

**STOMACH INFRASTRUCTURE, REFORMISM, AND MARKET POLITICS: POLITICAL  
MOBILIZATION IN THE JUNE 21<sup>ST</sup> EKITI STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION**

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Introduction: *Stomach Infrastructure*, Reformism, and Market Politics:  
Political Mobilization in the June 21st Ekiti State Governorship Election

*'Indeed a new sociology of the Ekiti people might have evolved. However, the task of understanding how the outcome of this election has defined us as people will be that of scholars.'* – 'Kayode Fayemi, Concession Speech (excerpt), 2014

*'One good thing about this matter be say [is that]/ It is in the African tradition for people to trust themselves'* —Fela Anikulakpo Kuti 'Underground System'

In the governorship election held on June 21, 2014 in the southwestern Nigerian state of Ekiti, the contrast between the front-running candidates could hardly have been more dramatic. Dr. John Kayode Fayemi, the incumbent governor belonged to the regionally dominant All Progressives Congress (APC) party. He was a formerly exiled veteran of the struggle against military rule in Nigeria; held a PHD from King's College London; came to power in 2011 when the supreme court ruled in his favour after an extraordinary three-year-long legal battle for his stolen electoral mandate; proceeded once in office to convene a formidable team of seasoned technocrats from leading international organizations and academic institutions around the globe; and had garnered myriad domestic and international accolades at the time of the election for his fluency in the language of reform and for his modernizing strides as governor of Ekiti State. His main challenger, Mr Peter Ayodele Fayose of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), could boast of less impressive credentials: the authenticity of the Higher National Diploma certificate he submitted to meet the minimum requirement for contesting the election was under challenge, and though he had previously served as governor of Ekiti, his 3 year stint in office, widely associated with an upsurge in

violence and political instability in the state, ran aground with his dramatic impeachment on charges of corruption and abuses of power. Faced with the sort of challenge Mr. Fayose appeared to pose, the victory of incumbent Governor Fayemi seemed a foregone conclusion. Fayemi's decisive loss—not only by a 63 percent margin, but also in all 16 Local Government Area (LGA) subunits of the state—therefore came as a surprise to commentators on Nigerian media and online platforms and international observers.

The Fayemi campaign, soon after the results were announced, aired a speech congratulating Fayose for his victory, which served to further highlight Dr. Fayemi's stature but also seemed to affirm that the results of his startling defeat were credible. Nonetheless, a number of irregularities were reported on Election Day and continue to generate criticism after the polls. The national APC (notwithstanding Fayemi's concession) filed petitions at the Ekiti state Electoral Tribunal to challenge both Fayose's eligibility to have contested in the first place and the announced polling results. The charges were that Fayose's previous impeachment disqualified him from electoral competition, and besides, that the final tally in his favor was inflated through a sophisticated 'photo-chromic rigging' process—in which a pre-programmed solar-activated mechanism automatically transferred voter's thumb markings on ballot papers from the APC to the PDP after votes were cast but just before they were counted. Despite these challenges, the relative absence of outright fraud or violence on election day and Fayemi's quick concession granted a rare degree of credibility to the final outcome shifting the attention of commentators to the voters, rather than the electoral process itself, as the source of Fayose's victory.

The national media and online commentators soon became engrossed with the strategies both parties had employed, and specifically, with Fayose's apparently deeper

commitment to vote buying as the source of the explanation for his victory. The idea soon took root that the JKF campaign's focus on the successes of Governor Fayemi's government, notably in the impressive number of infrastructure projects his administration had commissioned, was ultimately less convincing to a largely poor Ekiti electorate than Fayose's generosity with bags of rice and other food items on the campaign trail. This theme gained even more energy with the introduction by some commentators on online media of the term 'stomach infrastructure' to describe both Fayose's approach to campaigning and the reason for its success. It was a simple but compelling narrative. The Fayemi government presented his infrastructural accomplishments to a poor electorate, while the Fayose campaign provided 'tarred hungry bellies' with food and finance of *stomach infrastructure*—so Fayose prevailed.

Another partial solution to the puzzle seemed to emerge in the days following the election. Allegations soon surfaced that scores of APC party leaders and mobilizers had been detained by the PDP controlled Federal security forces before the election, which had served to both prevent the party from completing its final campaign thrust and scare off weary APC supporters on election day (*ThisDay*, 06.27.2014). The credibility of Fayose's victory came under even more serious challenge after he had assumed office and almost 7 months after the election was over with the release of an incriminating recording (which has earned the name 'Ekitigate') of Fayose and a number of highly placed officials in the military and Federal security agencies discussing vague plans to 'settle the matter' on the eve of the elections (*Punch*, 02.08.2015). However, the less murky solution to the puzzle of the electoral support Fayose did genuinely receive seemed, at least on face value, to endure in the rhetoric of poverty and *stomach infrastructure*, which had resounded so powerfully among commentators within and outside of Nigeria after the result was announced. As a *New*

*York Times* op-ed noted, ‘hungry people will always be susceptible to immediate inducement of the kind offered by politicians like Fayose (06.2014).’

Perhaps inadvertently, the central thesis of these commentaries echoed an important theme located at the heart of a rich history of scholarship that has been dedicated to understanding the nature of the state and political power in Africa. Though sub-national elections have received virtually no attention from scholars investigating such issues in Nigeria (see: Apter 1987; Kuenzi and Lambright 2013 for some exceptions), national politics in Nigeria more broadly has proved fertile ground from which much of the empirical justification for core concepts addressed to understanding peculiarities of the state in Africa—notably the idea of the criminalization of the state (Bayart et al., 1999), prebendalism (Joseph, 1987), and the two-publics (Ekeh, 1975)—have emerged. These concepts, though far from identical, share the common goal of explaining the roots of political power in Africa, which, they argue, is derived from the personalization along ethnic lines of resources and office normatively considered to be in the domain of the public. Influenced by this tradition, recent studies in comparative politics drawing from empirical data from other sites have sought to establish the extent to which the return of multi-party democracy following the tide of the democratic ‘third wave’ on the African continent has either minimized or replicated these dynamics understood to be central to the maintenance of political allegiance in Africa. With exceptions, conclusions in this regard have tended to be pessimistic. They argue that neopatrimonial and ethnically exclusivist patterns are replicated, even ‘fed’ (Lindberg 2003), by electoral competition in Africa, and that vote-buying and electoral clientelism is both a cause and a consequence of poverty and economic decline (Wantchekon 2002, Bratton and Van de Walle 1994).

