



Zainul Abideen Jibril
Department of Political Science,
Adamawa State University, Mubi
+2347067998881
zajibril@hotmail.co.uk

Abubakar Umar Bello
Department of International Relation
and Strategic Studies,
Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola
+2348036324835
muninga2010@gmail.com

Abubakar Abdullahi
Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola
+2348164734734768
abdullahiabk675@gmail.com

EFFECTS OF POVERTY AND CORRUPTION ON VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN THE 2023 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION IN ADAMAWA STATE

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of poverty and corruption on voting behavior in the 2023 Gubernatorial Election in Adamawa State. Poverty and corruption are pervasive issues in Adamawa State and Nigeria at large, significantly impacting political engagement and electoral outcomes. The research adopts mixed-methods approach. The findings indicate that poverty influences voter decisions, often leading to vote-buying and other forms of electoral manipulation. Corruption further exacerbates this issue by undermining the integrity of the electoral process, fostering a climate of distrust among voters. The study reveals that voters in Adamawa State are more likely to be swayed by immediate financial incentives rather than long-term policy considerations, highlighting the critical role of economic hardship in shaping political behavior. Additionally, the research emphasizes the detrimental impact of corrupt practices among political actors, which erodes democratic principles and hinders fair competition. These findings have significant implications for policymakers, election monitors, and political parties, emphasizing the need for comprehensive anti-poverty and anti-corruption strategies to ensure a more transparent and equitable electoral process. The study recommends the implementation of stringent measures to curb electoral corruption, the promotion of voter education programs, and the development of policies aimed at alleviating poverty to foster a more informed and independent electorate.

Keyword: Poverty, Voting, behavior, Corruption, Voter, decisions, financial incentives, Political behavior, Corrupt practices, Political parties

1.1 Background of the Study

The nature of political backgrounds and the interaction of socio-economic factors with democratic participation are fundamental elements that significantly influence the electoral processes. These processes, in turn, have a direct impact on the quality of governance and the stability of a nation's democracy. This study intends to explore a dynamic relationship between poverty, corruption, and political engagement within the region, aiming to uncover the profound implications they have on the democratic framework. This framework is characterized by peaceful elections but marred by malpractices and violence during the collation of result and declaration stages.

***Corresponding author:**
Zainul Abideen Jibril
Department of Political Science,
Adamawa State University, Mubi
+2347067998881
zajibril@hotmail.co.uk

By dissecting these interconnected factors, we can have a clear knowledge on the challenges face by citizens and policymakers in their efforts to establish a robust and inclusive electoral system in the midst of societal realities.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the period from 1999 to 2024 in Nigeria saw various administrations attempting to tackle significant economic challenges and pervasive poverty. During President Obasanjo's administration (1999-2007), the poverty rate fluctuated between 65-70% due to structural adjustment programs and debt servicing obligations, which affected social spending. Economic reforms from 2004-2007 slightly reduced the poverty rate to around 60%. Under President Yar'Adua (2007-2010), the focus on infrastructure and education showed minimal impact on poverty, which remained around 54-57%. President Jonathan's administration (2010-2015) saw new social safety net programs, resulting in a slight decrease in poverty rates to 45-50%. However, despite GDP growth, issues like inequality and corruption kept poverty rates high. President Buhari's term (2015-2023) faced an economic recession and insecurity, pushing poverty rates up to 62-65%. Although some recovery and reforms occurred post-pandemic (2021-2024), poverty reduction was slow, with current rates around 35-40%.

In Adamawa State, the poverty trends mirrored national patterns. During Obasanjo's term, the poverty rate fluctuated around 70%, remaining high despite federal economic reforms. Under Yar'Adua, poverty rates in Adamawa were about 60%, and during Jonathan's administration, they ranged from 50-55% due to local challenges and the Boko Haram insurgency. Buhari's administration saw further increases in poverty, reaching 65-70% during the recession and insurgency. Post-pandemic recovery (2021-2024) showed gradual improvement, with poverty rates now around 50-55%.

Nigeria's fight against corruption has been ongoing since 1999, with Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) indicating varying degrees of public sector corruption. During Obasanjo's administration, the CPI score was critically low at 10-14, reflecting severe corruption. Yar'Adua's term saw slight improvements to 17-19, and under Jonathan, the score rose to 22-25, despite systemic corruption. Buhari's administration, known for its anti-corruption stance, saw the CPI score improve to 27-28, though challenges persisted. Post-pandemic, the CPI score remained around 24-25, highlighting ongoing corruption issues despite efforts to combat them.

