JOURNAL OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE
ISSN Print: 2992-2763 – ISSN Online: 2992-4618 | Vol. 3, No. 3 / September, 2025
https://www.jopd.com.ng

POLITICAL CULTURE AND FINANCIAL INDUCEMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN NIGERIA

Theophilus Arebamen OKOJIE, PhD
Department of Political Science,
University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria.
E-mail: theophilus.okojie@uniben.edu
ORCID iD: 0009-0008-3965-0162

ABSTRACT
Citizen participation is a vital component of a healthy civic engagement, participatory democracy, and the consolidation of democratic governance. The political culture within any society shapes how its citizens engage in political processes and Nigeria is no exception. This paper argues that the behaviors of both citizens and political elites, influenced by limited awareness of the political system, align Nigeria with a parochial political culture. Building on this context, the study examines the relationship between political culture, financial inducements, and popular participation in Nigeria, employing the framework of parochial political culture to explain the pervasive role of monetary incentives in the political arena. In this context, parochial political culture is characterized by low political awareness, minimal citizen expectations of government, and widespread disengagement from formal political activities, which fosters transactional exchanges as the primary form of political interaction. The study utilized a qualitative method that leveraged secondary materials such as journal articles, books, grey literature, media reports and archival documents. The study explores various forms of financial transactions linked to civic engagement in Nigeria, establishing that financial inducements predominantly shape citizen participation, creating a façade appearance of genuine involvement. The paper underscores the implications of commodification of political interaction, which undermines democratic principles by reducing political processes to negotiations driven mainly by monetary interests rather than authentic civic commitment. To foster meaningful popular participation, the study advocates for enhanced active citizen engagement and the reorientation of individuals to recognize their critical roles throughout the policymaking process. Furthermore, strengthening civic education and investing in human capacity development are identified as essential strategies to alleviate poverty and diminish the commercialization of political participation, ultimately promoting a more inclusive and vibrant democratic culture in Nigeria.

Keywords: political culture, financial inducement, popular participation, clientelism, civic engagement

INTRODUCTION
Nigeria's democratic experience is characterized by its complex political culture influencing voter behavior, political participation, and civic engagement. The current citizen's participation in the political process is a simultaneous response to the nature of civic orientations and the behavior of the political elites. It plays a fundamental role in shaping democratic governance by fostering active citizen participation in political, economic and social processes. Individuals' political actions and behaviors typically mirror the prevailing political culture of their communities at any given time and location according to Magill et al., (2024), the contemporary grassroots politics in Nigeria exemplifies this phenomenon. This form of politics is often regarded as a manifestation of the broader national political culture within the Nigerian political landscape, aligning with Gabriel Almond's Political Culture theory.

The recent surge in negative and unconventional political conduct among the citizenry at the grassroots to the national level raises critical questions about the nature of civic culture for promoting popular participation and enhancing democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Despite the presence of formal established democratic institutions, Nigeria continues to grapple with political apathy, limited trust in government, and low levels of effective citizen vigilantism. A significant proportion of Nigerian citizens, when engaging in politics, now demonstrate an unusual impatience for political wealth, pleasure, leisure, and tendencies toward indolence (Akinrinde and Omitola, 2020).

These behaviors are capable of hindering the development of democratic and vigorous civic political participation. Recently, political and electoral violence, which threaten the very existence of the Nigerian state, has increasingly been perpetrated by a majority of the nation's elites (Akinrinde and Omitola, 2020). Citizen participation, as a crucial element of healthy civic growth which is a key factor in ensuring the survival and development of acceptable political behaviors appears commodified. Given the current prevalence of unconventional practices of political actors at all levels of governance, the involvement of citizens though remains vital for fostering stable and legitimate political development in Nigeria now become threatened.

While civic culture which traditionally embodies voluntary involvement in community development, political processes, and governance, the introduction of payment for participation often manifested through monetary incentives or rewards raises critical questions about motivation, inclusivity, the quality of democratic participation and the need to further more insights on the concept of political culture in a society largely with parochial orientation, dominance of commodification of the civic space and the implications on popular political participation in Nigeria. These practices undermine democratic principles by commodifying civic engagement and fostering corruption (Aiyede, 2010; Ibeanu 2006).

Concept of Financial Inducement, Popular Participation and Political Culture as a Theoretical Strand

Financial Inducement

Financial inducement refers to an incentive or reward, often monetary, offered to influence a person's behavior or decisions, especially in financial contexts. It may involve a sum of money, commission, fees, or other financial benefits given to persuade someone to take a particular action. Political financial inducement is therefore a practice where political actors use financial incentives, rewards, or material benefits to influence behavior, decisions, or allegiance within the political process. These inducements can take various forms, including direct cash payments, distributing goods, promises of jobs, or offering lucrative contracts aimed at voters, politicians, or other key stakeholders. This tactic is especially common during elections or instances of party defections.