Studies of Nigerian politics in the Fourth Republic—which began after the country’s return to democracy in 1999—have tended to draw similarly dire conclusions; scholars have painted a picture of a political space characterized by intense ethnic competition and conflict, the persistence of prebendalism (Obadare, Adebaniwa 2013, Joseph 2013), pervasive ‘godfatherism’ (Hoffmann 2011), electoral clientelism and violence (Omotola 2009), and other forms of abuse almost entirely driven by a predatory elite class. Electoral manipulation has come to be seen as a constant feature of Nigeria in this era, as elites blatantly flout formal rules either through rigging and violence, or through ‘the doling out of patronage along ethno-regional lines.’ (Suberu, 2010). Notably, the ‘masses’, which is generally inclusive of those not seeking to occupy political office, are portrayed as either too hobbled by privation and the threat of violence to be anything more than passive actors, or as clients hawking their political allegiance to the highest bidder. Scholars such as Bayart et al (1999; 15) have gone even further to argue that the criminality and political clientelism driven by the elite is actually a reflection of ‘moral and political codes of behavior,’ in African society mirrored in ‘cultural representations, notably of the invincible, and of trickery as a social value’ which serve to legitimize corruption and deviance.

The popular narrative, which attributed Fayose’s victory to the politics of ‘stomach infrastructure’, can therefore be seen as operating within this neopatrimonialist framework —characterized by elite capture, electoral clientelism, and even amoral complicity among undifferentiated ‘masses’ —which, along with the politics of ethnicity, have been the dominant themes in studies of electoral politics in Nigeria and across the African continent since the early days of the ‘third wave’. Bratton (2008; 9) concludes on a similar note in a study on the widely criticized 2007 presidential election in Nigeria when he says: ‘In this regard, we can see vote buying as one aspect



of the larger phenomenon of patronage politics in which leaders exchange material rewards in return for political allegiance.’

This dissertation does not aim to offer a definitive explanation of the outcome of the Ekiti election. It is impossible to determine the extent to which factors beyond Fayose’s electoral support – such as rigging and intimidation – were reflected in the final vote tally. Rather, this it adopts a more constricted focus to consider the extent to which the political processes outlined above conditioned the types of political action undertaken by party mobilizers and informally employed workers in Ado-Ekiti. Specifically, it poses the question: *Was stomach infrastructure the decisive driver of political action among mobilizers and market vendors in the Ekiti election?*

Against the main currents of studies on electoral politics in Nigeria and, more broadly, on political mobilization in Africa, the perspectives of informal workers and party mobilizers in Ekiti reveal as inadequate the notion that political mobilization is ultimately reducible to ethno-regional appeals matched with an amoral exchange of bribes for votes from ‘masses’ conditioned by poverty. It is argued that the discourse of the exchange of votes for *stomach infrastructure* which emerged after the election—like the models of electoral clientelism advanced in mainstream political science studies of electoral politics in Africa—ignore the embeddedness of electoral clientelism within broader linkages between candidates and key subsets of voters which more readily influenced voters’ decisions to offer political support to candidates than does the presence or amount of clientelistic exchange alone. What was crucial to market vendors and political mobilizers were the perceptions of the moral content latent in both personal and policy appeals martialed by the key candidates – or what author’s like Schatzberg (2001) have called the ‘moral matrix of legitimate governance’. I also argue that the patterns of mobilization which emerged in Ekiti and

some voter's ultimate decisions to support Fayose on the basis of these appeals may evince an impulse for accountability within a distinctive but important constituency in state-level elections, rather than reveal evidence of the further erosion of Democracy in Nigeria.

In the remainder of this introduction, I outline the conceptual, theoretical and methodological bounds of the study. Chapter 2 then locates the Ekiti election within the broader trajectory of recent elections in Nigeria. It argues that our current understanding of electoral mobilization in Nigeria and voting patterns in Africa more generally which mostly draw from studies of national-level presidential politics inconsistently map unto sub-national politics (see: Biershenk, Olivier de Sardan 2003) and therefore struggle to adequately account for the patterns of mobilization which emerged in Ekiti. This predominance of the 'center-centered' perspective (Snyder 2001) evinces a significant gap in the literature on electoral politics in Nigeria. Chapter 3 focuses on the main appeals of both the Fayemi administration and the Fayose campaign as represented in the perspectives of informal sector workers in Ado-Ekiti. It shows how, even for economically vulnerable constituencies, symbols of authenticity and accessibility perceived in the policies and personality appeals martialed by the key candidates activated indices of trust and distrust, which, more so than material exchange, predisposed these voters' overwhelming support for Fayose. Owing to the bulk of material gathered, this is necessarily the longest chapter. Chapter 4 is a brief but important discussion, which shifts this inquiry to consider the motivations for political action in the Ekiti election among a group of grassroots mobilizers from both parties. It finds that motivations, even among a group formally incorporated within patronage networks, to defect from or comply with party imperatives were not ultimately reducible to *stomach infrastructure*. The conclusion both summarizes the

key points of the argument and argues for an extension of our understanding of political mobilization in Nigeria to include both regionally salient historical dynamics and particular state-level constituencies which may provide political entrepreneurs with avenues for mobilization. Centering on the ambiguous challenges these modes of mobilization pose for questions of democratic accountability in Nigeria, I also argue for a deeper consideration of the place of personality, political charisma, and embedded moral values— of trust in particular—in determining whether or not efforts at mobilization will achieve success.

### **Political mobilization in Nigeria**

Three interlaced themes dominate much of key literatures broadly addressed to the issue of how political action is impelled in Nigeria. Themes of elite capture, of a public sphere characterized by amorality and clientelism, and of ethnic mobilization and conflict run through the extant literature on the subject of political mobilization. But, for the most part, they also reflect the character and uses of political power in Nigeria under authoritarian and ‘competitive-authoritarian’ (Levitsky and Way) regimes—which, in the Habermasian terms of Osaghae, (1995: 36) have led to ‘the aggravation of a crisis of legitimacy.’ The abuses of military rule in particular gave rise to a number of provoking critiques centered on tracing origins and specifying the effects of particular forms of state-society relations in Nigeria amidst this crisis. Ekeh’s (1975) explanation of ‘two-publics’ was an early reflection of theme of the amorality in public dealings driven by ethno-clientelism. Joseph’s (1987) characterization of the logic of ‘prebendalism’ drew from Ekeh but was addressed to the realities of Nigeria’s short-lived Second Republic –which ended in a military coup during his study. For Joseph the central aims of actors driving state and political processes could, like for Ekeh, be distilled to the plunder of state resources to feed the self, the family, and a limited

network of clients. The authors of this era have been largely influential and foresighted because their descriptions of these dire political realities serve as both the basis for more recent work on political mobilization in now democratizing Nigeria, and a still powerful characterization of the structures and practices that still shape Nigeria's current Fourth Republic.

