein, other pundits argue that the causal factors are: lack of security; partisanship of traditional rulers who were supposed to be the custodians of our cultural heritage; abuses of office by elected officials, zero-sum politics or winner takes it all syndrome; lucrative nature of political office; poor handling of election petition, and lack of faith in the judiciary; and lack of compliance with the extant electoral law and enforcement of the enabling laws; the partisan disposition of the police, and other security agencies detailed to monitor the election, and secures lives and property; corrupt INEC staff and ad-hoc officials who connive with the politicians; conflict of interests between and among politicians; and greed and selfish interest of politicians coupled with ideological bankruptcy (Ugiagbe, 2010)

However, prevalent forms of political violence in Nigeria exclude in political assassinations, arsons, violence-pruned campaigns, thuggery, and election-related ethno-religious crisis, snatching of ballot boxes and so on and so forth.

Analysts agree this has been possible because election in Nigeria is seen as a “do or die affair”. This violence is most often carried out by gangs whose members are openly recruited and paid by politicians and party leaders to attack their sponsor's rivals, intimidate members of public, rig elections, and protect their patrons from similar attacks. The architects, sponsors, and perpetrators of this violence generally enjoy complete impunity because of both the power of intimidation they wield and the tacit acceptance of their conduct by police and government officials at all levels (HRW, 2007)

It is against this backdrop that the Nigeria's governing elite have been widely implicated in acts of electoral violence, corruption and fraud so pervasive as to resemble criminal activity more than democratic governance (HRW, 2007). It is intriguing to note that members of the political class responsible for instigating this plethora of violence as well; as their foot-soldiers who undermine the

electoral process by perpetrating these violent acts are never brought to book. Political behaviouralists have argued that violent electoral behaviour which is either intended to hurt or kill political opponents or their supporters has devastating human right impact on ordinary Nigerians. In the same vein, they contend that the scenario is prevalent because of the nature of the political system, the prevailing political culture and the level of political socialization. In the Nigerian case, electoral violence is more entrenched because our political system is supportive of zero-sum game politics. This was why Otoghile (2009) described electoral violence as the radioactive by-product, some structural and attitudinal dislocations in the society which affects the level of political participation of citizenry.

The sociological discourse on the theory of violent conflicts and violent political behavior that exude in electoral violence contends that such acts hinge on the following theories: relative deprivation, rising expectation; frustration-aggression; used to explain electoral violence in Nigeria but the one that best captures the general phenomenon of electoral violence is the systematic hypothesis. It lays emphasis on the variable which often contributes to the maintenance of a political order or disorder, such as the breakdown of consensual norm, instances of political alienation, the cohesiveness of a ruling group and its legitimacy, and the attendant, the social structure and the political process (Okanya, 2001; Anifowose, 1982).

## **STRATEGIES TO CURBING ELECTORAL VIOLENCE AND VOTE BUYING IN NIGERIA.**

### **Political education: A strategy for curbing electoral violence in Nigeria**

There is a galaxy of ways that Nigeria could use to curb electoral violence and strengthen democratic governance. They include: constitutional amendment; electoral reform; pressure from civil society groups through agenda-setting; change in the character of the elite; political education etc. political education is the best tool to curb electoral violence and vote buying in Nigeria, all others rest on its effectiveness.

It has been argued at several fore's that the significances and utility of political education cannot be over-emphasized. This is because political education as it were is the conduit-pipe through which the political cultural values and behavioral patterns of the society are imbibed and internalized political socialization. In any case, since Nigerians tend to be very religious, religious books emphasizes the need for acquisition of knowledge as an instrument for guiding and girding against the wiles of the enemy in all societies, Nigeria inclusive. Therefore, there is the need for Nigerians to have a fore and deeper knowledge of causes, manifestations, dimensions, consequences and ways of curbing the phenomenon.

Since education has been identified as the launch-pad of a nation-state's development agenda, political education constitutes a herculean task for several agents of education in Nigeria; namely: the family; peer groups; schools (primary, secondary and tertiary); religious institutions; civil society organizations and the fourth estate of the realm (the mass media ). For schools as agents of socialization and social change, the need to abhor all forms of violence must be incorporated into our school curriculum. The political education that the pupils and students would receive will both in the short and long term deepen our political culture and socialization processes.

Therefore, Nigerians should know the dynamic nature of our politics, and the emerging trends that shape the political culture and determine the direction of political socialization, and in relation to electoral violence, should learn, imbibe and internalize the political sociology of electoral behavior education. This would help the nation to either make or mar its emerging democratic order.

