

CAMPAIGN FINANCING AND CORRUPTION DURING 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN TARABA STATE, NIGERIA¹

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Abstract

Across democracies of the world, campaign financing greatly influence democratic processes. In democracies of developing nations like Nigeria, money and other inducements significantly influence voters' decisions. Adopting political corruption' models of analysis; this study examines how campaign financing during the 2015 general elections reinforced corruption in Taraba State, Nigeria. The study employed the survey research design to collect data using structured questionnaire administered to politicians (25); Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officers (25); and electorates (25) across the 16 Local Government Areas of Taraba State, Nigeria. Results of the study confirmed high cost of campaigns by political parties in Taraba State, Nigeria during the 2015 general elections expressed in vote buying and use of public resources for campaign purposes and this significantly reinforced corruption within Taraba State, Nigeria. Similarly, the study established the lack of effective monitoring laws or mechanisms that govern campaign financing in Taraba State, Nigeria. The study recommends that more effective legislations should be enacted to prohibit the different forms of vote buying and the associated forms of electoral bribery and other malpractices that form the root of political finance-related corruption in Taraba State, Nigeria. Likewise, sanctions should be directed at political parties and against individual party officials involved in illicit transactions during general elections.

Keywords: Political Parties, Campaign, Corruption, Vote Buying, Campaign Expenditure, Politicians

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Introduction

The relationship between democracy and corruption is such that democracy continuously feeds corruption. This perhaps might have triggered the warning by Kilgour (2016) that “Transparency International (TI) is correct in saying that none anywhere should be above the law or abuse voter-trusted power for private gain”. This makes some observers to opine that it is almost impossible to place a dividing line between human endeavors and money. That is why Ohman (2013, p.2) describes the relevance of money in politics as the “mother’s milk of politics.” This suggests that democracy goes with the use of money and the employment of money makes the entire election process vulnerable to various abuses (Kilgour, 2016). Similarly, finance in politics has the potentials of damaging electoral competition with its attendant risk of putting state resources at the disposal of the ruling party negatively to the extent of influencing the quality of government (Ohman, 2013).

To trace the place of money in a country’s political arena, Nwagwu (2016) noted that all funds raised and spent in order to influence the outcome of elections are meant to support the routine operation of political parties, including the provision of services to citizens and party leaders, the training of party workers and the recruitment of candidates and volunteers, treating these as costs of democracy. Therefore, to estimate the role of money in political process is the same as looking at the role of money in a modern society (Ohman, 2013). Political parties and candidates require money to publicize their electoral platforms and to pursue effective campaigns. Attempts to regulate campaign finance reflect the commonly held belief that uncontrolled political fund-raising and spending can undermine the integrity of the democratic process and erode the confidence of the electorates in political institutions (Kilgour, 2016). A number of studies have established that campaign expenditure is on the increase in many countries, developed and developing alike in tandem with United Nations’ objective. For example, Munro (2017) and Pickert (2008) observe that between 2000 and 2012 the estimated total spending for U.S. presidential elections almost doubled, from \$3.1 billion to \$5.8 billion. This massive growth in campaign finance is not peculiar to the United States; it is also evident in Nigeria where a large pall of fund-raising and spending are carried out by candidates and their parties due to the near absence or stringent measures imposed on political candidates. Ukase (2016) supports this position with a figurative evidence from 2015 election with PDP and APC spending amounting to ₦8,749,685,296 and ₦2,915,846,737, respectively.

Campaign finance refers to the raising and spending of funds aimed at influencing a political vote. But the raising and spending of financial

resources in a democratic economy appears to have generated debates and controversies about money and its power over politics and ethical questions thereby making campaign finance reform so critical (Jacobs & Smith, 2016; Munro, 2017). Most often, debates about campaign finance revolve around the protection of freedom of expression and the prevention of corruption but these two democratic principles can enter into conflict with each other (Munro, 2017). It appears that in regulating campaign fund-raising and spending, governments seek to avoid political corruption and a situation whereby politicians use the power associated with their office to reward large contributors (Jacobs & Smith, 2016). They argue that even in the absence of any actual *quid pro quo*, large contributions can arguably contradict the democratic principle of “one person, one vote,” since contributors gain a privileged channel to express their interests and opinions, in addition to preventing outright corruption (Jacobs & Smith, 2016). There is no doubt that the impact of money in the democratic process in Nigeria is high as in other countries as money is a key aspect of any modern society because there is no part of the world where money does not matter in a political process. In the case of Nigeria, for example, Alkali (2015) once commented that President Goodluck Jonathan’s regime qualifies as a kleptocracy because of the number of cases of frauds, misappropriation or diversions of public funds. Milyo (2008) views money in politics as a conventional wisdom which has central and nefarious role in politics. Underlying this belief are two fundamental assumptions which he advocates: elective offices are effectively sold to the highest bidder; and campaign contributions are the functional equivalent of bribes or political corruption.