Authors like Agbaje (2006; 30) —writing from within what (Daloz, 2005) calls the neo-Marxist school—find the roots of the lingering malaise in institutions of accountability distorted by the pursuit by a vicious ruling elite of ‘their class project of domination’. Others like Bayart's (1999) and Chabal and Daloz (1999) turn to cultural inventories where they argue that a latent source of legitimization for moral debility among the elite can be located. Hoffmann's (2011)—focusing on ‘godfathers’ who derive power by superintending ‘magical elections’ to install clients into political office—considers elite impunity in light of poor electoral management to be the defining characteristics of Nigeria's recent political situation. In light of these depictions, some authors have lamented the condition of the ‘masses’ of Nigeria's citizenry as not only ‘transformed into passive actors in governance even under civil rule; the object of manipulation and elite mobilization’ but also reduced to economic privation as a result of the dysfunctional nature of the nation's political processes (Agbaje, 2006; 30). Authors like Mustapha (2006; 15) have further argued that ‘under conditions of scarcity, inequalities and uneven access to economic and political resources, ethnicity has provided a convenient platform for political mobilization.’ Thus, dysfunction has led to a crisis of governance resulting in mass privation, which has heightened ethnic divisions and encouraged mobilization on ethno-regional and clientelistic grounds. These analyses moreover have run parallel to studies of mobilization in other locations on the African continent, which have often

found ethnic and clientelistic appeals to be salient over and against ‘programmatically’ appeals to policy positions (Wantchekon 2003, Lindberg 2010). What the review above has sought to demonstrate is how the interrelated threads— of elite capture, of ethnic mobilization, and of amorality in a public sphere characterized by selective clientelism—are woven into the fabric of our understandings of political action sketched by key writing on Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa addressed to the broader subject.

Omitted from this otherwise instructive scholarship, are three critical concerns, which correspond to the themes presented above, and, it is argued, animate inquiry into political mobilization in Ekiti. Firstly, notions of ‘godfatherism’ and a political elite able to capture and bend political structures to reproduce their domination illuminate but also obscure when, as Banarjee (2011; 76) contends in her vibrant ethnography of electoral participation in India, ‘the powerful and corrupt are seen to achieve their purpose without according agency to the subjects of their coercion.’ Though pervasive electoral scandal and violence serve to reinforce elite positions of dominance, fixation on these occurrences has left unanswered key questions that may reveal sources of popular agency within these structures. For example why do some but not all rigged elections result in protests and social upheaval (see: Apter 1987)? Is it possible, as Hoffmann and Nolte (2013; 27) tentatively suggest, that recourse to resignation rather than protest ‘might be evidence of widespread acceptance... of counterintuitive election results’? Furthermore, what factors account for godfathers’ choices in godsons—and to what extent are evaluation of ‘marketability’ and the likelihood of popular acceptance considered in such decisions? Extending our line of inquiry beyond narratives of elite capture to include more empirically grounded explorations of the engagement of broader society with political personalities and events would lead to a

richer analysis of factors which impel political action in Nigeria. Post's (1963) study of Nigeria's founding pre-independence elections, provides an example of analysis able to capture the nature of the participation of non-elite groups in the political arena despite the presence of rigging and malpractice (see: Miles, 1988 and Apter 1987 for similar examples).

Secondly, ethno-regional mobilization is doubtlessly an undeniable aspect of democratic politics in Nigeria. Mustapha (2006; 25) for instance, asserts that 'on aggregate, the electorate has tended to concentrate its vote along clearly discernible ethnic lines.' Yet there are two important respects in which the conversation around group affinity and mobilization in Nigeria has tended to be limited. Firstly, such analysis tends to fixate on federal-level politics and neglect state-level dynamics, particularly in near-homogenous or ethnic majority states such as Ekiti, in which contesting candidates are almost always from the same ethnic or even sub-ethnic group. The obvious reason for this omission is also its shortcoming. Analysis of mobilization in such contexts is either aggregated and thereby distorted or completely ignored given this fixation. Secondly, though the focus on ethnic mobilization highlights the 'aggregative function' that groups interest play in electoral politics, it ignores the presence of other key citizen groups, particularly in urban state capitals, which may span various ethnic constituencies or not self-represent as ethnic. Thus, far-reaching studies of the ways in which organized constituency groups are incorporated into the political arena, for instance civil servant unions, market women's groups, and the *okada* riders union – all groups which proved important in Ado-Ekiti and are present in most Nigeria states – have been uncommon. Barber's (1975) and Mba's (1987) early study of market women's groups like Albert (2007) and Fourchard's (2010) studies of the role of the NURTW in Lagos politics have been extremely

instructive, but have tended to be restricted to the particular ‘megapolitan’ context of Lagos.

Finally, and most tied to the idea of *stomach infrastructure* presented in the popular narrative of Fayose’s victory, the theme of the centrality of selective clientelistic mobilization, which through the scholarship on Nigerian politics, generally suffers from two crucial oversights. The first is captured in Pitcher et al.’s (2009: 144) critique centered on the absence of the idea of legitimacy in usual depictions of neopatrimonialism. In these authors’ terms, what studies of political mobilization centered on clientelistic exchange often overlook is ‘the symbolic construction of domination, compliance, and reciprocity’. The neopatrimonialism frequently reflected in the literature on African politics ‘misread’ Weber’s initial characterization of patrimonial authority by reducing such relationships to the bare fact of exchange between rich, powerful leaders and the masses coerced by despotism or penury (Pitcher et al. 2009; 138). To its extreme limit, this view paints a picture of allegiance as available for sale to the highest bidder in the context of a ‘political marketplace’ (de Waal, 2014). Likewise, Lindberg’s (2010) claim that ‘when there is no money, there is no patronage and no loyalty in this kind of system’ expresses this view of neopatrimonial allegiance. Rather, Pitcher et al. argue that Weber’s ideal types of patrimonial, rational-bureaucratic, and charismatic authority all depended on the legitimate acceptance by the ruled of their domination by the ruler, which for Weber was the distinction between power and authority. In the case of patrimonial rule, this is accomplished not only by exchange, but also by a broader symbolic linkage which embodies morally laden and reciprocal duties and obligations. These wider considerations of the moral dimensions of exchange are well represented in studies of political power in Africa. Notably, Schatzberg’s (1993) ‘moral matrix of father,

family, and food' like Bayart's (1993) 'the politics of the belly' bear obvious similarities to popular narratives of *stomach infrastructure*. Ideas of commensality (Anigbo 1980) also relying on the metaphor of eating, have likewise explored these dimensions in the Nigerian context, but insufficiently factor into conversations about clientelism and political mobilization in democratizing Nigeria.