The concept is particularly prominent in political environments where economic disparities and institutional weaknesses create opportunities for such transactions. It manifest as clientelism, a system of personalized exchanges between political patrons and clients, where tangible benefits are given in return for political loyalty or support. This dynamic can lead to an asymmetry of power between the affluent political actors and economically disadvantaged voters, resulting in a dependency that binds the latter to the former (Ibeanu, 2006.b).

Political financial inducement plays a significant role in campaign financing by enabling candidates to communicate, mobilize supporters, and enhance their competitiveness. However, it raises ethical and democratic concerns, as it can undermine the integrity of the

electoral process, breeding corruption, weakening accountability, and fostering a culture of vote-buying rather than policy-based support. In practice, inducements include targeted distribution of goods like food staples, cash transfers in economically distressed areas, promises of jobs or contracts, and leveraging local leaders to ensure effective dissemination of benefits. These tactics often sway voter decisions towards immediate gratification rather than long-term policy considerations.

Furthermore, political financial inducement interfaces with broader challenges in political finance, such as opaque funding sources, misuse of state resources, and weak regulatory enforcement, which collectively affect transparency and democratic governance. While financial contributions are essential for political competition, the misuse or manipulation of such funds through inducement practices threatens democratic principles and public trust in political institutions. Thus, political financial inducement is a complex phenomenon blending financial support with political strategy, reflecting and reinforcing socio-political inequalities and institutional vulnerabilities within electoral systems. It calls for strong regulatory frameworks and vigilant enforcement to ensure transparent and fair political finance practices that uphold democratic values.

Payments to induce citizens to participate in the political process often referred to in the literature as clientelism, has a long-standing history in electoral politics. The practice of using electoral incentives to secure votes has been commonly observed during election campaigns in both developing and developed countries (Ndema, 2025). Existing literatures show the prevalence in the Roman Republic as well as in Britain and the United States during earlier periods (Yakobson, 1995; O'Leary, 1962 and Schaffer, 2007) explicitly cited in Baidoo, Dankwa and Eshun (2018). Hicken, Leider, Ravanilla, and Yang (2017: 9) cited in Baidoo, Dankwa and Eshun, (2018) in their field experiment in the Philippines rendered account of one of the mechanics of financial inducement of voters below: "Typically, each voter in a household will be offered a packet with their name on it, and campaigns track who accepted and who did not. Candidates may also engage in a second round of vote buying if they learn that a challenger is offering more money than they are. Campaigns seek to ensure that voters clearly associate the gift with their candidate. For example, the candidate's flyer may be stapled to packages of food handed out to voters or cash may be attached to flyer or letter from the candidate. Most commonly, candidates distribute money attached to a sample ballot, and encourage voters to take the ballots with them to the polls as a guide. The sample ballot includes not just the candidate's name, but also allied candidates from other races up and down the ticket."

The purchase of political support through financial inducement manifests in various forms, such as offering employment opportunities before elections, distributing gifts, providing last-minute social infrastructure to communities, and making conditional promises to individuals upon a candidate's election. These inducements may also be employed as strategies to demobilize active opponents or mobilize passive supporters. The former is often described as "negative" vote buying or "abstention buying," while the latter is known as "participation buying." Both approaches aim either to discourage certain electorates from voting or to ensure high voter turnout (Baidoo, Dankwa and Eshun, 2018). During the distribution of these "goodies" or "freebies," political parties and politicians focus on two main considerations. One major factor is the type of voter being targeted. Cox and McCubbins (1986) identify three types of voters: core supporters, swing voters, and opposition backers. In every electoral system, these groups form the primary targets of vote-buying strategies. According to Schaffer and Schedler (2005), the main objective is to influence either the electoral choices or the participation of prospective voters, persuading them to vote in specific ways or, in some cases, not to vote at all.

Popular Participation

Popular or political participation is a fundamental aspect of democratic governance, encompassing various forms of engagement by citizens in political processes. Financial inducement is widely criticized for eroding accountability, transparency, and genuine democratic competition. If unchecked, it can promote corruption, weaken political opposition, and prioritize short-term personal or party benefits over the public good. Popular participation refers to the active involvement of citizens in the governance and decision-making processes of their country or community. It embodies the principle that those affected by political, social, and economic decisions have the right and responsibility to engage in shaping those decisions (Ibeanu, 2006.a).