Campaign finance regulations, as noted by Milyo (2008), are thus an attempt to hinder the operation of this political marketplace. He argues that management of campaign finance is necessary for credible and genuine elections and electoral campaigns because it has the potential to skew competition between contestants. As the democratic process requires funding, the concern of this paper is that can money not make politicians more responsive to contributors than voters? This is anchored on the observation of Ukase (2016) that access to uncorrupt and legal funding reduce the temptation of political parties and their candidates and civil servants to engage in corrupt behaviour. However, he notes that the very existence of money in politics creates the risk of corruption. This follows that finance is a necessary tool in politics but must be controlled in such a manner that only positive impact is nurtured and its negative impact minimized. This paper focuses essentially on the financing of political parties’ activities that impacts negatively on the entire democratization process.

Transparency International (TI) in its 2009 policy position standards on political funding suggested that the quality of government and the efficiency of democracy are damaged when corruption distorts political party and campaign financing. The Nigerian democracy is over twenty years now, but it appears the more the democracy gets older, the greater the dimension of corruption apart from being more and more expensive (Olorunmola, 2016). The cost of democracy has been pretty high partly because the political parties and the candidates require huge funds to finance their campaign budgets. Thus, Pollock (1926) and Overacker (1932) argue that the need for funds is anchored on the fact that politicians need to spend money in order to influence the outcome of an elected position and that political campaign is a greater part of the political process that requires huge money to sell the party and the candidates. This implies that the idea of campaign financing is hinged on what money can do in influencing the outcome of an election. However, Olorunmola (2016) argues that whether in established or new democracies, unregulated or unenforced campaign financing regulations exist and whether private or public, is capable of reversing the ethics, practices and spirit and growth of democracy. Several observers and commentators have said that campaign financing confers undue advantages and improperly alters available choice to electorates, but this influence may tend to have a severe negative impact on corruption if not moderated (Cordis & Milyo, 2013).

Ohman (2013) highlights four key functional areas of political finance in a state: democracy; free and fair elections; good governance; and corruption to the extent that these functions are facilitated by money. Traditionally, money functions as a medium of exchange, without which no modern society could function. Money is necessary for the provision of fundamental services such as health care, education and social security. Therefore, Ukase (2016) and Ohman (2013) describe money as an integral part of politics and the relationship between politics and money is described as political finance and this political finance has both positive and negative effects on political life, free and fair elections, democratic politics, effective governance and corruption are all related to political finance, the democratic nature and effectiveness of politics. Financing of political life, as observed by Ukase (2016) is a necessity but with a great problem as election processes and party structures all cost huge sum of money. Despite extensive studies on virtually all aspects of political party activities, researchers appear to have paid no much attention on politically-based financial issues, especially campaign finances and its relationship with corruption. This indicates that studies on campaign financing of political parties and candidates are not adequate. Political parties no doubt play a crucial role in election campaign in many parts of the world and because it is hard to sometimes draw a distinct

line between the campaign costs of party organizations and their routine expenses, party funds are loosely seen as “campaign finance” too. In the case of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, the situation has gone beyond imagination as the level of corruption was overdramatized because party funds go beyond campaign expenses, hence the rationale for this study. This study therefore provides an introduction to key problems and solutions in campaign finance. While there are many potential problems associated with political finance, the study has chosen to highlight how various campaign finance components affect corruption, including abuse of state resources to show the difficulties in regulating and combating such behavior using Taraba State of Nigeria as a case study because many cases were so reported in the state.

The paper is presented in five sections. In addition to this introduction, section two is the review of literature in which we theoretically treatise the conceptual issues in campaign financing in democracies, the legal dimensions of campaign financing and the implications of campaign financing in a nation’s democratic process. Section three contains the methodology and data analysis in which we used descriptive statistics, regression, Pearson correlation and chi-square to test the hypothesis in the analysis of the impact of campaign financing on corruption in the 2015 general elections in Taraba State. Section four is the discussion and findings while section five is the conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptual Issues in Campaign Financing