The second omission is intertwined with the first and can also be understood with reference to Weber. The usual characterization of electoral mobilization in terms of gift giving and vote-buying misses the symbolic dimensions of the gift but also neglects the representational nature of the giver. Weber's idea of charismatic authority usefully reconfigured as the charismatic linkage by Kitschelt (2000) in the context of electoral democracy, does well to reinsert leaders' personalities, styles, and approaches into the question of how electoral mobilization is achieved. Yet, despite the importance of notions of political charisma both in founding explorations of the roots of political allegiance and in more recent re-visitations these issues have marked a distinct absence in studies of political mobilization in the context of Nigeria. The preoccupation with 'money politics' in Nigeria has not allowed for an exploration of how other factors beyond exchange may enhance or complicate clientelistic electoral appeals.

Usefully Resnick's (2014) study of populism in the context of recent presidential politics in Zambia, Kenya, and Senegal looks at precisely this issue; she defines populism as a composite linkage comprising programmatic, clientelistic, and charismatic linkages, representing Kitschelt's adaptation of Weber's types of authority. Crucially, she also puts into useful perspective how the particular pressures of urban poverty may be congruent with the anti-elite nature of populist messaging and specific promises such candidates may articulate to incorporate the urban poor. Likewise,



Cheeseman and Larmer (2013) highlight (ethno)populist's abilities to form successful linkages with important constituencies not only through ethnic appeals, but also by uniting retrospective evaluations of adverse policies with appeals based on personal charisma.

Following Kitschelt's notion of linkages and on Resnick's advancement of his concept to consider the possibility of composite linkages, I argue that mixed appeals relying heavily on personality play a larger role in Nigerian politics than their effective absence in the literature on mobilization indicates. The rationales for mobilizer's political action and the mobilization of informal sector workers in Ado-Ekiti attest to this. But looking beyond the outlines of these linkage categories and into their constituent parts, I argue that for vendors and mobilizers in Ado-Ekiti, personality, campaign styles, and particular policies were understood as indicators of 'trustworthiness' (Bratton 2007; Obadare 2005 ) which more readily conditioned these actors' decisions on which candidate to support. This position challenges the usual characterization of political mobilization in Nigeria as either a space driven by a market logic of exchange devoid of moral content (Osaghae 1998; Agbaje, 2006; de Waal 2014) or as a theatre of amorality where cultural registers of 'trickery as a social value' and of plunder driven by 'certain prestigious styles of life' (Bayart 1999) are enacted.

The foregoing section has considered themes of elite capture, ethnic mobilization, and neopatrimonialism, which have been dominant across much of the scholarship on political mobilization in Nigeria. Crucially, this section has illustrated that important issues of popular agency, of citizen interest groups, and of the moral dimensions of political appeals have been occluded by the preoccupation with these themes, and that

this preoccupation has limited the latitude and rigor of considerations of the nature of political mobilization in Nigeria. Our lenses have also been blinders causing analysts of political mobilization in Nigeria to consistently miss out on the aspirations and social values latent in the kinds of mobilization that have succeeded in incorporating various sub-segments of the electorate. An investigation of the rationales for mobilizers' choices of political action and of Fayose's successful mobilization of informal workers in Ado-Ekiti, largely on the basis of appeals to personal charisma, calls for a more serious treatment of these ideas.

### **Methodology**

Given its focus on political mobilization in the Ekiti elections, this study will draw primarily from in-depth interviews with party mobilizers and semi-structured interviews carried out among a set of informal sector workers in Ado-Ekiti. Van De Walle's (2009) observations regarding the finitude of patronage networks and resources in most African contexts can be seen as a starting point for selecting these two groups. In Nigeria, the finitude of such resources further exacerbated by the unevenness of their redistribution—despite the existence of vast oil wealth—has been at the heart of studies focused on the most crucial aspects of politics, particularly the roots of conflict. One side of the coin represented by the limited nature of these networks is *access* but on the other is *exclusion*. Since 'mass-based patronage machines' are precluded by resource limitations (ibid., 2009) the political mobilization of those 'relegat[ed] to the permanently insecure masses' (Owen, 2013) on the 'outside' of such networks is thought to be driven by the hope of future *access*, or conditioned by exchanges of petty gifts and 'small chops' (Lindberg, 2010) around election time. Within such networks, logics of 'supply and demand' are posited as the driving force of action in models of the political marketplace (de Walle, 2014). These

considerations therefore make more interesting the question of whether the political action of mobilizers on the inside and informal workers on the outside of such networks was ultimately impelled by clientelistic exchange and *stomach infrastructure*.

My initial agenda centered on the electoral outcome. The election appeared to present an interesting lens through which to examine ongoing debates around the role of poverty and clientelism in increasingly competitive elections in Africa's 'third wave' democracies. Since clientelism as an electoral strategy is often assumed to favor the incumbent (Posner, Young 2007), the defeat of Governor Fayemi seemed to provide the opportunity for the type of inquiry Flyberg (2011) referred to as 'deviant case study' research. In choosing this election as a case study, my initial intention was to follow an increasingly well-trodden path in the scholarly writing on African voters: I planned to conduct a survey across different demographics in Ekiti state to uncover patterns in voting behavior and identify the reasons which voters most frequently offered for decisions to support their candidate of choice.

