

Naira Redesign Policy; Implications on Vote-trading Behaviour during the 2023 National Elections

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Offer of favours, gifts and money **and acceptance** in exchange for votes during election



Offer ≠ Acceptance ≠ Reciprocity

Why does vote-trading thrive in our setting?

Many reasons, but poverty/Low socio-economic status, inefficient electoral systems and collective patrimony among others!

Collective Patrimony

Voters sometimes perceive vote-buying as a chance to claim the **citizens' share of the collective patrimony** at the only time politicians can be called to account, and a signal of a politician's wealth and ability to win elections (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007).



Why is studying vote-trading important?

**The practice erodes
participatory
democracy and
drowns the voices
of citizens**

Vote buying, insecurity and violence have been linked as some of the impediments of citizens' participation in Nigerian elections

Since 2003 citizens' participation in Nigeria's elections have declined in each succeeding election from **69.1% of registered voters in 2003** to a dismal **35% in 2019**.



The danger is.....

There is a perception of **common acceptance of vote-buying** despite the accepted immorality of it (Kramon, 2009; Bratton, 2008).

Normalization of this perception becomes reality

A major threat to the integrity of the 2023 national elections in Nigeria was the pervasiveness of vote-trading in Nigeria.



How common was vote-buying in Nigeria?

As at 2019, a UNODC Survey revealed that **1 of every 5 adult Nigerians** was personally offered money or a favour in exchange for votes. UNODC, 2019

4% for non-monetary
17% for monetary

Vote-trading and Naira Redesign/Cashless Policy

It is believed that the GoN through the CBN implemented the policy to



- I. prevent vote-trading in the 2023 elections
- II. mop up cash and combat banditry

To achieve the cashless policy, limits on Over-The-Counter (OTC) withdrawals were imposed on the daily and weekly transactions to be carried out on every bank account. The maximum OTC cash withdrawal by individuals and corporate bodies per day was capped at N20,000 and N100,000 respectively.



Commercial banks told customers they had no cash to pay them; ATM machines were dried; and POS operators were soon thrown out of business as banks starved them of cash.



How will availability of cash affect the economically vulnerable Nigerians to accept or reject vote-trading offers by politicians?

Methodology

01

Mixed Method Study

02

Intercept Survey (n=998)
15 IDIs

1 Northern State & 1 Southern State

03

Explore the policy implications and
socio-economic contexts of vote-
trading.

04

Descriptive analysis of those who were
offered monetary and non-monetary
gifts

Result

Of the 998 survey respondents



Qualitative findings highlighted naira scarcity as a major driver of vote-trading, describing **food items** as the most common non-monetary gifts offered by politicians.

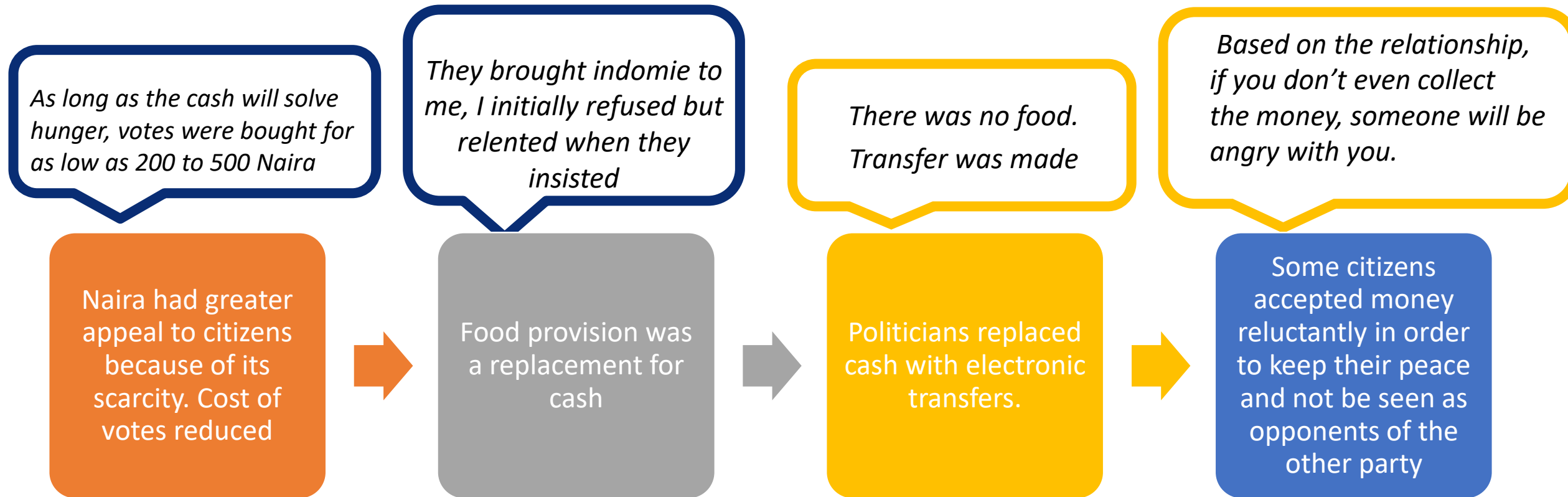
Result

Were you Offered Gifts?		Were you offered money?	
		No	Yes
No		93.8%	6.2%
Yes		63.2%	36.8%

Year	Monetary	Non-monetary
2019 (UNODC)	17%	4%
2023 (Our Study)	10%	16%

Overall, **63% (approximately 3 of every 5 electorates who were offered non-monetary gifts were not offered money**, while only 6% of those not offered non-monetary gifts were offered money) indicating a possible shift from monetary to non-monetary gifts.

Qualitative Findings: context of vote-selling and impact of naira scarcity



Policy Implications

Compared to the previous prevalence of vote-buying from the 2019 study, our findings suggest a reduction in preponderance of monetary vote-buying (17% to 10%), however, non-monetary increased from 4% to 16% .

The Naira Redesign policy seem to have reduced monetary exchange, but there exists also a political strategy to replace monetary offers with non-monetary gifts, thereby weakening the policy's effectiveness in curbing vote-trading.

Regulatory policies like the redesign policy tend to stimulate diverse adaptive and coping strategies for politicians to respond and perpetuate continuous vote-trading.

Intercept survey isn't representative enough

Construct definition and social desirability bias in measuring vote-trading

Time limitations

Thank You

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