The study aims to achieve several objectives: to examine the correlation between the poverty rate and voter turnout in Adamawa State during the specified electoral event; to analyze the influence of household income levels on voters' party preferences in the context of the 2023 Gubernatorial Election; to evaluate the impact of perceptions regarding poverty and corruption on the extent of electoral engagement during the 2023 Local Government Elections in Adamawa State; and to assess the outcomes of the naira redesign policy, specifically focusing on its effects on poverty reduction, corruption mitigation, and contributions to enhancing voting behavior and democratic stability.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

2.0 Introduction

The literature review section of this study navigates the intellectual landscape surrounding the intertwined themes of poverty, corruption, and political participation within the context of the 2023 Gubernatorial

General Elections in Nigeria's This review critically engages with a wealth of scholarly works, theoretical frameworks, and empirical insights that collectively illuminate the intricate relationship between these factors. By examining past research and thought-provoking perspectives, this section aims to contextualize the current study within the broader academic discourse, thereby providing a foundation for the subsequent analysis and interpretation of findings. Through this comprehensive survey of existing knowledge, the literature review endeavors to uncover gaps, generate insights, and contribute to the ongoing scholarly dialogue surrounding the multifaceted dynamics that shape political engagement in regions grappling with the complexities of poverty and corruption.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Poverty

Defining poverty has remained a subject of ongoing debate and divergence among scholars in the field of social sciences. This has led to the emergence of differing perspectives on how to conceptualize and assess poverty. Some scholars advocate for a definitive threshold that separates poverty from non-poverty, while others advocate for a more contextual approach that considers the prevailing standards of living within a specific society (Nnaemeka, 2013, cited in Oke, et al, 2015).

From an economic standpoint, (as cited by Obadan 1997 in Oke *et al.*, 2015); suggests that poverty can be understood as a situation characterized by low income and or limited consumption. This perspective often serves as the basis for establishing poverty lines, which represent the income or consumption values required to obtain essential nutrition and life necessities. Accordingly, individuals are categorized as poor when their measured standard of living, assessed through income or consumption patterns, falls below this poverty line. The poverty line functions as an arbitrary benchmark that delineates individuals experiencing poverty.

A common classification asserts the existence of two primary categories of poverty: absolute poverty and relative poverty. Absolute poverty refers to a state in which individuals lack fundamental necessities such as adequate food, shelter, clothing, and essential healthcare. Relative poverty, however, adopts a more subjective viewpoint, suggesting that individuals' perception of poverty can vary based on comparisons with others. Under relative poverty measures, a certain income level is established, with individuals falling below it considered as living in poverty in relation to their peers.

Exploring the Nexus of Poverty within Nigeria's Democratic Engagement as cited by Oscar Lewis's, (1963), in Gilbert et al, (2015, p.119.); individuals tend to exhibit limited democratic participation. It is only when individuals break free from the cycle of poverty that they begin to actively engage in democracy, demanding a role and supporting it. Thus, addressing widespread poverty becomes crucial to instilling attitudes and behaviors that align with democracy. Poverty, along with insecurity and lack of education, does not contribute to robust democratic citizenship. In response to evident flaws and tensions within Nigeria's present democratic rule, public dissatisfaction became evident shortly after the 1999 elections. This discontent emerged as citizens perceived that existing democratic structures did not align with public interests and opinions. Over time, a political culture and structure evolved that excluded a significant majority from the democratic process. As we have discussed, it's clear that the economic and

social welfare of individuals and society are central to democracy. Beyond socioeconomic status influencing participation levels, individuals assess the decision to participate democratically based on a cost-benefit analysis (as cited by Alapiki, 2004 in Gilbert *et al.*, 2015, p.119.). Notably, an individual's material circumstances consistently determine their level of political participation, around which other variables revolve. Importantly, the foundation shapes the superstructure, and the dominant culture, including the political realm, is shaped by the prevailing economic class.

Regrettably, the Nigerian state, under its custodians, has evidently fallen short of its duty to enhance citizens' lives. The impoverished now adhere to Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs," prioritizing their unmet necessities over the seemingly "luxurious democratic participation" that fails to address their immediate needs. The deliberate perpetuation of poverty restricts the political arena to the advantage of the ruling elite. Money, essentially the material conditions of life, becomes a means to access the cultural and material resources necessary for effective democratic participation. For instance, money enables quality education, which in turn raises awareness and equips individuals to process and decipher political information for informed choices. Lacking proper education, and often dealing with a subpar educational system that produces uncritical thinking, a majority of Nigerians grapple with a state of "false consciousness" about their existence. Their capacity to comprehend and engage with complex, abstract, and intangible subjects like politics is limited (cited by Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980 in Gilbert *et al.*, 2015). Within the constraints of space and time, let's briefly examine the impacts of poverty on democratic participation through the following manifestations.

Political Apathy: The nature of Nigeria's political system and its state apparatus contributes to a sense of detachment and indifference towards democratic participation. The skewed political structure and the influence of the political elite create barriers that hinder effective engagement in democratic processes. The commercialization of politics further exacerbates this issue, turning the political landscape into a marketplace where financial resources dictate influence.