Popular participation ensures that public opinions and inputs are given full consideration in government affairs, making governance more inclusive and democratic. The core idea behind popular participation is that governance should be people-centered, involving citizens regardless of their social status, education, or wealth. This participation enhances political stability, encourages government transparency, fosters public confidence, and legitimizes the authority of the government. It also enables citizens to contribute meaningfully to managing national resources and addressing socio-economic issues (Ojo, 2014).

For popular participation to be effective, it often requires political education, access to information, organizational structures, and sometimes legal and policy frameworks that enable citizens to take part meaningfully. Governments may promote popular participation by supporting civic education, creating platforms for dialogue, and encouraging citizen activism. Popular participation is a fundamental democratic principle that empowers individuals and communities to influence how their societies are run and how public resources are used, leading to more accountable and responsive governance (Collier, 2009; Clarke, 2013; Huntington and Nelson, 1976).

Political culture: The concept of Political Culture as postulated by Huntington and Nelson, (1976) is the constellation of attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors that influence citizens' engagement with their political system and participation in civic activities within a society. It encompasses the norms, traditions, and informal rules that direct political conduct and involvement, reflecting individuals' relationships with governmental authority and their roles within the political process. This concept gained prominence through the work of Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba in their 1963 publication, The Civic Culture, which examined political attitudes across five nations exhibiting a balanced mix of three distinct political culture types (Huntington and Nelson, 1976).

The first type, parochial political culture, is characterized by citizens' limited awareness or involvement in politics, often concentrating on local or familial issues. The second, subject political culture, involves citizens who are cognizant of the political system and its outputs but remain passive, accepting governmental decisions without active participation. The third, participant political culture, features individuals who are actively engaged in shaping legislation and policies, demonstrating high levels of political awareness and involvement. Ideally, civic culture integrates these various types to cultivate a stable democracy where citizens are sufficiently engaged to influence governmental actions while also exhibiting a willingness to accept authoritative decisions, thereby maintaining equilibrium between popular control and effective governance. Its defining features include the acceptance of state authority coupled with a sense of civic duty and participation, national pride in the political system, expectations of equitable treatment by the government, openness to discussing political issues freely, tolerance of opposition and diverse viewpoints, active participation in local governance, political parties, and civic organizations. Also, confidence in one's political

competence and a sense of civic cooperation and trust among citizens are considered essential characteristics (Almond and Verba, 1963; Magill et al., 2024; Kavanagh, 2024).

Parochial political culture is therefore a theoretical strand in this paper to explain the dominance of financial inducement and citizens' popular participation in Nigeria. Parochial political culture as explained earlier is characterized by limited awareness of the political system among citizens, minimal expectations from government, and a general detachment from formal political engagement. In Nigeria, this parochial strand manifests as a localized, inward-looking orientation where citizens often view politics as distant or irrelevant to their immediate lives, leading to low engagement in democratic processes and worsening the intractable challenges of political apathy, limited participation, and the problematic practice of payment or financial inducements for participation (Nwankwo, 2018). According to Anazodo, Agbionu and Ezenwile, (2012) the dominant type of political culture is the parochial political culture, characterized by citizens' limited awareness of governmental responsibilities and minimal expectations from the state. This lack of engagement enables leaders to loot the treasury and formulate policies that serve their own interests. Through the process of political socialization, the masses have internalized norms of deference to authority, making them reluctant to challenge or criticize those in power the passive culture of engagement in the political process results in a lack of political literacy, mistrust in government, and the acceptance of normalization of political marginalization (Kavanagh, 2024). Political office holders therefore demand to be treated as untouchable figures, even when underperforming. As a result, if an incumbent leader behaves similarly to previous corrupt or ineffective leaders; many citizens accept it as normal and refrain from demanding change (Docherty, Goodlad and Paddison, 2001). This environment allows leaders to exploit institutional weaknesses, engaging in grand corruptin and amassing wealth which then becomes a strategic tool in the hands of political elites for inducement or incentives to secure the participation of their constituents which they use to secure regime protection and remain in power thereby undermining the aspirations for democratic consolidation in Nigeria (Uroko, Anenechukwu and Okoli, 2025).

Parochial political culture profoundly shapes social action in Nigeria and determines the direction of its political development (Onwutuebe, 2024). This is especially apparent when Nigeria is compared to countries like the United States and Britain, where participant and subject political cultures prevail, respectively. For example, in cases of contract-related bribery involving Nigerian leaders and multinational companies, those implicated in the United States have been prosecuted, while in Nigeria, individuals named in similar scandals have neither been interrogated nor brought to justice. Anti-graft agencies such as the EFCC and ICPC have often ignored these serious offenses, primarily due to the influential status of those involved. Meanwhile, Nigerian citizens have displayed 'I don't care posture' towards the scandals, failing to demand accountability or ask questions about the corrupt dealings. As noted by Anazodo, Agbionu, and Ezenwile (2012) some individuals involved in these scams continue to organize political campaigns and rallies during each election cycle for political representations.