Loosely speaking, campaign finance is the funding of campaign expenditure. Many authors have defined campaign finance in various ways: political finance, party finance, campaign funds or campaign finance. This is what Heard (2016) described as the cost of democracy. IFES (2008) defines campaign finance as transactions that are related to an electoral campaign. Transactions may include formal, financial, or in-kind donations or expenditures. In a similar manner, campaign expenditure is expenditure incurred by or on behalf of a registered political party or candidate to promote the party or candidate in connection with present or future elections, including expenditure that has the aim of damaging the prospects of another party or candidate. Campaign expenditure is defined as any expenditure incurred by a party for electoral purposes that is solely for the purpose of enhancing or promoting electoral success for a party at a forthcoming or future election (Heard, 2016). This includes issuing disparaging materials relating to another party or its candidates. Moreover, goods or services for which payments are made prior to the campaign period for use during the campaign period shall be considered campaign expenditures and, therefore, must fall within the campaign expenditure limit. Campaign expenditure

includes an expenditure incurred by a party in connection with the following items: political party broadcasts; advertisement; distribution of unsolicited materials to electorates; circulation of manifesto or other policy documents; market research and canvassing; media/publicity; transportation; and rallies or other events (Heard, 2016).

In campaign financing discussions, it is important to mention some concepts that are frequently used which could be easily misconstrued: political parties, campaign finance and corrupt campaign finance, campaign expenditure, political party finance, and campaign funding, so as to appreciate the context in which the researchers have applied same in this study. In competitive systems, parties are organized by politicians to win elections while in authoritarian systems parties are organized to affect the attitudes and behaviour of the population. In both instances, an organizational structure must be forged, money must be raised, members recruited, officers elected or selected and procedures for internal governing established and agreed upon. The characteristics of political parties include the following: deliberate purpose of controlling state power, having specific organizational structure, procedures, leadership, members, ideology and finance (Ukase, 2016). Heywood (2003) views a political party as a group of people that are organized for the purpose of winning governmental power by electoral means. He suggests that political parties are organizations whose members have values, ideals and aspirations in common and at least participate in the organized contests/struggles for political power. The narrowest meaning of the term is money for electioneering activities (Duschinsky, 2006). Similarly, it could mean money spent on political foundations and other organizations for political lobbying, newspapers and media expenses advertisements, litigation, etc., to promote a partisan line. According to him, political finance is influenced by and influences the relations between parties, politicians, party members and the electorate. The problems of political campaign finance lie at the heart of a public debate on political corruption.

Despite the availability of extant laws on campaign and political financing, the government is yet to scale down the cost of political campaigns (Walecki, 2004). These costs come in different forms such as costs for election to public office; financing political parties before and during elections; financing bodies such as party “foundations” and other organizations that, although legally distinct from parties, are allied with them and advance their interests; cost of political lobbying expenses of newspapers and other media incurred and paid to promote a partisan line; costs of litigation in politically relevant cases; third-party or “independent” expenditures (spending by others other than political parties and candidates); activities of elected officials and other politically-exposed persons (Ukase,

2016; Walecki, 2004). The nature of money in politics is multifaceted and poses cyclic problems (Milyo, 2008; Ukase 2016; Walecki, 2004). They add that money in politics creates difficulties for legislation and enforcement and call for a comprehensive approach to regulation, enforcement and sustenance of free and fair electoral process.

Walecki (2004) categorizes measures concerning political financing into regulations and subsidies as follows: bans on certain types of donations; contribution limits; spending limits for political parties and presidential candidates; public subsidies; indirect public funding and in-kind subsidies (including regulations concerning political broadcasting); comprehensive disclosure and reporting regulations; and severe penalties. The Common Rules against Corruption in the Funding of Political Parties and Electoral Campaigns adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on April 8, 2003 provides in Article 6 the guidelines on donations to political parties (World Bank, 2009). Drawing a boundary line between “political” and “non-political” finance is not the only problem. It is necessary also to define the meaning of ‘finance’ as it has practical implications. A “financial” payment may arguably not be limited to money alone, but may involve resources that are non-financial but with a monetary value (Masoyi, 2017; Ohman, 2013). A political donor who gives a gift of ₦40,000 and another individual who donates a computer to a political party, thereby saving the party the expense of purchasing a computer for ₦40,000 have both given an equal financial advantage to the recipient party. Political finance, therefore, includes the monetary and non-monetary finances. Ohman (2013) views campaign finance and political party finance to be synonymous. Ukase (2016) describes campaign finance as money used for financing electioneering activities. He adds that money may be spent by candidates for public office and by their political parties or other individuals/organized groups of supporters to specifically compete in an election. All these different types of political financing are corruption related (See Table 1):

Table 1: Major types of political finance-related Corruption

Type	Actor group vulnerable to corruption	Description
Illegal expenditure including vote election	Voters and election officials	A political party or candidate may directly or indirectly bribe voters and election officials. They may alternatively offer the electorate different kinds of incentives (gifts, food, alcohol or even short-term employment). Besides elections, in some parliaments there is an unofficial market for votes - parliamentarians or councilors might be paid for votes or for joining different caucuses.