Sociologically, politics marred by violence is synonymous with the politics of bitterness that would create an atmosphere of fear, intimidation, and arson; and would not allow the people to choose their leaders. Such politics undermine comparative electoral politics and alienate the citizens politically and make them politically apathetic, and create a fundamental disjuncture between the civil society and the state. This deeply-rooted problem contributes to growing cases of mass disenfranchisement of the citizens with its attendant political normlessness and exclusion which does not help to deepen and consolidated our democracy.

The citizens also need to know and appreciate the working of the nation's election management body (Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC) including the enabling legal framework. This framework outlines the amendment of the 1999 constitution, the 2010 Electoral Law (Act). And other related regulations and rules to enhance the integrity, relevance, and adequacy of the institutions reforms of INEC. That understanding must include citizenship education that encompasses a good understanding of the legal basis of electoral governance with a very useful model that operates at three levels: (a.) rule making; (b.) rule application. and (c.) rule adjudication (Aiyede, 2008 while quoting Mozaffar and scheduler, 2002). This legal basis stipulates the punishment to be meted out to electoral offenders no matter how highly placed. Legally and constitutionally too, and Election Malpractice Tribunal should be established as recommended by the Justice Muhammadu Lawal Uwais, Electoral Reform committee. The Tribunal would enable cases to be discharged expeditiously. With necessary political will, this development would help stamp out the culture of impunity so that perpetrators of electoral offences can be prosecuted and held accountable for such offences. There must be evidence

of prosecution of violators since a climate and culture of impunity will undo the best rules and regulations (see Joseph et al, 2005). It is based on the above that scholars have argued that government should ensure that Justice Mohammed Uwais Electoral Reforms Recommendations are fully implemented through legislation by the National Assembly (Joseph et al, 2005; Mahgud, 2008, Opadokun, 2009:38).

Politically, and in terms of development, leaders who emerge as product of violence-prone elections are not likely to be the people's choice, and not likely to consider the people's opinion on policies and issues that affect their daily lives. While such leader lack legitimacy by procedure, they may spend their entire term in office trying to secure legitimacy by result which may lead to necessary people-oriented policies because aggrieved citizens that had suffered mandate theft may withdraw into their cocoon, and from the arena of the state. In this regard, a state that have agenda of development and yearns for suitable national development should educate its citizenry about the inherent dangers of allowing an entrenched culture of electoral and political violence as part of the features of the political system. Unless this achieved, the problem of electoral violence remains politically topical for a while in Nigeria .

### **ELECTION SECURITY A STRATEGY TO CURB ELECTORAL VIOLENCE**

The test of true democratic society has been said time and again, rests on its ability to ensure that the rule of law guiding elections is carried out to the satisfaction of all participants in the exercise. Electoral security system is the whole gamut of security architecture involving election management institutions and processes, electoral legal instruments, security forces and civil society electoral monitoring bodies which are brought together to ensure credibility in the electoral security. Electoral security is the embodiment of processes as well as system of protecting electoral stakeholders such as voters' candidates, poll workers, media and observers, electoral facilities( polling stations and counting centers) and electoral events such as rallies and campaigns against death, damage or disruption of the electoral processes [Yorom G. 2010].

Election Security (i.e. Security of election officials and materials) remains a formidable challenge in Nigeria. Nnoli (2006:16) agreed that, National Security is a cherished value associated with the physical safety of individuals, groups, nation-states, together with a similar safety of their other most cherished values. It denotes freedom from threats, anxiety or danger. Therefore, security in an objective sense can be measured by the absence of fear that threat, anxiety or danger will materialize.

Violence has become a political strategy in Nigeria where the unpopular anti-democratic elements impose themselves on the people by force. Nigeria's brand of democracy has become government of the rich, through the manipulation of the poor for the service of the few and exploitation of the majority. Violence is dysfunctional to representative government and draws back the hand of development. Violence has resulted in bloodshed, burning and destruction of properties and casts doubt on the legitimacy of those pronounced winners at the polls. This is because violence undermines electoral integrity. Through the instrumentality of violence, there is enthronement of unconcerned and anti-democratic characters holding the levers of power. Of course, the consequence of this, is the sustained recession witnessed in all areas of our national life ( Tade: 2019). Jega (2019) noted that deeply embedded unwholesome practices such as use of money, violence, incumbency powers and a range of electoral malpractices and fraudulent activities in the electoral process grossly undermine its utility as a vehicle for democratic value. In the light of the above, the prevalence of election violence in a country, determines the level of security to be provided by the security agencies.