However, given the state of political upheaval I encountered upon arriving in Ekiti -accompanied by my friend and Yoruba translator Olufunsho Bamiduro - I was forced to reconsider this agenda. The victory of Muhammadu Buhari and the APC on the Federal level in the week before I arrived in Ekiti threw politics within the state into a free-fall; the APC controlled state legislature, buoyed by the party's Federal success, commenced impeachments proceeding against Governor Fayose on grounds of abuse of power and fiscal irresponsibility. This sparked a backlash among Fayose supporters in the state strongly (reportedly also financially) encouraged by Fayose to come out and 'defend the mandate' they had given him in his June 2014 electoral victory (*NewsWireNgr*, 2015).

With Pro-Fayose ‘youths’ out on the main streets and entrances of the state capital, Ado-Ekiti, waving placards, branches, and axes in defense of the mandate, I soon realized that travel to various parts of Ekiti would be strained. Beyond security concerns imposed by the ‘protests’ I reasoned that voter’s choices to refuse or respond to questionnaires, and the responses I would receive from willing participants, were highly likely to be conditioned by the charged political context. While considering alternatives routes for investigation, I decided to test out these assumptions by attempting a set of preliminary questionnaires in an Ado-Ekiti market where I anticipated that I would get a diverse range of respondents while avoiding the major road sites where protests were ongoing.

On one hand, I was greeted with the level of apprehension I anticipated with a noticeably high rate of respondents declining to speak, and a number of individuals even offering warnings that this was an insecure context in which to openly discuss issues related to Ekiti politics. On the other hand, I soon noticed that the great majority of the individuals who did agree to respond to the questionnaire claimed to have supported Fayose and offered passionate and reasoned motivations for this support, often also blaming the political upheaval in the state on Fayose’s opponents. Subsequent conversations with individuals in this market revealed the limitations of my initial questionnaire, but also shed an interesting new light on the high levels of support that Fayose seemed to have gained among these market workers. Rather than establishing a representative measure of political sentiments across the state grappling further with the rationales for the predominant political leanings among this particular group became a more interesting (and feasible) exercise, allowing me to step outside the boundaries of structured and pre-coded questions to pursue a largely semi-structured approach of open-ended questions and focus group interviewing.

Choosing a market as the site for the initial set of questionnaires also proved to be advantageous. The markets provided access to a more limited demographic than I had initially anticipated; virtually all of the respondents were small scale traders with roadside stalls, produce sellers, *okada* riders, or owners of other forms of informal enterprise. Yet precisely the same reason—i.e. the high concentration of vendors and informal sector workers—proved to be the particular advantage of carrying out these questionnaires in markets. As Resnick (2014) discusses, population growth in most of Africa’s urban areas has been matched by growth in the informal productive sectors, as opportunities for industrial or other forms of formal employment have been limited. Though Resnick’s study focuses on much larger capital cities such as Lusaka and Dakar with over 1 million inhabitants, this argument is even more pertinent in smaller cities of the 300-500 thousand range of Ado-Ekiti (Momoh, et al.), which present fewer opportunities for integration into the formal economy but comprise the majority of Africa’s fastest growing urban areas (Hathaway, 2006; UN 2014). It is likely that the informal productive sectors will absorb a larger proportion of the growth in such cities and thus increasingly become a critical constituency in democratic politics. Given this trend, a number of authors have increasingly argued that urban spaces catering to this growth will prove fertile ground for clientelistic politics. Mitlin (2014) for example, asserts that, ‘in informal settlements, the lack of access to basic services in a context of scarce municipal and/or utility resources encourages the prevalence of clientelist bargaining.’ The major market places in the urban settlement in Ado therefore provided the opportunity for an ‘extreme case’ design (Gerring 2007), by representing, at least in theory, a highly likely setting for clientelistic mobilization in Ekiti. But beyond these factors, the fact that both main candidates made specific appeals to groups representative of various informal sector constituencies made this an

interesting sub-segment through which to better understand the dynamics of political mobilization.

Bearing these considerations in mind, my main methodology comprised semi-structured interviews (in English and Yoruba) with 50 informal workers in 3 Ado-Ekiti markets. Since Ado-Ekiti has a number of specialized markets where most vendors sell a certain type of merchandise, we selected three different types of markets (through purposive cluster sampling) in which to carry out interviews since, as studies have shown, different sub-sectors of the informal economy can attract particular ethno-linguistic groups (Macharia 1997 cited in Resnick). We interviewed 20 people in the biggest market and 15 in the two smaller markets, following a randomization rule of picking every fifth shop or stall on either side of the street and stratifying respondents based on gender. Interviewees were randomly selected to get as wide a range of variation possible within the selected cohort of mostly (47/50) Fayose supporters. Respecting the agreed conditions for access, all vendors interviewed are presented as anonymous.

It is crucial to recognize certain important limitations of these approaches. Firstly, it is difficult to determine the exact extent to which the charged climate of pro-Fayose protests affected the responses we did receive. When asked, a majority of the interviewees said they believed we were students carrying out a research project, but a good number (10/50) of people did express some uncertainty about who commissioned the project, with some even unreservedly expressing that they thought we were sent by the Fayose government—though a virtually all of the respondents that held this view were happy to receive ‘Fayose people like us’ and one elderly man even encouraged us to inform the governor to ‘continue doing well for the people.’ Similarly, it is hard to

avoid response bias when asking people about whether they have undertaken actions, such as voting, which might be perceived as socially desirable.

Since reasons for vendor's support for Fayose (rather than whether they had voted) was our main concern, that latter issue did not proved debilitating. Also, since all respondents willingly assented to offering their views after learning about the aims of the study and after assurances that we were indeed students—and that skipping uncomfortable questions was highly welcomed, it seems reasonable to assume that most of the reasons given for supporting Fayose were genuine. Along with the market questionnaires, three in-depth group-interviews were conducted with other groups of informal workers including *okada* riders to avoid 'coverage error' – where other groups of informal workers working outside of markets are excluded – but also to provide further context to the responses collected in the market.

Studying political mobilization entailed speaking with a mobilized constituency but also with mobilizers. As such, the second main leg of my method involved semi-structured and unstructured interviews with party elite, but also with grassroots mobilizers from both main political parties. Speaking with grassroots political actors helped frame the questions and contextualize the responses from the markets but also provided an important picture of these actors' understandings of both the dynamics of political mobilization and their roles in the narrative of how political allegiance was won and lost in Ado-Ekiti. This is a valuable perspective to incorporate because the role of the individuals who carry out day-to-day interactions between political parties and constituents is largely absent in studies of political mobilization in Nigeria. I also conducted semi-structured and unstructured interviews, with senior party officials, party rank-and-file, journalists, and local academics to get a broader sense of the policy environment under Fayemi and the issues and events, which enlivened the

campaign. In-depth interviews were supplemented with extensive use of newspaper archives, campaign materials, and recorded journalistic interviews with both candidates. These report and documents provided factual information on various aspects of the election and Ekiti state politics.