Funding from infamous sources	Candidates and political parties		A political party or candidate may accept money from organized crime (such as drug traffickers), terrorist groups or foreign governments. These groups might even form their own political parties.
Selling appointment, honours or access to information	Public servants and candidates	and	A political party may gain rewards in the form of job selections, appointments (ambassadorial, ministerial or honours or access judicial), decorations or titles of nobility. Money may also be used to access information to buy a seat in parliament or a candidacy.
Abuse of state resources	Public sector		Certain state resources, such as money and infrastructure that are available to office holders, may be extensively used for electioneering. In addition, the political party or candidate may capture state resources through the unauthorized channeling of public funding into companies, organizations or individuals.
Personal enrichment	Candidates and politicians	and	Candidates may be required to contribute significant amounts to a party's election fund and also to pay for their individual campaign. Politics then becomes a rich man's game and elected representatives accumulate necessary funds to pay for the next elections by taking a percentage on secret commissions and accepting bribes.
Demanding contributions from public sector	Political parties		A political party or candidate in need of money may accept donations from prohibited sources or spend more than the legal ceiling permits. Violations of disclosure requirements, such as inaccurate accounting or reporting, or lack of transparent funding, are often the cause of political scandals.
Activities disobeying political finance regulations	Political parties		One of the motives for political contributions to a political party or candidate is the possibility of payoffs in the shape of contracts or policy licenses and government contracts. Donations may also change be givers for a governmental policy change or legislation favourable to a specific interest group.
Forcing private sector to pay 'protection money'	Private sector		Extortion, for instance using tax and customs inspections to force entrepreneurs to hand over part of their profits to a political party.

Limiting access to funding for opposition parties	Opposition parties and candidates	Authoritarian regimes with a patrimonial economic system and political repression may seriously constrain financial resources available to opposition parties.
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Source: Adopted from Adetula (2008) and Walecki (2003)

The Legal Perspective of Campaign Financing in Nigeria

Political party funding and finance constitute an important aspect of the electoral process. The sources of funding and finance of political parties and the way and manner these funds are spent largely determine the quality and acceptability or otherwise of almost every election. Accordingly, the 1999 Constitution and the Electoral Act 2002 have made provisions, though not exhaustive, in respect of how political parties could source for and/or receive their funds. Limitations have also been placed on sourcing of funds from certain areas and on the extent to which political parties could make electoral expenses. The 1999 Constitution confers general powers on the Commission under Part I of the Third Schedule to the Constitution particularly paragraph 15(c) thereof to monitor the organization and operation of the political parties including their finances. Further down to paragraph 15(d), the Commission is also empowered to arrange for the annual examination and auditing of the funds and accounts of political parties and publish a report on such examination and audit for public information. Finances of political parties are covered by Section 225 of the Constitution while Annual Report on finances is covered by Section 226.

Section 77(a) provides for offences in respect of any political party that contravenes Section 225(3)(a) of the Constitution which deals with prohibition of holding or possessing any funds or other assets outside Nigeria by a political party. The Section also prescribes for forfeiture of the funds or asset to the Commission in addition to a fine of not more than ₦500,000.00 upon conviction in respect of contravention of Section 225(3)(a) of the Constitution. Section 77(b) prescribes forfeiture of the funds or assets to the Commission in addition to a fine of not more than ₦500,000.00 on conviction in respect of contravention of Section 225(3) (b) of the Constitution.

Implications on the Nation's Democratic Process

The way and manner political parties and their candidates went about generating funds during the previous general elections, but, specifically during the 2015 general elections raised a lot of worrisome questions. Corruption of the electioneering process was exemplified by political parties' mobilization of huge campaign funds to run campaigns - funds, which to say the least, were fraudulent. Granted that campaigns come with

reasonable cost-implications, but the commercialization of the electoral process reminiscent in the way and manner political parties and their candidates raised funds calls to question the legal and moral standing of those seeking to lead the nation (Table 2 above). The Guardian newspaper was even more forthcoming on this issue. In one of its editorials, it stated *inter alia*:

That business, interest groups and sundry individuals raised within a few hours, for instance, the billions of naira to support campaign for elective office of an individual in a clime where millions of people are unemployed, is a tragic drama. Glaringly, the donors to all parties have sent a strong message that they have only played their cards face up for selfish interests, the political target being that such donors could be key actors in the control of the nation's economic levers upon a successful run of their beneficiaries in the election.

First, there were indications that contributions from individual party members came from those who were privileged to have access to plump government offices, while the other bulk came from businessmen and contractors who enjoyed patronages from the government (Kura, 2011). Regrettably, this pattern of donation has untoward far-reaching implications for the nation's political and democratic trajectory. For instance, these donations reflect the nature and character of African politics, which elevates patron-client networks and neo-patrimonialism in an unprecedented fashion (Okpeh, 2013).