Election Security involves the physical protection and safety of polling units, election materials and electoral personnel both permanent and adhoc-staff before, during and after elections until electoral results are collated and announced.

### **POVERTY REDUCTION A STRATEGY TO CURB ELECTORAL VIOLENCE AND VOTE BUYING.**

It is argued that socio-economic factors, especially poverty, unemployment and illiteracy play a major role in promoting the market for vote buying and selling in democracies.

The poor and less educated among electorates are almost always the target during the distribution of vote buying incentives. This is attributed to the fact that gifts have more force among the poor. Hence parties will buy the votes of the poor before trying to buy those of the Wealthy (Stokes, 2005).

For instance, Bratton (2008) reports that during Nigeria's 2007 elections the most common amount of money offered to voters was US\$4. These economic mechanisms are likely to make poor voters the prime targets of vote buying by political parties who want to maximize their (re)election chances.

It follows that the same outlay of resources by the party will buy more votes among poor than among wealthy voters.



In a nutshell, vote-buying can be a greater motivation to the poor to vote than the enticement of public goods, as the poor are oftentimes forgotten about in the distribution of public goods.

Reducing poverty can also be seen as strategy to reduce vote buying.

Governments should make it a point to reduce poverty by enhancing wealth redistribution. This can be done by creating or providing sustainable jobs, especially for the rural folks.

## **UNBIASED ENFORCEMENT OF ELECTORAL LAW A TOOL TO CURB ELECTORAL VIOLENCE AND VOTE BUYING.**

There is a wide range of provisions of the criminal and civil law which could check electoral violence [Green. R and Donnerstein E. 1998]. The punishment for the offences of murder, manslaughter, grievous bodily harm and assault can always catch up with perpetrators of electoral violence in Nigeria. Several years of imprisonment can be involved against perpetrators of electoral violence. The Nigerian electoral act 2006 specifically has several provisions targeted against electoral violence. Section 97(5) of the acts provides that no political party or member of a political party shall retain, organize, train or equip any person or group of persons for the purpose of enabling them to be employed for use or display of physical force or coercion in promoting any political objective or interest in such a manner as to arouse reasonable apprehension that they are organized, trained or equipped for that purpose. By section 97 (6), no political party candidate or any person shall keep or use private security organization, vanguard or any other group or individual by whatever name for the purpose of providing security, assisting or aiding the political party or candidate in whatever manner during campaigns, rallies, processions or elections.

The punishments prescribed for contravention of the above subsections in the case of an individual is a fine of 500,000 or imprisonment for a term of six months (Ladan T. 2016).

Whenever anyone is caught engaging in vote-buying and in the act of electoral violence, the person should be dealt with seriously and prosecuted in accordance with the existing law as enshrined in the constitution in respect of his affiliation and status. In this regard the Judiciary must be autonomous the fact that judges are appointed by the executives should erode the place of the judiciary. There are usually three arms of government; and by the stipulation of the constitution they are supposed to be independent of one another in order to perform creditably well.

Several provisions of the electoral act, 2010, (as amended): Section 124, 126, 129, and 130, criminalized bribery and corruption relating to voting during elections. This is usually not been enforce due to affiliation or fear of the unknown. Also the Nigeria National assembly in electoral act, 2018 (as amended) set campaign spending limits for presidential election at 5billion naira, governorship at #1billion while senatorial and house of representatives elections were put at #500 million and #250 million respectively. Other limit set by the national assembly are aspirants for state assembly, local government chairmanship and councilor pegged at #50 million, #30 million and # 15 million respectively. The two chambers also set #10million limit for donations by individuals and organization to political parties.

If these is implemented and enforced without biases, political party's affiliation and personality the issue of political violence and money politics will be reduced to barest minimum.

## **STRONG INSTITUTIONS A PANACEA TO ELECTORAL VIOLENCE AND VOTE BUYING**

Election administration are structure and process. By structure we mean the bureaucracy that is set up to or established to organize and conduct elections, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) , The Police ,the judiciary, the media, and the Civil society groups are institutions charged with the responsibility to conduct, monitor, supervise elections in Nigeria. Election Administration goes beyond the conduct and management of elections, it is the process and structure. There is the institution, structure and frameworks/process guiding the operation and conduct of elections. While the Institution refers to the Electoral Management Body because it is a formal creation of the constitution, Structure is subsumed in the Institution and is defined as the bureaucracy ( Afolabi, 2014).