Exploring Categories of Payments for Political Participation in Nigeria

Political participation in Nigeria is a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses a wide range of activities, from voting in elections to engaging in protests, rallies, and other forms of civic engagement. Historically, Nigeria's political landscape has been characterized by vibrant democratic processes, yet it has also been marred by challenges such as electoral malpractices, political patronage, and corruption (Onwutuebe, 2024). Citizens actively participate in politics not only through formal mechanisms like voting but also via informal channels that influence political outcomes and power dynamics. These activities are often

influenced by socio-economic factors, cultural norms, and the prevailing political environment, which collectively shape the ways in which Nigerians engage with their political system. Despite the constitutional guarantees for democratic participation, the reality on the ground reveals a complex interplay of incentives and pressures that drive political involvement (Akinrinde and Omitola, 2020). Payment for various forms of participation has become an embedded aspect of Nigeria's political culture, often blurring the lines between genuine civic engagement and transactional exchanges. These financial transactions often undermine the integrity of electoral processes and distort democratic choices, leading to leadership that may lack genuine popular support. Ultimately, a comprehensive understanding of these payment categories is essential for developing effective strategies to curb unethical practices and foster a more genuine and participatory democratic process in Nigeria.

Payment for Votes during General Elections

Vote buying in Nigeria refers to the practice where political actors offer material incentives such as money, goods, or services to voters in exchange for their electoral support. This practice is not limited to the developing world but also a dilemma in the developed clime, the common practice in the United States of transporting voters to polling stations on Election Day is still viewed as a form of paying people to vote, despite authorities asserting that it does not violate federal law. Both busing voters to polling locations and employers providing paid time off for voting can be regarded as types of payment for votes (Sønderholm and Mainz, 2023; Bahamonde, 2022). This clandestine activity often occurs during campaigns or on Election Day, aiming to sway voters' choices through direct transactions. Mechanisms include pre-election payments, distributing cash or gifts at polling stations, or promising future benefits contingent upon voting for a particular candidate. These transactions undermine the voluntary nature of voting, distort electoral outcomes, and erode the democratic process by prioritizing monetary influence over genuine political preference. The prevalence of vote buying significantly compromises the integrity of elections in Nigeria. It fosters an environment where electoral outcomes are determined by financial inducements rather than the voters' true preferences or policy considerations. This practice diminishes public trust in electoral institutions, encourages corruption, and perpetuates a cycle of political patronage. Moreover, it marginalizes candidates and parties that rely on legitimate campaigning, skewing political competition and undermining the principles of fairness and transparency essential for credible elections. Ultimately, vote buying weakens democratic legitimacy and hampers efforts toward good governance (Ndema, 2025).

Payment for Party Delegates Support

In the Nigerian political landscape, party delegates serve as pivotal actors during internal party processes, particularly in primaries and candidate selection. Delegates are often entrusted with the responsibility of choosing party candidates for various electoral positions, thereby influencing the party's direction and electoral prospects. Their support can determine the success of candidates and, consequently, the party's overall performance in general elections. Given their strategic importance, delegates are frequently targeted for financial incentives to secure their allegiance and support, which can significantly sway internal party dynamics and candidate nominations (Okojie, Semiu and Edosomwan, 2024).

Compensation for delegates' support in Nigeria manifests through various methods, primarily involving direct monetary payments, gifts, or other material benefits. Cash payments are the most prevalent, often delivered discreetly to influence delegates' voting decisions during primaries or conventions. In some cases, delegates receive non-monetary incentives such as employment opportunities, business favors, or access to resources that can enhance their social or economic standing. These payments are typically negotiated beforehand and are

sometimes concealed within broader campaign expenses. The practice underscores a transactional approach to delegate support, where financial incentives are used to secure loyalty and ensure the desired outcome in candidate selection processes (Adekola and Nurudeen, 2025).

The practice of paying delegates for support has profound implications for party cohesion and democratic integrity within Nigerian political parties. On one hand, it can lead to increased factionalism, as different groups vie for control over delegate support through financial means, fostering internal conflicts. It may also undermine the legitimacy of candidate selection processes, as decisions are perceived to be influenced more by monetary incentives than genuine political support or merit. Furthermore, reliance on such payments can perpetuate a culture of corruption, eroding public trust in political institutions. Over time, this transactional approach can distort party dynamics, prioritize financial influence over ideological commitment, and hinder the development of transparent and democratic party systems (Okojie, Semiu and Edosomwan, 2024).