## Chapter 2 – “In Ekiti, the masses are the one’s who endorse” – Southwest politics and the electoral trajectory of Ekiti State

This chapter shows that the narratives which animated political action in Ekiti were shaped by both the evolving institutional context in Nigeria and ‘the ideas and networks left over from past episodes of political mobilization’ (Cheeseman and Larmer, 2013). Improvements in the Independent National Electoral Commission INEC’s electoral management and the configuration of longstanding tensions between Ekiti interests on one hand, and both southwest ‘progressive’ politics and Federal intrusion on the other are the broad dimensions which framed the narratives of the electoral campaign. Though central to these narratives, the politics of patronage and identity featured in ways quite unique to the subnational dynamics and the structural positions of key political actors in the southwest. To justify these assessments a brief history of electoral politics in Ekiti in relation to broader national and southwestern politics is presented. This chapter also presents the immediate context of the Ekiti election in order to illustrate how the major electoral appeals of both candidates were shaped both by these broader themes and by specific demands which gained political salience during the Fayemi administration.

### **Federal influence, regional solidarity, and local autonomy**

Alongside five other states, Ekiti was declared a state on October 1, 1996 by Nigeria’s last military dictator, General Sani Abacha. These new states took to 36 the total number of states in Nigeria’s Federal Republic. Ekiti was partitioned from the old territory of Ondo state, partly due to existing agitations, largely driven by the *obas* or traditional elite in Ekiti, for a new state to correspond to pre-colonial and colonial legacies of the Ekiti as distinct from other Yoruba subgroups. But as Suburu (2005)

argues, distinctions between groups and the agitation for new states is also incentivized by distributive rationales since the revenues of Nigeria's state governments are almost exclusively derived from fiscal transfers of oil rents from the Federal level. But as authors like Kraxberger (2009) argue, Abacha's decision to acquiesce to these demands was also intended to divide a fledgling pro-democracy movement across southwest Nigeria that drew on the shared cultural and historic ties between Yoruba states for its opposition to northern-dominated military rule. The tension between sub-ethnic autonomy and pan-Yoruba interests, mediated by a central state seeking to exert greater control, which was evident in these early dynamics, has remained a salient axis for electoral mobilization in Ekiti.

This three-way tension has also reflected patterns of patronage that shaped political action in the southwest both before and after Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 (Hoffman, Nolte 2013). The victory of Olusegun Obasanjo in the 1999 presidential elections on the platform of the PDP was uncelebrated in the southwest, as Obasanjo, despite being from the southwest, was perceived as allied with northern-Nigerian powerbrokers whose influence within the PDP brought him his victory at the center. The southwest's repudiation of Obasanjo was made evident in the PDP's failure to secure even Obasanjo's home state during the 1999 presidential election—and in the AD's success in winning all the gubernatorial seats in the region, including in Ekiti where Adeniyi Adebayo was elected as governor. In response, Obasanjo's engagement with southwest politics during his first term in office was therefore characterized by efforts to win back influence for the central state through the cooptation of local political leaders into Federal patronage—but also through undermining the networks and popular base of AD southwestern governors by withholding central revenue allocations (*ibid.*, 2013). The eventual success of these efforts was reflected in the

2003 elections, which replaced AD incumbents with PDP governors in every southwest state except for Lagos. Although electoral fraud and intimidation contributed to the PDP's seizure of the reigns of power across the southwest, the AD's failure to cater to 'expectations that political power would be used to improve the conditions of the population' was also to blame for the fact that 'people either turned to the PDP or, at a more basic level, were not prepared to challenge the PDP through recourse to public protests or violence' (*ibid.*, 33). In Ekiti, AD Governor Adeniyi Adebayo was defeated by a young and relatively unknown PDP politician who appeared seemingly out of nowhere with a campaign strategy of providing firefighting equipment, potable water tankers, and mobile ambulatory services in poor neighborhoods all around the state; his name was Mr. Ayodele Peter Fayose (*Africa News*, 06.18.2001).

Highlighted above is the interplay between resistance to and acceptance of Federal influence in the southwest. Cultural and distributive logics drove the efforts of Ekiti *obas* to break-ranks with the pro-democracy movement across the southwest in order to successfully agitate for the creation of Ekiti under the Abacha administration. Likewise the establishment and management of patronage networks with traditional and business elite proved to be an important factor in the AD's efforts to maintain power across the southwest and in the PDP's success as resting power in 2003. But crucially, this interplay was also mediated by popular demands for the vision of 'progress through education, social solidarity, and infrastructural development' propagated by the southwest's political 'founding father' Obafemi Awolowo (*ibid.*; 28). For both groups within direct networks of patronage and outside of them, patrimonial concerns were interlaced with evaluations of legitimacy in terms of socio-cultural interests and progressive demands. These dynamics continued to reflect

southwestern politics through Nigeria's Fourth Republic and remained crucial in shaping narratives that gained salience in the 2014 election.

### **Incumbency, Infrastructure, and 'the era of impunity'**

The level of intrigue which marked electoral politics in Ekiti in the years following Fayose's appointment as governor is bewildering. His stint in office was portrayed in media reporting and frequently recalled by local experts and civil society in Ekiti as mired in controversy, violent clashes within the PDP and with AD politicians, and even allegations of sponsored assassinations (*Africa News*, 10.17.2006). Yet, another aspect of his time in office also often highlighted were his modest strides in upgrading some of the state's infrastructure, particularly roads and markets, and his continued appeals through efforts of the sort displayed during his campaign to reach out to constituencies of the 'ordinary masses' beyond those captured in patrimonial political networks. These disparate narratives seem to converge on the point that Fayose's boisterous style and wrangles with local power brokers over the terms of patrimonial relationships contributed to his ultimate impeachment in 2006 (Durotoye 2014 int.). Dramatic accounts of the story of his impeachment and exile abound. But what is clear is that Fayose disappeared from Ekiti politics not to return till the early years of the Fayemi administration. Only after facing a flurry of legal disputes around the office of governor, being placed under a state of emergency by President Obasanjo, and bearing a succession of caretaker governors appointed by the president, was Ekiti state returned to a partial state of normalcy and a governorship election held in the state in 2007.