This commodification of politics results in the exclusion of the majority of citizens from active participation, as the focus is on securing financial support from wealthy individuals and political godfathers who seek profitable returns rather than public service. Consequently, this disempowers the general populace, fostering a culture of apathy and disinterest in political affairs cited by Aminu Kano, (2003) in Gilbert *et al.* (2015, p.119.).

Crisis of Legitimacy: The period since the return to democracy in Nigeria in 1999 has highlighted the challenge of fostering democracy within a context of widespread poverty. The active participation of citizens is integral to the essence of democracy and governance. However, the same citizens are often marginalized and politically marginalized, leading to a prevailing sense of apathy. When citizens believe that their interests are not significantly represented in public decisions and when the political process fails to serve the public, as articulated by Rousseau (1762) in Gilbert *et al.* (2015, p.119.); The legitimacy of Nigeria's democracy is called into question as the majority remains disenfranchised and disempowered. Overcoming the current legitimacy crisis necessitates a concerted effort, particularly from the impoverished population, to advocate for the strengthening of political institutions in the country.

Vote Buying and Vote Selling: The commercialization of politics has introduced the phenomenon of vote buying and selling. This economic transaction involves voters selling their votes to the highest bidder in exchange for monetary or material gains. This behavior is often more pronounced during party primaries when delegates trade their votes for immediate rewards. Impoverished citizens are particularly vulnerable to vote selling, where promises of jobs, scholarships, or basic necessities influence their choices. This practice undermines the democratic process and renders constitutional guarantees of freedom, equality, and participation ineffective. Vote selling perpetuates a cycle of socio-economic inequality and leads to ill-informed electoral choices. Additionally, when votes can be easily purchased or manipulated, the fight against political corruption loses its credibility, fostering disaffection, apathy, and cynicism among the electorate, Gilbert et al. (2015).

2.1.2 Corruption

Corruption encompasses a broad spectrum of behaviors, a fact underscored by the ongoing and contentious debates surrounding its definition. It is commonly defined as the misuse of public authority for personal gain (as cited by Nye, 1967 in Morris, 2011), with most people associating corruption primarily with bribery. In bribery, individuals offer illicit payments to government officials in exchange for specific authoritative actions that yield discernible and targeted effects. These actions, officially sanctioned by the state, would not occur without the concealed payment (Johnston 2005, 18 as cited in MORRIS, 2011). Yet, the scope of corruption extends beyond bribery to encompass kickbacks, akin to bribes but involving unlawful payments after the service is rendered. These payments often originate from a portion of the government funds that have been allocated. Additionally, corruption encompasses extortion, where public officials employ their state power to coerce individuals into providing bribes. While these corrupt acts involve interactions between citizens and government representatives, corruption also encompasses graft and embezzlement. In graft, public officials independently misappropriate or divert public funds for personal use. Similarly, embezzlement involves the unilateral diversion of designated public funds. Closely related to graft, fraud encompasses a range of complex and imaginative schemes orchestrated by officials, sometimes in collaboration with civilians, to misappropriate public funds. These schemes might involve fabricating fictitious companies, adding nonexistent employees to payrolls, inflating government contract charges, or manipulating financial records to obscure the disappearance of public funds.

2.1.3 Types of Corruption

There are two fundamental categories of corruption are commonly distinguished based on their institutional context: "upper-level" corruption and "lower-level" corruption. The former refers to the involvement of high-ranking officials such as presidents, ministers, legislators, governors, and individuals occupying significant positions. In contrast, the latter encompasses civil servants and individuals at lower administrative levels. This classification primarily arises from the distinctions in the distinct political roles of these public officials and the ethical principles that govern their behavior. As a result, the term "political corruption" generally indicates corruption occurring during the phase of policy formulation, often referred to as the input stage of the political system. Conversely, "bureaucratic" or "administrative" corruption

pertains to the execution of policies carried out by officials at lower levels, aligning with the output side of the equation (Bardhan 2006; Scott 1972 cited in Morris, 2011).

Due to their distinct functions within the system, these two manifestations of corruption also transgress different norms. "Bureaucratic corruption" involves violations of first-order norms, which encompass the written rules and laws shaped through politicians' decision-making processes. In contrast, "Political corruption" committed by policymaker's entails breaches of more implicit second-order norms. These unwritten guidelines dictate how politicians should make decisions and include concepts such as equity and fairness (Warren 2004 cited in Morris, 2011).