Financial incentives and vote buying were blatantly apparent during the candidate nomination processes within the PDP and APC for the 2023 General Elections (Adekola and Nurudeen, 2025). This trend was particularly evident also at the APC's three-day presidential primary in Lagos ahead of the 2015 general elections Nwagwu, *et al*. (2022). A total of 7,214 delegates attended, with reports alleging that each delegate received $5,000 from the two leading aspirants $2,000 from Atiku Abubakar's camp, and $3,000 from Muhammadu Buhari's camp. Based on these figures, Atiku's group may have expended over $14,428,000, while Buhari's group potentially spent $21,642,000 solely on securing delegates' votes, not including expenses for accommodation, meals, or transportation during the primaries. Ultimately, the process became a contest won by the highest bidder. In contrast, the People's Democratic Party reportedly used state resources to support President Goodluck Jonathan's unopposed bid for its presidential ticket. Moreover, campaign visits to northern and southern monarchs, allegedly involving substantial undisclosed sums, are all evidence of payments for votes, or votes commodifications Owete, (2014) cited in Nwagwu, *et al*. (2022).

Payment for Mobilization of Political Rally Attendees

Political rallies are public activities or events organized by aspirants, candidates, political parties, etc., as a means of canvassing for votes by publicly projecting to the public their ideas, programs, and policies to influence the opinion and decision of the electorate in their favor during elections (Dakuku, 2023). Political rallies offer huge benefits to political elites in the following areas. Firstly, rallies help parties build momentum and boost voter turnout. They also allow party leaders to assess the performance of units and ward canvassers, enabling them to allocate rewards or sanctions based on each individual's effectiveness in mobilizing voters. Additionally, rallies serve as a platform for party brokers to demonstrate their capacity to deliver votes, which can lead to career advancement within the party. Furthermore, rallies provide leaders with data on voters' reactions to material incentives by observing their attendance or absence. Lastly, rallies give the opposition valuable information about the electoral strength or weaknesses of clientelistic parties, as the number of attendees publicly reveals their voter mobilization capabilities (Szwarcberg, 2014).

Political actors employ a variety of strategies to mobilize attendees for rallies, often leveraging financial incentives to ensure high turnout (Inobemhe, et al, 2025). These strategies include direct monetary payments, provision of transportation allowances, and offering food and beverages at rally sites. Campaign organizers may also utilize community leaders and local influencers to encourage participation, sometimes promising financial rewards or other material benefits to their followers Sulaiman, Ajiteru and Abalaka, 2025).

Additionally, the use of targeted messaging that emphasizes the importance of rally attendance for political success helps galvanize supporters. The combination of these tactics aims to maximize attendance, thereby projecting strength and legitimacy during electoral campaigns or political events.

Financial incentives constitute a significant component of rally mobilization in Nigeria. Politicians and their agents often provide cash payments or in-kind benefits such as food, drinks, or transportation allowances to attendees. These incentives serve multiple purposes: they motivate supporters to attend rallies, compensate for time and effort, and foster loyalty. In some cases, payments are distributed on the day of the event, while in others; supporters may receive advance promises of future benefits. The practice of offering financial incentives not only boosts rally attendance but also creates a transactional relationship between politicians and their supporters, which can influence voting behavior and political allegiance (Dakuku, 2023). This parochial practice of political engagement in Nigeria has made ill-informed voters to assume that a candidate or party that provides food or money during rallies to be measurable indices to accessing how generous candidate or party will be when elected. They frown at any candidate or party not providing immediate food or cash and label them tight-fisted , anti-poor and, therefore may not be generous in providing for them the dividends of governance defined within the concept of parochial culture when elected according to (Dakuku, 2023).

The reliance on monetary incentives to mobilize rally attendees has complex implications for public engagement and perception. On one hand, it can lead to inflated attendance figures that may not accurately reflect genuine grassroots support, thereby distorting perceptions of political strength. This transactional approach can also diminish the authenticity of political participation, reducing it to a mere exchange of money rather than ideological commitment. Moreover, such practices may foster cynicism among the electorate, undermining trust in political processes and institutions. Over time, the normalization of financial incentives for rally attendance will worsen the culture of vote-buying and clientelism, complicating efforts to promote genuine civic engagement and democratic accountability in Nigeria. The sad reality of payment to rally attendees in Nigeria according to findings is that majority of the rented crowd do not vote for the candidates, they attended their rallies, they sell their votes for the highest bidder during the general elections even for candidates and parties they did not participate in their rallies (Dakuku, 2023).

Payment for Journalists or Brown Envelope Syndrome

The concept "Brown Envelope Syndrome" refers to the pervasive practice of offering monetary or material incentives often concealed within brown envelopes to journalists in Nigeria to influence their reporting and editorial decisions (Obasi, 2024). This phenomenon undermines the integrity of the media by compromising journalistic independence and objectivity. Journalists may accept these envelopes to sway coverage in favor of certain political actors, parties, or agendas, thereby distorting the dissemination of communication flows in the political system. The syndrome is deeply rooted in the parochial culture and corruption that characterizes Nigerian politics, making it a huge challenge to fostering a free and fair press in the nation’s aspirations to robust civic culture.