Neo-patrimonialism, according to Okpeh (2013), relates to the tendency whereby members of the ruling class patronize each other with favours (both in cash and in kind) in order to remain relevant in the power game. By this logic, an upstart in politics must first and foremost find a powerful patron (usually called godfather) from within the power elite bracket to market him to those that matter. This negotiation is usually conducted on the basis of all kinds of dubious agreements between the would-be politician and his/her patron and has nothing to do with genuinely serving the people. In the final analysis, the mandate of the electorates is abused in the interest of the patron and his allies and the political process is jeopardized (Okpeh, 2013). Isaac Asabor in Okpeh (2013) argues in the same vein that many Nigerians have witnessed how monies contributed for the purposes of political campaigns have brought the once rosy relationship between politicians and their "godfathers" to an abrupt end. Worse still, in this context, many godfathers as individuals, companies and parastatals are involved.

It is commonly held that money has the instrumental capacity to determine election results, influence the choice of the electorates, and it can also make or mar people's mandate. In fact, as Okpeh (2013) and Milyo (2008) explain, money is a strong factor in the way and manner politics is

played in Nigeria. Money has made it possible for the ruling elites to dominate the nation's politics at the detriment of the collective interest of the masses. Moreover, one of the baneful consequences of money is that it has led to the disconnection between the leadership and followership in the political process. Worse still, money has not only contributed to the enthronement and consolidation of class rule, it has truncated our political culture and created a political process devoid of idealism. The multiplier effect of these is crass opportunism, corruption, and mediocrity (Lawrence, 2003; Okpeh, 2013; Oyovbaire, 1999). According to them this system of funding noticed during the 2015 elections does not only exacerbate corruption, it also undermines transparency, accountability and responsiveness of the government to the yearnings and aspirations of the citizens.

Secondly, those who donate funds control the beneficiaries, and politicians become more accountable to their sponsors than to their constituents and this have serious implications for governance in the post-election period. It is a truism that most of the donations were made by individuals who enjoy or potentially want to enjoy patronage from the government. For instance, since these donors are not "father Christmas." they take control of governance structures as soon as elections are completed, recommend their own friends and "godsons" for plump political appointments so as to recoup their donations, and also make reasonable profit out of it. For the corporate donors, they would always look up to the government they installed for policies that would be favorable to their respective sectors, even when such policies are highly detrimental to the general well-being of the entire society. This is not only antithetical to the logic of democracy and good governance but also have the cumulous effect of entrenching massive corruption within the polity. Thirdly, the preponderance of money in the polity tends to disempower well-meaning Nigerians citizens and deny them the opportunity of using politics as an instrument of change.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework employed in this study is situated within the 'political corruption' models of analysis. This involves two theoretical models, that is, bribery model and resource allocation model. The two models are intertwined and can at best be described as the political corruption theory.

Bribery Model

Everson (2008) argues that campaign financing shares the same characteristics as bribery at the political arena. According to Gambetta

(2002) as cited in Everson (2008), political corruption exists whenever a Truster (T) and a Corrupter (C) cooperate with each other with the help of a Fiduciary (F). If one of these actors is not present, the evaluated practices cannot be described as political corruption. Gambetta's model assumes that there are interactions between three agents: the T, the F and the C. The exchange relationship among these agents is initiated when C wants certain resources that F is not supposed to deliver to him, given the conditions of his relation to T. In the standard case, no pressure is applied by F to force C to pay a bribe to F, or by C to force F to accept a bribe. T has the legitimate claim to regulate the allocation of the resources in question, whereas both F and C are excluded from its control (Gambetta, 2002 in Everson, 2008). The Gambetta model assumes that political corruption is a rent-seeking activity whereby individuals seek to redirect government policies and services for their benefit, not vice versa. Political corruption implies the use of illegal mechanisms, whereas in the case of rent-seeking, individuals turn to the law to benefit their own interests (Jain, 1998). The resource allocation model and principal-agent model have been used to explain political corruption as a rent-seeking activity (Becker, 1968 in Everson, 2008).

Resource Allocation/Political Corruption Model

The resource allocation model is based on the premise that rent-seeking activity constitutes part of the economic performance, as well as the activity of firms. This model assumes that in a competitive world regulated by the government, entrepreneurs use all their efforts in the production of goods and services. Political corruption takes place when these entrepreneurs pay money under the table to government officials to obtain licences and contracts that allow them to conduct their business. The payment (bribe) is determined by the rent available to capture political corruption.