Strong and formidable electoral institution is a panacea to curbing electoral violence in Nigeria. Election mismanagement often spurs and brings to the fore, tribal, ethnic and religious tensions and divides, as well avoidable violence with attendant loss of human lives and legitimacy by election winners. This tends to create a vicious cycle of instability and insecurity in the electoral process/cycle as today's losers becomes desperate and plan not to lose next time there adopting different strategies to subvert the process to their own personal aggrandizement. Mishandling of elections is another real and prolific source of conflicts, violence, insecurity and instability in Africa (Hounkpe and Gueye 2010). Therefore, Building a strong and effective institution is indispensable to the conduct or management of election in Nigeria and other emerging democracies in the world.

## **Theoretical framework**

The study adopted Political Economy Approach. Proponents of this approach are Marx (1848) cited in Chikendu 2002, Ake (1981), Aja (1998) and Chikendu (2002). The political economy approach is pigeonholed on dialectical materialism. The theory of dialectical materialism according to Marx places primary on material or economic directions conditions of society. Apparently, it is premised on the belief that man is dominantly motivated by economic needs. These theorists believed that labor is the essence of material existence hence; economic activity is man's primary concern (Oddih, 2007). For Aja (1998), the thrust of this perspective is on how the understanding of its economic structure as defined by the relations between employers of labor and the working class in the process of production. To Marx, every political system corresponds and reflects its kind of economic structure. He places emphasis and premium on the production base-the substructure, one easily understands the nature of internal relations, one easily organizes, makes and reproduce itself, the causes of tension, conflicts or contradictions in any given society and the bearing or direction of social change. For these theorists, it is believed that the primary cause of tension and other social dislocation in a society is economic factor. To this end, if one understands the economic structure of a society, the relations between the people in production process, it is easier to understand the nature of politics, culture, national security, social-psychological consciousness, and ideological inclinations. Thus it is this economic force that breeds conflicts and contradictions in human societies. Ipso facto, elections is seen as the quickest means to power and economic survival depending on the creed and perception of the politicians to win elections by all means. As argued by Ake (1981), the postcolonial states were endowed with highly developed power. But with denial of access to wealth by the colonial masters and poor development of the forces of production to secure economic base for existence, the indigenous middle-class turns to the state to utilize the highly statist economic for its aggrandizement. State power contemporaneously become a high state, and an object of deadly struggles that must be captured through hook or crook means since controlling the state tantamount to controlling political and economic power. For this reason, Chikendu (2002) opined that it is not surprising therefore that political competition which is undertaken in order to gain control of state power should generate great heat and bitterness and promote extra-constitutional behavior in the form of electoral malpractices. All in all, the relevance of this approach to win and control state power and use same for personal economic advantage of the politicians lies at the root of all electoral frauds and vote-buying in Nigeria.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research essay adopted the qualitative research method as her method of data collection and analysis. The method of data collection used in this research study is the secondary source which is also known as documentation. Due to the spontaneous nature of the issue under investigation, we gathered information from magazines, journals, newspapers, textbooks, internet materials which are relevant to the study.

### **Method of data analysis**

The framework of content analysis is what will be adopted due to the fact that it will aid us in giving better appreciable acknowledgement to the study and make us knowledgeably acquainted to the subject under analysis.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Empirical evidence abounds of how electoral violence affects the credibility of the electoral system, the democratic system and the rule of law. This ugly trend raises a fundamental question about the capacity and ability of the Nigeria state to curtail electoral violence and fraud since security agencies and INEC officials are implicated in the macabre dance of violence that dots the nation's electoral history. In fact, the nature, extent and magnitude of violence and rigging associated with elections in this country are posing a serious threat to the national quest for stable democratic transition, as well as the attainment of the long term goal of consolidated democracy (Malu, 2009).

And as a problem that has ravaged and permeated the entire bloodstream of our political system, it has become imperative for Nigerians to know the danger that it poses to strengthening and deepening the nation's democracy with concomitant effect on national development.

The vote-buying and violence affect relatively few people and rarely work well does not mean that these malpractices are without consequence. As others have noted, the intrusion of money and violence into election campaigns damages the quality of democracy (Schedler 2002, Schaffer, 2007). These transgressions undermine democratic norms of political liberty (by depriving voters of free choice) and political equality (by benefiting the rich at the expense of the poor). They diminish the legitimacy of electoral outcomes by giving "losers" usually opposition parties, reason to think that the vote was fraudulent. Even without other methods of

manipulation-such as ballot stuffing, ballot stealing and tampering with vote tallies- Nigeria's disastrous April 2007 election s suffered precisely this fate

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