The infiltration of brown envelope practices continuously impacts media coverage, often leading to biased reporting that favors those who provide financial incentives. Such influence can skew public perception by amplifying certain narratives while suppressing dissenting voices or unfavorable stories. Consequently, the electorate's ability to make informed decisions is compromised, as media outlets may serve as tools for political manipulation rather than independent watchdogs. This distortion of information perpetuates a cycle where

public opinion is shaped more by financial influence than by factual reporting, thereby undermining democratic processes (Abubakar, Zubair and Olaosebikan, 2024).

The acceptance of payments by journalists raises profound ethical concerns. It breaches the fundamental principles of journalistic integrity, including fairness, accuracy, and independence. When journalists accept brown envelopes, they risk losing public trust and credibility, which are vital for a healthy democracy. Moreover, this practice fosters a culture of corruption within the media industry, making it difficult to combat misinformation and bias. The challenge lies in enforcing ethical standards and promoting a media environment where reporting is driven by truth and public interest rather than financial inducements (Chukwu, 2022). Addressing the syndrome requires concerted efforts from media regulatory bodies, journalists' associations, and civil society to uphold ethical journalism and curb the influence of illicit payments.

Payments for Courtesy Visit Attendees

Payments for courtesy visit attendees typically involve financial incentives or tokens of appreciation extended to individuals or groups who participate in these visits. Such arrangements may include direct monetary gifts, allowances, or other material benefits intended to cover expenses or serve as a gesture of goodwill. In some cases, these payments are formalized through agreements or informal understandings, often reflecting the underlying political culture where financial support is used to secure loyalty and reinforce alliances. The scale and nature of these payments can vary depending on the significance of the visit, the status of attendees, and the political context (Isiaq, 2021). Financial incentives provided during courtesy visits can significantly influence political relationships by strengthening bonds between politicians and their supporters or allies. These payments can serve as tangible recognition of loyalty, encouraging continued support and cooperation. However, they also raise concerns about the commodification of political relationships, where loyalty is driven by monetary gain rather than ideological alignment or genuine commitment. Such practices may undermine the integrity of political interactions, foster dependency, and contribute to a cycle of transactional politics, ultimately affecting the quality and sustainability of political relationships in Nigeria (Onyenweaku, 2023).

Payments for Participation in Protests

Financial incentives play a significant role in motivating individuals and groups to participate in protests and counter protests. These incentives may include direct payments, stipends, or material benefits provided to protesters to ensure high turnout and sustained engagement. Such payments are often coordinated by political actors or interest groups seeking to amplify their message or undermine opposition. The promise of monetary gain can lower the barriers to participation, especially among economically vulnerable populations, thereby increasing the scale and intensity of protests as rendered by Oyebode, (2022:122) below that:

> Most of the protests in Nigeria are usually hijacked by opposition elements to push their own political or parochial ethnic agendas in an attempt to discredit government or wrest power. This postulation became obvious in the #EndSARS protest in 2020 as opposition parties and secessionist promoters gave financial and material supports for the elongation of the protest

Corroborating the assertions above, This Daylive (2024) opined that the EndSARS protest, which initially began as a peaceful demonstration in some states and the Federal Capital Territory, was hijacked by paid elements that infiltrated the movement and orchestrated violent activities, resulting in the destruction of lives and properties (Ugbudu, 2025). There was a report of incidents of arson, vandalism, looting, and clashes with law enforcement

agents in multiple cities. Tragically, these events led to the loss of innocent lives and extensive property damage. Meanwhile, political entrepreneurs exploited the situation by using paid protesters to push their agenda, demanding regime change either through a military takeover or the resignation of the incumbent Nigerian president (Ugbudu, 2025).

The reliance on financial incentives for protest participation has complex implications for political activism in Nigeria. On one hand, it can lead to increased political engagement and visibility for certain causes; on the other hand, it risks undermining the integrity and legitimacy of protests. When activism becomes primarily driven by monetary gain, it may diminish genuine civic participation and critical engagement with political issues (Oyebode, 2022). Furthermore, the use of payments can foster a culture of dependency, where activists and protesters expect financial rewards rather than intrinsic motivation to advocate for change. This dynamic can distort democratic processes, erode public trust, and perpetuate a cycle where political activism is commodified rather than rooted in genuine civic concern (Omoyeni,. et al, 2024).