2.1.4 Political Participation

In Uhlaner, (2015); Political participation encompasses a spectrum of activities carried out by the general public within the context of politics. These activities encompass various actions, such as participating in elections by casting votes, contributing to political campaigns, offering financial support to candidates or causes, engaging in written correspondence or direct communication with officials, signing petitions, initiating boycotts, taking part in demonstrations, and collaborating with others to address specific societal concerns. Throughout history, the concept of political participation has been a central topic in philosophical dialogues centered around democracy and representative governance. It functions as a conduit through which citizens can articulate and express their perspectives. The subject remains of significant normative interest, as evident in discussions within the realm of Democratic Theory.

Scholars hold diverse interpretations of political participation. The prevailing viewpoint confines participation to actions endowed with the capacity to influence others. This perspective is evident in definitions like: "Political participation refers to actions undertaken by private individuals with the aim of affecting government decision-making" (as cited by Huntington and Nelson 1976, p. 3 in Uhlaner, 2015).

Another perspective posits: "Political participation encompasses activities that either directly influence governmental actions, such as shaping or executing public policies, or indirectly impact the selection of individuals responsible for crafting those policies" (as cited by Verba et al. 1995, p. 38 in Uhlaner, 2015).

2.1.5 Forms of Political Participation

Citing Verba et al. (1995, p. 38), as mentioned by Uhlaner (2015), there are two primary categories of political participation: Conventional and Unconventional political participation.

- i. **Conventional political participation:** This pertains to traditional and constitutionally guaranteed activities that are fundamental for the continuation of the democratic process. In a democratic system, these conventional forms of political participation encompass activities such as voting, running for office, joining political parties, holding political positions, and contributing to or participating in campaigns.
- ii. **Unconventional political participation:** Often considered controversial, inappropriate, or offensive, unconventional political participation involves actions that individuals typically undertake to

express their discontent with certain issues. Examples of unconventional political participation include civil disobedience, protests, marches, demonstrations, boycotts, and sit-ins. Despite variances in approach, both conventional and unconventional political participation serve as avenues for impassioned citizens to actively engage in and exert influence on the political process.

2.1.6 Voting Behaviour

Gordon (1998), one of the most effective ways for citizens in a democratic system to participate in the governance process is by exercising their right to vote in elections. Voting stands out as the most significant political instrument at the disposal of citizens, enabling them to hold the government accountable and ensure it addresses their needs and concerns.

Isiaq, et al, 2018); noted that voting is the primary means of engaging in political processes and highlighted that the study of voting behavior represents one of the most advanced subdisciplines within political science. Voting behavior encompasses the factors that influence how a specific group of individuals cast their votes for particular political parties or candidates in elections, as described by (Isiaq, et al, 2018). It can also encompass the patterns of electoral behavior that elucidate how and why decisions are made by public decision-makers, or the process by which a voter selects a candidate during elections.

Godwin (2020) explores the intricate and multifaceted nature of voting behavior within the field of political science. The investigation delves into understanding the reasons behind the choices made by individuals or groups of people during their participation in electoral processes. These factors can range from one's political beliefs and affiliations to socioeconomic status, demographics, candidate characteristics, and the policy positions that resonate with voters. Additionally, political campaigns, media coverage, social networks, and local influences all play a role in shaping how individuals decide to cast their votes. By understanding and analyzing voting behavior, researchers, policymakers, and political campaigns can gain valuable insights into the motivations and preferences of voters, enabling them to make informed decisions and tailor their strategies to better engage with the electorate.

2.1.7 Election

Wojtasik (2017) defines an election as a structured procedure wherein individuals or collectives make a selection from a predetermined set of choices. This process is commonly employed to choose representatives, make decisions, or establish outcomes, often involving voting or balloting. Elections serve as a means for citizens to exercise their right to vote and be candidates for public office. In preparation for the upcoming 2023 Presidential elections in Nigeria, approximately 93.4 million eligible voters are gearing up to participate in the democratic process, with the election scheduled for 25 February.

Osinakachukwu, (2011); Elections are a fundamental element of democracy, as they enable people to choose their leaders through a fair and open process. They serve as a means to showcase the public's voice, confer legitimacy, and ensure the orderly transition of leadership. In this context, elections also function as a postmortem evaluation of the performance of incumbent officeholders, assessing how well they have

fulfilled their promises made during their previous election. This process enables the population to endorse popular leaders and remove unpopular ones, preventing mutiny and chaos within the system. In essence, when conducted without electoral fraud, elections provide a peaceful mechanism for the transfer of power from one administration to the next.

According to Suleiman et al. (2021), at its core, electoral systems play a fundamental role in converting the votes cast during a general election into the seats secured by political parties and candidates. This process hinges on crucial factors that significantly influence the outcome include the choice of electoral formula (such as plurality/majority, proportional, mixed systems, or others, along with the specific mathematical method for seat allocation), the structure of the ballot (whether voters select a candidate or a party and whether they make a single choice or express multiple preferences), and the district magnitude (which refers not to the number of voters in a district but to the number of representatives that district elects to the legislature).