However, the 'normalcy' that returned to Ekiti politics should not be overstated. The Action Congress (AC), the descendent of what remained of AD after PDP's crushing

blow in 2003, adopted as its candidate Dr. John Kayode Fayemi, a reputed exile of the pro-democracy movements. The PDP fielded Lagos based engineer Olusegun Oni as its candidate. But spectacular levels of malpractice characterized the 2007 election, in which Oni was declared winner, necessitating a rerun election in 2010. This re-run was also mired in intrigue and violence and, in turn, triggered highly politicized legal proceedings, which in 2011—three years after the initial election—declared Dr. Fayemi the rightful governor of Ekiti State (Durutoye 2015, int.).

Dr. Fayemi's victory was possible partially due to the support and influence of AC party leader and governor of Lagos Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, who was the only opposition incumbent to have survived the PDP's southwestern electoral onslaught in 2003. Despite his isolation, Tinubu's grassroots support in Lagos garnered through policies widely perceived as progressive and maintained through forms of local tax and a formidable network of patronage earned him the role of preserving the AC power base in the southwest. The success of AC (renamed ACN in 2006) in maintaining Lagos in 2007, and in securing three other southwestern governorship seats—including that of Dr. Fayemi in Ekiti—through judicial reversal of election results earned Tinubu a reputation as 'possibly the most powerful politician in Yorubaland' (*ibid.*; 41). Likewise, the 2011 elections witnessed not only Tinubu's retention of influence over Lagos through the electoral victory of his respected technocrat 'godson' Babatunde Fashola, but also ACN's repossession of all but one southwestern state. This in-turn provided the impetus for the expansion of ACN's rhetoric, policies, and branding as the embodiment of southwestern technocratic 'progressive' opposition politics (Garmont, 2015).

The lead-up to the 2011 election also witnessed the key development on the national level of the appointment of reputed academic, Attahiru Jega as the chairman of INEC.

INEC's introduction of new technologies for biometric voter registration and a new secret balloting arrangement known as the Remodified Open Secret Ballot System (REMOBS) were also considered key to its success in the 2011 elections (INEC, 2012). The plaudits the 2011 elections earned served to not only boost public confidence in INEC but also to provide an added legitimacy to ACN's coup in the southwest.<sup>1</sup> The consolidation of ACN's power under Tinubu's leadership proved critical in augmenting the nascent appetite in the southwest for a 'mainstream' role in national politics in anticipation of Nigeria's 2015 presidential elections. This, at least in part, resulted in the merger with northern-based opposition parties that in February 2013 birthed the All Progressive's Congress (APC)—the first coalition of regionally dominant opposition parties in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

### **#EkitiDecides**

The Ekiti election in 2014 presented APC both with its first electoral challenge after the merger and a potential prelude to the 2015 presidential showdown against PDP. The schedule of the Ekiti polls as a lone mid-term election also meant that it was the center of attention across the nation, drawing significant interest from partisans in traditional and social media, where it earned the hashtag #EkitiDecides, but also from observers interested in a foretaste of INEC's performance in the 2015 presidential elections.<sup>2</sup> Relatedly, given the usual importance of governors 'delivering' the majority of votes from their states in presidential elections, the Ekiti election also presented an opportunity for the new APC party to gain a critical foothold in the southwest in the lead up to 2015. But crucially, the growing confidence in the capacity of INEC raised hopes that the process and outcome of the Ekiti polls would reflect voters' freely

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<sup>1</sup> Afrobarometer data reported increasing levels of confidence in INEC after 2011

expressed preferences. All of these factors served to amplify the energy with which the major parties engaged in efforts to win the support of voters both across various vested networks and in broader constituencies.

The campaign was framed as a referendum on the policy of the Fayemi administration for both parties. The Fayemi camp was eager to celebrate its flagship initiatives, most notably its infrastructural projects—which occupied 87 out of 100 pages of one of its main promotional material—but also various youth employment programs, its civil service reform agenda, and its urban renewal efforts. These were framed in the rhetoric of ‘progressive’ southwest governance—in reference to the legacy of Awolowo’s politics, but also to a larger extent, to Fayemi’s association with the policies of Lagos state governors Tinubu and Fashola, and the newly minted APC which had adopted the ‘progressive tag’ in its name.

The PDP’s strategy from the early days of the Fayemi administration was concerned with emphasizing the Fayemi administrations association with southwestern progressiveness and ‘Lagos politics’. But presented by the Fayose camp, this association framed the Fayemi administration as run by ‘outsiders’ aloof to the real concerns of Ekiti people. This strategy can be understood as drawing upon the register of Ekiti autonomy that had animated the tension between local, federal, and regional influence in earlier days of Ekiti politics.

A central issue, which dominated the campaign and reflected this key aspect of Fayose’s appeals, was a policy the Fayemi administration called the Teachers Development Needs Assessment Test (TDNA). The TDNA was announced by the Fayemi administration in its first year of office, with the aims of gauging the competency of state employed teacher in order to target policy inputs that would

improve education outcomes in the state. To accomplish this, all 16,000 teachers across the state were required to sit for exams. Although the State Teacher's Union led opposition to this policy from the early days of its announcement, the PDP contributed considerably to the Union's highly public conflict with the administration. Through a text message campaign and recurrent media statements, PDP stoked fears that the policy was intended by the administration as a measure to fire teachers with whom it disagreed (Adeize, 2014). The administration's attempt to administer the test on three occasions was greeted by successive boycotts led by the Union and strongly encouraged by PDP. Likewise, the administration's decision to withdraw the TDNA a few months to the election was greeted by Fayose as 'a voodoo, gimmick,' and 'the deceit of the century' (*Punch*, 05.13.2014). Many teachers were convinced by this view that the Fayemi administration only wished to revive its mandate in order to administer the test again in its second term unhindered by electoral considerations (Taiwo 2014 int.)