Implications of Parochial Culture and Financial Inducement for Popular Political Participation in Nigeria

The parochial culture of deepening normalization of financial inducement has significant implications for popular participation in the country's political process. These practices signal a deep moral decline among politicians and reflect widespread rent-seeking behaviors among political actors and voters alike. The routine acceptance and distribution of cash to secure votes have become standard practice that shape political behavior of the political elites and the citizens. The Nigerian Political Science Association's 2007 communiqué according to (Adetula, 2008) underscores the formidable influence of money in politics, noting how powerful figures called the 'godfathers,' wealthy elites, incumbents and the party brokers often employ security forces to intimidate voters and manipulate elections. Such abnormally narrow the political space by placing a premium on financial resources as a gatekeeper to political participation. Exorbitant nomination fees, for instance, systematically exclude all the less resourceful competent aspirants out of electoral contest. While the wealthy or well-connected now see contesting elective positions as their exclusive preserves. These practices undermine democratic principles by commodifying civic engagement and fostering corruption (Aiyede, 2010;Ibeanu 2006).

Also, the monetization of politics disproportionately affects the inclusion of women and youth demographics which typically lack access to substantial financial means, thereby limiting their ability to participate meaningfully in the political process. The result is an environment where monetary power overshadows genuine democratic engagement, with political entrepreneurs openly funding candidates and orchestrating electoral victories. Consequently, the pervasive use of financial inducement in Nigeria's political system undermines popular participation by creating barriers to free entry and fostering voter manipulation. The dominance of financial inducement has transformed political participation into a marketplace characterized by transactional exchanges of civic values where individuals and groups engage as willing sellers and buyers, with their interactions ultimately determining the outcomes of civic engagement within society. This commodification of political interactions undermines the intrinsic democratic principles of collective responsibility and common good, reducing political processes to negotiations driven primarily by financial incentives rather than genuine civic commitment. Consequently, the engagement of citizens becomes contingent upon material exchange, limiting the authentic expression of political will and weakening the foundation of participatory democracy (Nebeife, Izang and Okoli, 2021).

It therefore erodes the integrity and fairness of elections and perpetuates inequality in political representation, thereby weakening the democratic process and public trust in governance. This political culture of financial inducement fosters the worsening practice of elected representatives focusing mainly on corruptly amassing wealth in office to enrich party leaders and also dispense to supporters for regime protection and re-election while transparency and accountability take back seat in governance

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the intricate relationship between political culture, financial inducement, and popular participation continues to shape governance challenges in Nigeria. The dominant use of financial incentives by political actors undermines genuine citizen engagement, fostering a false sense of participation and deepening fault lines that hinder the nation's aspirations for robust civic culture in Nigeria. This situation is further complicated by parochial loyalties and the commercialization of civic involvement, which erode democratic ethos. To promote genuine popular participation, there is need to place emphases on active citizen engagement and reorient individuals to appreciate their roles throughout the policymaking process. Finally, strengthening civic education and investing in human capacity development are crucial strategies to combat poverty and reduce the commodification of political participation, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and vibrant democratic culture in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

Abubakar., H, Zubair, T.J and Olaosebikan, I.E. (2024). Examination of the Prevalence, Reasons for Brown Envelope Syndrome Among Journalists in Kwara State, Nigeria.*KWASU Journal of Information, Communication and Technology*. Vol. 3(1), 97-107

Adekola, A. A., & Nurudeen, S. L. (2025). Presidential Nomination Process for Nigeria's 2023 Election: A Study of PDP and APC. *Dauliyah: Journal of Islam and International Affairs*, *10*(2), 121-147.

Aiyede, E. R. (2010). Political parties and the challenge of democratic governance in Nigeria. African Journal of Political Science, 5(1), 1-20.

Akinrinde, O. O., & Omitola, B. (2020). The Nigerian Political Culture and Youths' Participation in Grassroots Politics: A Theoretical Discourse. Available at https://www. researchgate. net/publication/340629134_The_Nigerian_Political_Culture _and_Youths' Participation_in_Grassroots_Politics_A_Theoretical_Discourse. (Retrieved on 10/07/2025).

Almond, G and Verba. S. (1995). The Civil Culture. Boston: little brown and company

Almond, G. A., & Verba, S. (1963). The civic culture: Political attitudes and democracy in five nations. Princeton University Press.

Anazodo, R., Agbionu, T. U., & Ezenwile, U. (2012). Parochial political culture: The bane of Nigeria development. *Review of Public Administration and Management*, *1*(2), 1-12.

Chukwu, O. J. (2022). Assessing Entertainment Given to Journalists Covering Events in Nigeria, Through the Prism of Ethical Consideration. *Journal of Education and Sociology*, *1*(1), 1-7.