In addition to the core principles of electoral systems, attention must also be given to the administrative aspects of elections. This includes factors such as the distribution of polling places, the selection of candidates, voter registration, and the management of the election process. These administrative issues hold significant importance, and any potential benefits of a specific electoral system choice can be compromised if they are not adequately addressed. Electoral system design also has ripple effects on various aspects of electoral laws, influencing how district boundaries are established, voter registration methods, the design of ballot papers, the counting of votes, and numerous other elements of the electoral process, (as highlighted by International IDEA in 2004 cited in Suleiman, et al, 2021).

2.1.8 Historical Development of Nigeria's Current Electoral System

Suleiman, et al, (2021); The electoral history of Nigeria commenced in 1923 with the implementation of the Clifford's Constitution, which introduced an electoral system for regulating elections in Lagos and Calabar, with an initial income requirement of £100 per annum. In 1946, minor changes were made, reducing the income requirement to £50.

A pivotal moment in Nigeria's election history was the Macpherson's Constitution of 1951, which introduced party politics and led to the emergence of key political parties: the Action Group (AG) led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the Western Region, the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) led by Sir Ahmadu Bello in the Northern Region, and the National Convention of Nigerians and Cameroons (later National Convention of Nigerian Citizens) (NCNC) in control of the Eastern Region.

Universal adult suffrage was introduced in the 1954 and 1959 regional elections in the East and West, while male adult suffrage remained in the North. This historical context underscores the electoral evolution during the colonial era. The first electoral institution, the Electoral Commission of Nigeria, was established to manage and oversee the 1959 pre-independence general elections. During the First Republic, it was renamed the Federal Electoral Commission (FEC) under the administration of Sir Abubakar Tafawa-Balewa.

FEC conducted the contentious General Elections of 1964 and the West Regional election of 1965, which contributed to the collapse of the First Republic due to election controversies. In preparation for the 1979 elections, the Federal Election Commission (FEDECO) was established during General Olusegun Obasanjo's regime.

FEDECO was dissolved in 1983 by the military due to allegations of partiality and the heavily rigged 1983 elections, which returned President Shehu Shagari to power. This led to the termination of Shagari's second term in December 1983. Afterward, General Babangida initiated a transition to civil rule program in 1985 and established the Electoral Commission (NEC) in 1987. NEC managed local, state, and national assembly elections. However, the annulment of the 1993 presidential election cast doubt on the integrity of the transition program.

General Sani Abacha's regime, which followed in 1993, created the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) but was marked by his self-succession efforts, leading to Nigeria's isolation from the international community. Following Abacha's death, General Abdulsalami Abubakar renamed the electoral commission to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) through the enactment of Decree No 17 of 1998 (now an Act of Parliament). INEC played a crucial role in conducting elections that marked the start of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999, as well as the 2003, 2007, and 2011 general elections.

Notably, the electoral process faced criticisms in 2003, 2007, and 2011, where election officials' impartiality and the counting of votes were questioned. These elections saw the phrase "those who vote decide nothing, but those who count decide everything" become relevant. The history of elections in Nigeria has seen the adoption of various models, leading to the present one in use today.

2.1.9 Poverty and Voting Behaviour In Nigeria

Sahara reporters, (2014), the trajectory of poverty influencing the people's voting behaviour will never stop, until poverty is adequately addressed in the country. The poor will continue to trade their loyalty for bags of rice and odourless fufu, until egalitarian policies are implemented by the government. The onus is on the poor to use their conscience and not vote for tentative bag of rice, because poverty is not getting off the land anytime soon under this hegemonic party in Nigeria.

According to the findings of Ajakaiye and Adeyeye in 2001, as referenced in Haruna's work in 2007, they argue that the enduring poverty in numerous countries is connected to a lack of widespread involvement in governance and decision-making. They also stress that simply granting voting rights to the impoverished, without addressing the overwhelming challenges of poverty, does not significantly advance democracy.

Ake, as cited in Haruna's 2007 publication, adds that expecting a starving peasant to prioritize abstract rights over their immediate survival needs is unreasonable. Multiple scholars contend that poverty poses a significant barrier to active political engagement in Nigeria today. As suggested by Onimode in 1992, as referenced in Haruna's work in 2007, there is a feedback loop between poverty and the democratic process, where poverty obstructs the voting behavior of the impoverished in democratic activities.

Ajakaiye (1997 cited in Haruna, 2007) highlights that the poor often find it impossible to engage in the political process when they struggle to meet basic needs like food, education, and healthcare for their families. Poverty's association with low literacy and resulting ignorance further impedes the effective participation of impoverished Nigerians in the democratic process. This lack of education and the associated feelings of inferiority complex are significant barriers to the political engagement of many Nigerians.