Gambetta (2002) in Everson (2008) claims that although political corruption is a *sui generis* phenomenon, it is possible to define and identify it in terms of illegal, immoral and improper practices which are not always inefficient, hence the definition of political corruption as the "abuse of entrusted power" (Everson, 2008). This definition of political corruption avoids linking the definition to the forms that such corruption can assume. Nye (1967) has also denoted interference in electoral activity as one of the main sources of political corruption in public institutions. Thus, nepotism and vote-buying as well as bribery and embezzlement should be considered as political corruption practices because they represent different forms of the abuse of power. Nye states that:

Corruption is behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gains; or which violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private regarding influence. This includes

such behavior as bribery (use of a reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust); nepotism (bestowal of patronage by reason of descriptive relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation” (Nye, 1967, p.47 in Everson, 2008).

However, in the contemporary debate, political corruption is associated with institutional and behavioral patterns. In these new perspectives, political corruption is mainly viewed in relation to the impacts that it may have on the state and the economy and the different forms that it can assume. Everson (2008) posits that political corruption was conceived as a relational problem between sources of power, and the moral rights of rulers which include:

- (i) Illegal behaviors - Corruption implies that people in authority show dishonest or illegal behaviors;
- (ii) (ii) Improper acts - Corruption is the act or effect of making somebody change from moral to immoral standards of behavior.
- (iii) The decay of a matter - Corruption implies alteration or being changed progressively for the worse.

Everson (2008) adds that in ancient times, corruption was related to bribery, while in contemporary times the analysis has shifted towards a focus on different immoral and illegal behaviors among political leaders. In 74 BC, Marcus Tullius Cicero, a prominent Roman advocate, used the term ‘*corrumpere*’ to describe the act of paying a judge for deciding in someone’s favor. The Latin word *corrumpere* means to destroy or to break up. Gambetta (2002) claims that although political corruption is a *sui generis* phenomenon, it is possible to define and identify it in terms of illegal, immoral and improper practices. Hence political corruption is defined as the abuse of entrusted power (Everson, 2008). Everson (2008) avoids defining political corruption without linking the definition to the forms that such corruption can assume. Nye (1967) also denotes interference in electoral activity as one of the main sources of political corruption in public institutions. Thus, nepotism and vote-buying as well as bribery and embezzlement should be considered as political corruption practices because they represent different forms of the abuse of power (Adetula, 2008). Political finance and corruption are separate concepts, but when their valences overlap, the zone of political corruption emerges. But what constitutes corruption in political finance is often unclear (Walecki, 2004). He observes in general that corrupt political finance involves the improper or unlawful conduct of financial operations (often by a candidate or a party) for the profit of an individual candidate, political party or interest group.

Research Methodology

This study adopts survey research design to collect primary data from a cross-section of the target population of the state politicians (25 respondents); INEC (25 respondents); and electorates (25 respondents). The population of the study consists of all the electorate walls in the 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Taraba State, Nigeria. Through the random sampling technique, two LGAs were selected from each senatorial zone including INEC staff in the state capital. Primary data obtained through the use of questionnaire was designed on 4-point likert scale. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, regression, Pearson correlation, and chi-square for testing of hypotheses. The model for the regression is as follows: $CR = f(CC, LF, VB, UPR)$. This is mathematically expressed as:

$$CR = \beta_0 + \beta_1CC + \beta_2LF + \beta_3VB + \beta_4UPR + e, \text{ Where:}$$

CR = Corruption

CC = Cost of campaign

LF = Laws governing campaign financing

VB = Vote buying

UPR = Use of public resources for campaign purposes

Results, Findings and Discussions

The analysis of regression in terms of variables, coefficients and other values are as presented in Table 3 below. The result of the R^2 indicates that our model is a good fit. However, going by the result 68% variation in the dependent variable (corruption) during political campaign is brought about by the variation in the independent variables (cost of campaign, laws governing campaign financing, misuse of money, vote buying and the use of public resources for campaign), while the remaining 32% variation in the dependent variable is brought about by other variables captured by the disturbance term e . The result of the Durbin-Watson Test which is at 2.052 indicates that there is no linear autocorrelation in our multiple linear regression data.

Table 3: Result of Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient	P value	T-Stat
Constant	0.831	0.154	5.398
CC	0.123	0.042	2.934
LF	-0.031	0.034	0.927
VB	0.020	0.038	0.522
UPR	0.050	0.037	1.353
R^2	0.68		
Adjusted R^2	0.51		
Durbin-Watson Stat	2.052		

Source: SPSS 20 Output.