Clarke, J. (2013). In search of ordinary people: the problematic politics of popular participation. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, *6*(2), 208-226.

Collier, R. B. (2009). *Reorganizing popular politics: participation and the new interest regime in Latin America*. Penn State Press.

Cox, G. W., & McCubbins, M. D. (1986). Electoral Politics as a Redistributive Game. The Journal of Politics, 48(2), 370-389.

Huntington, S. P., & Nelson, J. M. (1976). *No easy choice: Political participation in developing countries*. Harvard University Press.

Ibeanu, O. (2006). Civic engagement and political participation in Nigeria: A review of the literature. In A. O. Adebayo (Ed.), Democracy and development in Nigeria: A critical perspective (pp. 45-67). University of Lagos Press.

Ibeanu, O. (2006). The politics of patronage in Nigeria: A critical analysis. Nigerian Journal of Political Science, 3(2), 45-60.

Inobemhe, K., Okezie, W. I., Saint UDEH, N. T., Garba, S., Modeyin, O. E., & Usman, M. (2025). Issues in Political Campaigns during Nigeria's 2023 Presidential Election. *Social Sciences and Education Research Review*, *12*(1), 322-329.

Kavanagh, D. (2024). *Political science and political behaviour*. Routledge.

Magill, K. R., Scholten, N., Blevins, B., & Smith, V. D. (2024). The importance of civic culture: Toward intellectual solidarity and community agency. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, *19*(1), 139-161.

Ndema, S. C. (2025). THE DYNAMICS OF ELECTION IN NIGERIA AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA COMPARED. *International Journal of Diplomatic, Legal & International Studies*, *10*(6), 9-39.

Nebeife, C. J., Izang, M. A., & Okoli, A. C. (2021). Political culture and Nigeria's democratic experience in the Fourth Republic. *Central European Journal of Politics*, *7*(1), 30-45.

Nwankwo, C. (2017). Vote buying and the erosion of civic culture in Nigeria: A critical analysis. Journal of African Political Economy, 12(3), 123-145.

Nwankwo, C. (2018). Political orientation and electoral behavior in Nigeria: A study of the 2015 general elections. Journal of African Elections, 17(1), 45-67.

Obasi, H. U. (2024). Influence of Gratification on Political Reporting in Nigeria,(A Case Study of Magic Fm, Aba, Abia State, Nigeria). *British Journal of Mass Communication and Media Research*, *4*(2), 50-66.

Ojo, E. (2014). The impact of economic factors on political participation in Nigeria. International Journal of Politics and Good Governance, 5(5), 1-15.

Okojie TA, Semiu IO & Edosomwan SI (2024). Monetization of Party Primaries and Political Participation: Implications for Youths in Nigeria. *LAPAI Journal of Management and Social Sciences* Vol. 16 (2):229-242

Omoyeni, T. J., Omoyeni, S. O., Onuoha, A. U., Olabamiji, A. A., Abe, V. O., & Akinlade, R. B. (2024). State responses and management of public protests in Nigeria: A study of end SARS and end hunger protests in Lagos State. *LWATI: A Journal of Contemporary Research*, *21*(4), 39-65.

Onwutuebe, C. J. (2024). Military culture and political leadership in Nigeria's democracy. *African Identities*, *22*(3), 599-619.

Oyebode, M. O. (2022). Violent protests in Nigeria: Causes, dynamics and viable solutions. *KIU Journal of Humanities*, *7*(2), 117-128.

Putnam, R. D. (1993). Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy. Princeton University Press.

Smith, J. (2018). Financial inducement and political participation in Nigeria: An empirical study. Nigerian Journal of Political Science, 10(2), 89-102.

Sulaiman, T. H., Ajiteru, S. A. R., & Abalaka, J. N. (2025). 2019 Nigerian General Elections Were Extremely Expensive. *Cultural Mosaic: Journal of Social Diversity and Inclusion*, *2*(1), 1-19.

Ugbudu, M. (2025). Leadership and hegemonic control in Nigeria: An examination of the end-bad-governance protests. *British Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, *2*(4), 16-30.

Uroko, F. C., Anenechukwu, S. N., & Okoli, A. B. (2025). The strategic use of ethnic and religious identity in Nigerian elections by the two dominant political parties. *African Identities*, *23*(3), 549-567.

Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., & Brady, H. E. (1995). Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics. Harvard University Press.

Williams, T. (2020). Civic culture and democratic governance in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. African Journal of Political Studies, 15 (1), 34-56

Yusuf, A. (2019). The role of money in Nigerian politics: A historical perspective. Nigerian Journal of Political History, 12(1), 23-39.Civic culture, community and citizen participation in contrasting neighbourhoods. *Urban studies*, *38*(12), 2225-2250.