Ajakaiye (1997 cited in in Haruna, 2007) also underscores how poverty can force electorates in different societies to sell their voting rights, leading to the election of corrupt and illinformed politicians who do not uphold the genuine desires of the people or sustain the democratic system.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Political Economy Theory

The Political Economy Theory is a relevant theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between poverty, corruption, and political participation within the context of the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria's Yola North Local Government Area, Adamawa State. The Political Economy Theory explores how economic factors, political structures, and institutions intersect to shape political behavior and outcomes of election. It recognizes that poverty and corruption are not isolated phenomena but rather interconnected dimensions of a society's political and economic landscape. This theory examines how these factors can influence political participation by affecting individuals' incentives, opportunities, and perceptions.

A study of this kind can be conducted from various theoretical perspectives. It's worth noting that the Marxian political economy approach, which highlights the connection between an economic system and the societal structures, provides a robust analytical framework, as Ake (1981) suggests. In this perspective, the economic system serves as the material foundation of social life, influencing the legal system, political system, belief system, and morality. By understanding the economic system, one can make educated assumptions about the broader aspects of the social system. The Marxian political economy approach originated from the writings of Karl Marx, Federick

Engels, and V.I Lenin and has been expanded upon by African scholars such as Claude Ake, Sam Ihonvbere, Daniel Offiong, R.A. Dunmoye, and Sabo Bako, among others. Political economy, in this context, delves into the economic behavior and interests of the entire state and its social classes. Marxian political economy aims to unveil the laws governing a society, focusing on the science of organization, wealth production, accumulation, and distribution. It also exposes the inherent conflicts in class societies and how these conflicts manifest, as Josiah (2000) asserts.

The Marxian political economy approach employs the methodology of historical and dialectical materialism to analyze social phenomena, giving priority to material conditions over attitudes and thought patterns when assessing societal development structures. Recognizing that society is in constant motion, this approach emphasizes the dynamic nature of social analysis. Furthermore, it sheds light on the nature of the state and the existing class relations.

In the context of the 2023 General Elections, the Political Economy Theory can elucidate how poverty and corruption impact political participation patterns. Poverty can limit individuals' ability to access education, information, and transportation, creating barriers to participation. Economic deprivation may lead to feelings of alienation and disempowerment, discouraging citizens from engaging in the political process and also the use of economic and political power to induce the franchise voters. Corruption within political institutions can exacerbate these challenges, eroding trust in the system and deterring citizens from participating in what they perceive as a compromised process.

Caporaso *et al.* (2005); the central to political economy theory. However, politically organized classes do not emerge spontaneously under capitalism. At first, individuals within the economy see themselves narrowly as isolated agents pursuing interests uniquely their own. Such interests may have nothing to do with the interests of others and may even set individuals in opposition one to another. Such interests are not, however, isolated and independent. Capitalist economy works in such a way as to set up a commonality of interest within certain classes of persons. The more individuals become aware of their common condition and purpose, the more they see their narrow material interest in a broader light. This process marks a transition from individual to class interest and ultimately, from material-economic to political interest.

The Marxian interpretation of the relationship between economics and politics centers on the idea of economic interests and the part they play in defining political agendas. However, the distance covered between pure economic interest and political action is considerable. Before economic interests can play a role in politics directly, individuals must be aware of their shared interests, organize on the basis of them, and overcome collective action problems.

Furthermore, the theory recognizes that political institutions and policies can exacerbate or alleviate poverty and corruption. If governance structures prioritize policies that address socioeconomic disparities and reduce corruption, citizens may feel more empowered and motivated to participate. Conversely, if policies fail to address these issues, they can perpetuate a cycle of disengagement, poverty, and corruption.

By employing the Political Economy Theory, this study can provide a comprehensive understanding of how poverty and corruption intersect to shape the level and nature of political participation in this theoretical lens enables an examination of the broader systemic factors that influence political behavior and outcomes. Moreover, it offers insights into potential interventions that address both poverty and corruption as a means to foster a more inclusive and participatory democratic process, contributing to the overall development and strengthening of democratic institutions in the region.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

3.1 Chi Square Test of Respondents View on Measures to Alleviate Poverty

Null Hypothesis: Measures to alleviate Poverty influence people’s voting behavior during the 2023 gubernatorial election in Adamawa State.	Chi-square Statistics	Degree of freedom (DF)	Significance (P-values)
Measures to alleviate poverty would increase voter turnout in your area during the 2023 Gubernatorial Election	169.541	4	0.000
Poverty rate reduced voter turnout in your area during the 2023 Adamawa Gubernatorial Election	124.533	4	0.000

Source: Field Survey, 2024. Note that this table provides a summary of the chi-square test result.