From the result of the regression equation or model, it is depicted that a 1% increase in the cost of campaign increases corruption by 12.3%, a 1% increase in the effectiveness of the laws governing campaign financing decreases corruption by 3.1%, a 1% increase in vote buying results to a 2% increase in corruption and a 1% increase in use of public resources for campaign increases corruption by 5%. More so, all the explanatory variables (cost of campaign, laws governing campaign financing, vote buying and use of public resources for campaign purposes) have positive significant effect on corruption except laws governing campaign financing which depicts negative significant effect on corruption.

Cost of Campaign and Corruption: It is clear from the above analysis that the election campaign was costly and it bred corruption. More so, candidates seeking political office are required by their political parties to contribute significant amounts, much higher than their official income, to their party's election fund and also to pay for their individual campaign. Politics becomes a rich man's game and elected representatives accumulate necessary funds to pay for the next elections by taking a percentage on secret commissions and accepting bribes. Apart from being a source of scandal and corruption, the ways in which campaign activities are financed can lead to severe inequalities. If the costs of campaigning are unaffordable, citizens without private wealth may be barred from running for public office. Moreover, election campaigns are unfair when rich candidates or parties with wealthy supporters are able to spend far more than their opponents. Placing no limitations on the amount which an individual or a corporation can contribute to a political party allows money bags the opportunity to hijack not just the party structure but to also corrupt the whole electioneering process with money, making it difficult for there to exist a level playing ground for candidates. It makes the process very expensive putting candidates in moral jeopardy of stealing public money to offset debts incurred during a very expensive electioneering process. It is a vicious cycle that perpetuates corruption and mal-governance.

Ineffective Enforcement of the Laws Governing Campaign Financing and Corruption: Money was very fundamental to the activities of any political party. Insufficient finances will cripple a political party and make them insignificant. Conversely, unlimited access to finance tends to give a party an unjust edge over other parties and turns the whole process into an auction where the highest bidder wins. Though it was not in all case that the richest political party wins, the truth is that it creates an unhealthy playing ground and has a tendency of corrupting the process and the government. The middle line is the political system where the political parties are equipped to

reasonably contest and win election, and in which money is just one of the tools and not the only means for electoral victory.

The Taraba State political landscape was saddled with the two extreme positions. While some parties can barely pay for their secretariat, others have unlimited access to funds capable of enabling them corrupt the electoral process. Many reasons have been adduced to account for this situation, chiefly amongst which is that our electoral laws are not adequate to check the excesses of the politicians. Accepted that there is room for improvement in our electoral laws, it is only a part of the problem. The greatest problem with political finance in Taraba State is that the laws in force are not implemented. Unregulated campaign financing can destroy the foundation of democracy.

The INEC did not implement the laws relating to disclosure. Nobody was questioned for retaining foreign donations. INEC did not, contrary to the provisions of the Electoral Act, place any ceiling on the amount of money any individual or corporation could donate to political parties. The toothless nature of the relevant agencies gives politicians the freedom to contravene the rules concerning party and campaign finance. The resultant effect was that the political environment was saturated with money and government, political parties and politics in general is seen as the easiest way to make money. The economic hardship in the country and the affluent lifestyle of politicians convinced the electorates that electoral process was a means to acquire wealth. Thus, manipulations and rigging of all sorts occurred. The will of the people is not reflected in the polls. So, the government, which is not elected by the people, cannot work for the people.

The misuse of money in campaigns and Corruption: Money makes the world of politics go round, but keeping it clean is not simple. Policies regulating the role of money in politics focus majorly on disclosure requirements, contribution limits, spending limits and public subsidies. Obviously, money has the active capacity to decide a lot of things: money determines who to campaign to, where to campaign and how campaigns are run; money determines elections results, influences the choice of the electorates, and it can make or mar people's mandate. However, the misuse of money, particularly when it reflects corrupt practices, creates major problems during campaigns and by extension the entire political system. The misuse of money has made it possible for the ruling elites to dominate Taraba State politics at the detriment of the collective interest of the masses. Furthermore, one of the negative consequences of money is that it has led to a disconnect between the leaders and the led in the political process at all levels of government in Taraba State in particular and Nigeria at large. Worse still, the misuse of money has not only contributed to the

enthronement and consolidation of class rule, it has truncated our political culture and created a political process devoid of ideal situations. The multiplier effect of these is gross opportunism, corruption, and mediocrity, as well as the undermining of transparency, accountability and responsiveness of the government to the needs of the masses.