The Chi-square test results in Table 4.5.1 examine the relationship between measures to alleviate poverty and voting behavior during the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State, Nigeria. These results provide insights into how poverty and initiatives to mitigate it influenced voter turnout.

Firstly, the hypothesis that measures to alleviate poverty would increase voter turnout is strongly supported. The Chi-square statistic of 169.541 with a degree of freedom (DF) of 4 and a P-value of 0.000 indicates a highly significant relationship. This suggests that initiatives aimed at reducing poverty had a substantial positive impact on encouraging people to participate in the gubernatorial elections. Voters were likely motivated by the prospect of poverty alleviation measures and viewed their participation as a means to support candidates who proposed such policies. Secondly, the data shows that the high poverty rate reduced voter turnout in certain areas. The Chi-square statistic for this factor is 124.533 with a DF of 4 and a P-value of 0.000, which also indicates a significant relationship. This finding highlights that poverty acted as a deterrent to electoral participation. Voters in areas with higher poverty rates may have faced barriers that prevented them from voting, such as lack of resources, transportation, or disenfranchisement.

In summary, the Chi-square test results reveal that poverty and measures to alleviate it played a critical role in shaping voter behavior during the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State. While poverty alleviation initiatives positively influenced voter turnout by motivating participation, high poverty rates negatively impacted turnout by creating barriers to voting. These findings underscore the importance of addressing poverty to enhance electoral participation and ensure a more inclusive democratic process.

3.1.1 Chi – Square Test Household Income, Poverty and Corruption Influence on Electoral Participation

Table 4.5.1: Chi Square Test of Household Income, Poverty and Corruption Influence on Electoral Participation

Null Hypothesis: Household Income, Poverty and Corruption does not Influence on Electoral Participation	Chi-square Statistics	Degree of freedom (DF)	Significance (P-values)
Poverty a barrier to electoral participation in Adamawa State during the 2023 Gubernatorial Elections.	135.510	4	0.000
Lower household incomes tend to favor certain political parties in Adamawa State during the 2023 Gubernatorial Election.	92.723	4	0.000
In your opinion, political parties in Adamawa State adequately address the concerns and interests of voters across different income brackets.	197.212	4	0.000
Poverty influences voter turnout in the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State	214.546	4	0.000
Corruption impact voter engagement in the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State	402.143	4	0.000

Source: Field Survey, 2024. Note that this table provides a summary of the chi-square test result.

The Chi-square test results presented in Table 4.5.2 explore the influence of household income, poverty, and corruption on electoral participation during the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State, Nigeria. These results offer detailed insights into how these socio-economic factors affected voter engagement and behavior. Firstly, the hypothesis that poverty serves as a barrier to electoral participation is strongly supported. The Chi-square statistic of 135.510 with a degree of freedom (DF) of 4 and a P-value of 0.000 indicates a highly significant relationship. This suggests that poverty significantly hindered voters' ability to participate in the elections, likely due to the challenges and constraints associated with living in poverty, such as lack of resources and accessibility issues. Secondly, the influence of lower household incomes on political party preference is also significant. The Chi-square statistic of 92.723 with a DF of 4 and a P-value of 0.000 highlights that voters from lower-income households tended to favor certain political parties. This result implies that economic status played a crucial role in shaping political preferences, possibly due to parties targeting their campaigns and policies towards the needs of lower-income groups. Thirdly, respondents' opinions on whether political parties adequately address the concerns and interests of voters across different income brackets show a significant result. The Chi-square statistic of 197.212 with a P-value of 0.000 indicates a notable perception that political parties may not be effectively addressing the needs of all income groups. This suggests a disparity in how political parties communicate and respond to the diverse economic concerns of their constituents. Furthermore, the direct influence of poverty on voter turnout is confirmed by a Chi-square statistic of 214.546 and a P-value of 0.000. This finding underscores that poverty not only serves as a barrier but also actively influences the

overall turnout, with higher poverty levels likely correlating with lower voter engagement. Lastly, the impact of corruption on voter engagement is highly significant. The Chi-square statistic of 402.143 with a P-value of 0.000 indicates that corruption had a profound effect on voter behavior and participation. This suggests that perceptions or experiences of corruption within the electoral process discouraged voter engagement, potentially leading to disenfranchisement and decreased trust in the electoral system.

3.1.2 Chi Square Test of Effect of naira redesign policy measures on reducing poverty and corruption in 2023 Adamawa State Gubernatorial Election.

Null Hypothesis: Naira redesign policy measures did not reduce poverty and corruption in 2023 Adamawa State Gubernatorial Election.	Chi-square Statistics	Degree of freedom (DF)	Significance (P-values)
People in Adamawa State were familiar with the Naira redesigned policy measures implemented in Nigeria	383.154	4	0.000
There is a belief the Naira redesigned policy measures have contributed to combating Corruption during the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State.	431.723	4	0.000
People in Adamawa State were satisfied with the efforts of the government in implementing the Naira Redesigned Policy to address Poverty and Corruption during the 2023 gubernatorial elections.	410.713	4	0.000

Source: Field Survey, 2024. Note that this table provides a summary of the chi-square test result.