Vote buying and Corruption: It is obvious from the analysis that the use of money in Taraba politics is rampant and the polity is characterized by the reckless use of money to buy votes and even conscience. The politicians in the State are ready to channel their financial and material resources to get electoral victory at the polls. A number of reasons can be adduced as being responsible for the incidence of vote-buying in Taraba. These include ignorance on the part of the electorates' apathy, and poverty as well as, deceit by the politicians. There is also attitudinal problem on the part of the people involved in both buying and selling of votes. The general attitude towards politics was such that most politicians view it as a call to investment from which huge profit is expected and not as call to serve humanity. The electorates on their part see politics, especially during election, as an opportunity to sell their votes to get their own share of the national cake since they do not have access to where the national cake is being shared. The peoples' perception is greatly reinforced by display of luxury by public office holders and flamboyant living of many politicians and so they believe that every elected or appointed public officer is amassing wealth from the public treasury. This seems to have strengthened the resolve of many voters to sell their votes to the highest bidder. The desire of politicians to strive to win elections, even at the party primary level at all cost, makes desperate contestants to engage in all sort of malpractices including offering financial and material inducements to voters. Working on the poverty of the people, politicians in the State have been known to distribute foodstuffs and other consumable materials to voters shortly before the elections and sometimes on election day, contrary to the provision of the extant electoral law that prohibits such practice.

Spending money beyond what is ordinarily required to settle legitimate campaign expenses by directly or indirectly bribing voters is definitely an electoral malpractice and the favourable electoral results emanating from that would not represent the true wishes of voters. Vote-buying has also made election results to have little or nothing to do with the performance in office of politicians. Since performance is not a critical factor in electoral outcome, the incentive to perform is very weak and because vote-buying is very effective in achieving electoral victory the resort to it is very high. Consequently, elected public office holders who spent huge sums of money to secure victory at the polls would usually have a greater propensity to

pursue their private business and financial interest and sometimes those of their corporate sponsors or mentors and financiers. The negative impact of vote-buying is that when the winner in an election occupies a public office that gives him access to public fund, he becomes more prone to corruption.

Use of public resources for campaign purposes and corruption: The use of public resources include direct or indirect expenditure of funds by a governmental body, the use of any property, resource, or equipment owned by the governmental body, and utilization of staff time during regular working hours. These resources, which are available to office holders, may be extensively used for electioneering campaign. Also, through the unauthorized channeling of public funding into controlled companies, organizations or individuals, a political party or candidate may capture state resources. The use of public resources for campaign purposes constitutes a form of indirect public subsidy. One of the ways this is done in Taraba State is by employing party supporters on government payrolls. These employees are expected to devote much of their time to political campaigning. Another way of diverting public funds into campaign comes from the resources that are being lavishly provided by the Taraba State Government to members of the Taraba State House of Assembly who commonly receive public money to employ research assistants and secretaries, but never do so. A third way is the provision of free radio and television air time to parties and their candidates. Also, a political party or candidate in need of money can impose levies on office holders, both public and elected, and may also compel civil servants to become party members and then extort kickbacks for some of its expenditure from their salaries.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has shown that campaign financing in Taraba State has been characterized by various levels of corruption, and this often puts the credibility of elections and electoral system to question. Apart from disempowering a lot of people it also raises a lot of moral issues relating to the sources of these funds. The study also indicates that, although laws exist on political parties and campaign financing since the return of democratic governance in 1999, the challenge has constantly remained that of enforcement. The 1999 constitution and other regulatory laws have explicit provisions which guide not just the funding of political parties, but clearly advocate the maximum spending limits of campaign finances for candidates for every political office. The Acts also specify the limits of contributions individuals and corporate organizations could make to a candidate. Additionally, the Acts require political parties to submit separate audited

reports of campaign expenses to INEC six months after an election. However, these provisions have constantly been contravened to the dismay of INEC by individuals, candidates and political parties. In the light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) Grants to political parties to help them with their electoral campaign should be shared equally among the parties before the elections. Withholding some part of the grant until after election defeats the aim of the grant.
- (ii) Legislators may help to ensure that campaign finance laws are workable and enforceable by exerting considerable amount of pressure on the Executive to make financial provisions to allow the enforcement of the law by relevant authorities. This is very important because quite often, new laws are accompanied with heavy administrative expenses on enforcement bodies without the same time providing the resources needed by the authority to permit it to carry out its new work.
- (iii) In addition, financial benefits transferred or accepted by a party in violation of specified prohibitions might be forfeited for the benefit of the Public Treasury. If such a benefit is spent or lost, its value may be forfeited. It is dangerous to assume that the problems of campaign financing are open to simple legislative remedies. There should be more stress on the enforcement of a few key laws such as those on disclosure, and less on the creation of an ever-expanding list of rules that cannot be enforced.
- (iv) Effective legislations should be designed to prohibit all different forms of vote-buying, direct and indirect, and associated methods of electoral bribery as this is the root of political finance-related corruption in Nigeria. Sanctions should be directed both against the party and against the individual party official or party member personally involved in the illicit transaction.

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