The Chi-square test results in Table 4.5.3 analyze the effects of the Naira redesign policy measures on reducing poverty and corruption during the 2023 gubernatorial elections in Adamawa State, Nigeria. These results shed light on the public's familiarity with and perceptions of these policy measures and their impact on electoral outcomes. Firstly, the hypothesis that people in Adamawa State were familiar with the Naira redesign policy measures is strongly supported. The Chi-square statistic of 383.154 with a degree of freedom (DF) of 4 and a P-value of 0.000 indicates a highly significant relationship. This suggests that a vast majority of the population in Adamawa State were well aware of the Naira redesign policy measures implemented by the government. Secondly, the belief that the Naira redesign policy measures contributed to combating corruption during the elections is also significantly evidenced. With a Chi-square statistic of 431.723 and a P-value of 0.000, this finding highlight that many respondents perceived the policy as effective in reducing corruption during the electoral process. This indicates a strong public belief in the positive impact of the policy on curbing corrupt practices associated with the elections. Thirdly, the data shows that people in Adamawa State were satisfied with the government's efforts in implementing the Naira redesign policy to address poverty and corruption. The Chi-square statistic for this measure is 410.713 with a P-value of 0.000, underscoring significant satisfaction among the population regarding the government's actions. This result implies that the policy was seen not only as a financial reform but also as a tool for socio-economic improvement, enhancing public trust in the government's initiatives.

4. Discussion of Findings

The study on the impact of poverty on voter turnout revealed several key findings. Measures aimed at reducing poverty significantly increase voter participation in gubernatorial elections, suggesting that voters are more likely to engage when they perceive potential economic improvements through supportive policies. Conversely, high poverty rates correlate with reduced voter turnout in specific areas due to barriers like resource scarcity and transportation issues. Poverty acts as a significant barrier to electoral participation, with economic challenges hindering voter engagement. Lower household incomes influence political preferences, with voters from lower-income backgrounds tending to favor certain parties, possibly due to targeted campaigning and policies. Concerns were expressed about the adequacy of political parties in addressing the needs of various income groups.

Corruption significantly impacts voter behavior, discouraging engagement and eroding trust in the electoral system. The population in Adamawa State is highly aware of the Naira redesign policy, perceiving it as effective in combating electoral corruption and improving socio-economic conditions. High levels of satisfaction with the government's implementation of this policy were reported, indicating that it is seen as both a financial reform and a means of socio-economic improvement.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the study highlights the complex relationships between poverty, corruption, and voter behavior. Measures to alleviate poverty and combat corruption can significantly enhance voter participation and public confidence in the electoral process, while economic hardships and corruption deter engagement. Addressing these barriers is crucial for fostering higher electoral participation and supporting democratic stability in Adamawa State. Based on the study's conclusions, several recommendations can be made to address the complex relationships between poverty, corruption, and voting behavior, thereby fostering higher electoral participation and supporting democratic stability in Adamawa State:

- i. **Enhance Poverty Alleviation Programs: Expand Economic Support Initiatives:** Implement and expand programs aimed at reducing poverty, such as job creation schemes, vocational training, and small business support. These initiatives can increase voter engagement as citizens see potential improvements in their economic conditions. **Targeted Financial Assistance:** Provide direct financial aid or subsidies to low-income households, particularly in areas with historically low voter turnout. This can help alleviate immediate economic barriers to voting, such as transportation and basic needs.
- ii. **Improve Accessibility to Voting: Transportation Services:** Establish free or subsidized transportation services on election days to ensure that voters in impoverished or remote areas can reach polling stations without financial strain. **Mobile Voting Units:** Deploy mobile voting units to underserved and rural areas to make voting more accessible to those facing logistical challenges.
- iii. **Address Corruption to Restore Trust: Strengthen Anti-Corruption Measures:** Enhance transparency and accountability within the electoral process. Implement stricter oversight mechanisms and ensure severe penalties for electoral malpractices. **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launch educational

campaigns to inform citizens about anti-corruption measures and their rights within the electoral system. This can help restore trust and encourage participation.

- iv. Political Engagement and Responsiveness: Inclusive Policy Development: Encourage political parties to develop policies that address the needs of all income groups, particularly low-income voters. Parties should actively engage with these communities to understand and address their concerns.
- v. Tailored Campaign Strategies: Political parties should design campaign strategies that resonate with low-income voters, focusing on issues such as poverty alleviation, employment opportunities, and social welfare.

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