In this regards, Fayose's campaign contributed to casting doubt on Fayemi's intentions by framing the association between the administration and its APC reformist counterparts running the Lagos government (Durotoye 2015 int.). Fashola's ban of *okada* riders in Lagos became a central aspect of the narrative in Ekiti—promoted and refuted throughout the campaign period—that the administration, like its Lagos counterpart, would ban *okada* and push forward other reforms adverse to 'ordinary people' if re-elected.<sup>3</sup>

Relatedly, an aspect of the *stomach infrastructure* narrative that seemed partially validated in the campaign was the sense in which the administration's celebrated infrastructure projects ironically became liabilities. Fayose both popularized the claim

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that the administration awarded its major projects to contractors from Lagos and portrayed the administration 's major projects as white elephants only of benefit to a narrow elite (Durotoye 2014 int.). By propagating such claims, Fayose was able to forge an appeal that cut across class sentiments, patronage interests and the latent sense of Ekiti autonomy.

The reliance on broad clientelistic appeals is one area of convergence between both campaigns which relates to the idea of *stomach infrastructure* but differs importantly from the way in which the narrative was popularly presented. By their own accounts, both campaigns, rather than just Fayose, made decided attempts to mobilize both the broader electorate and more specific networks through patronage. Some of the Fayemi's campaigns key initiatives specifically framed with reference to *stomach infrastructure* include the administration's *Owo Arugbo* [money for the elderly] scheme, which reportedly distributed 5000 in cash to nearly 20,000 qualified senior citizens in the state (Adeniyi 2015 int.). Influential organized networks also received contributions from the administration in the lead up to the election. *okada* riders were gifted with reflective jackets and helmets and traditional rulers from across the state were reportedly also awarded over 120 'Fords and SUVs' (*ThisDay*, 09.17.2013). APC officials and local experts also acknowledged that APC members were 'earmarked 5000 thousand naira' as encouragement to vote at the election, though they also explained that some of this money was seized by federal police during raids on the APC on the eve of the election (Aborisde 2015 int.).

Similarly, Fayose made direct clientelistic appeals both to organized groups —such as student unions, the market women's union, and *okada riders* —and to broader constituencies. Ever adept at courting media attention, Fayose was frequently pictured personally delivering rice, petty cash, and other *stomach infrastructure* himself,

relying on what was referred to as an ‘extra-systematic ad-hoc’ approach (Rotimi 2014). PDP party members also claim to have been given 2000 naira to turnout, confirming the general view that APC members received more ‘settlement’ from their party close to the election (Komolafe 2015 int.). Integrating this with personalistic appeals, Fayose was also often pictured at local sporting events, market places, and low-cost bars and canteens interacting with street vendors and frequently overpaying for inexpensive street food.

Thus for both candidates, the campaign period featured a mix of appeals, from policy related debates regarding the TDNA and other reforms, to appeals on the basis of clientelism and personality—indicating the increasing necessity for candidates to mobilize a variety of constituencies in order to win support. The relatively orderliness of the election underscored this and also highlighted the important trend of INEC’s improving status.

This chapter has traced how ideas of southwestern progressiveness came to be challenged by mixed appeals to local autonomy and personal affinity to non-elite groups, themes that have been central to the electoral trajectory of Ekiti. As the next chapter will show, these factors understood on the basis of personality of the major candidates were central in mobilizing political action among market workers in Ado-Ekiti. It is true that individuals on the margins of patronage networks are constrained by limited access to state resources and economic marginality, but there is evidence that such groups see electoral politics as a means to pursue long-term interests mediated by evaluations of personality not reducible to clientelistic exchange alone.

### Chapter 3: ‘Their style of doing things’: Stomach Infrastructure and Political Charisma among non-*oshelu*

*“Iya ma’n feran omo kan ju kan lo [Even a mother likes one child over the other]” –*

Thunder, April 2015, Ado-Ekiti

This chapter centres on perspectives of a set of market vendors interviewed in Ado-Ekiti, who overwhelmingly supported Fayose in the 2014 election. This constituency on the margins of state resources and patronage provide an interesting perspective into facets of political mobilization in Nigeria. Drawing from these perspectives, this chapter shows that electoral politics are also viewed as a means to secure interests broader than immediate clientelistic exchange, even among the poor. While clientelistic appeals were present, vendor’s evaluations of personality and political charisma—rooted in crucial issues of trustworthiness— more greatly influenced their perceptions of the main candidates’ commitments to the key policies of concern to this constituency. Issues of Ekiti autonomy and the changing electoral institutional context in Nigeria also feature heavily in these voters’ rationales for political action. This chapter further highlights how themes such as accessibility and authenticity influenced vendors’ perspectives on candidates’ trustworthiness, which conditioned the political mobilization of members of this important yet marginalized constituency.

#### **‘I no be *oshelu*’: Informality and political action in the market**

Ideas of informality have long been debated in examinations of both poverty and (un)employment trends across structurally adjusted economies in Africa (Chen 2001)

and of ‘extra-legality’ or unregistered economic activity which may be ‘present in countries and regions at very different levels of economic development and not confined to a set of survival activities performed by destitute people’ (Hansen and Vaa 2004; 10). Expansive writing specifically focused on Nigeria after structural adjustment has not only bridged discussions of extra-legality and poverty (e.g. Osaghae, 1998) but also questioned the strict separation of formal from informal economic sectors (Fourchard 2011). Generally, these authors tend to agree on features of limited or uneven regulation, small-scale enterprise, and economic and social vulnerability as broad, though not determinant, parameters of informal sector employment.

These features tended to reflect realities of life and work for the majority of vendors interviewed in Ado Ekiti markets. Of particular concern were issues of access to health, permanent housing, and proper sanitation around vendor’s residences. Questions regarding access to electricity and water were sometimes even considered ludicrous, frequently eliciting exclamations of incredulity such as ‘piped water in our area? For *where!*’ offered by one respondent. Likewise, small-scale trade in the market was the sole occupation of virtually all of the interviewees with women typically trading in foodstuffs and vegetables, while cosmetic stalls, phone-charging booths, and handcraft stands more often had male proprietors.

‘I no be *oshelu*’, which roughly translates to ‘I am not a politician’, was a frequent response given by vendors when the aims of the study were presented and their consent to be interviewed was requested. This statement linked to other interesting trends regarding political action among the majority of people who consented to be interviewed (after being assured that their views were equally as interesting as those of *oshelu*).

One of such key trends which initially appeared to contradict this apparent civic disengagement was the fact that most people interviewed could name community or professional associational groups of which they were active or inactive members or, less often, in leadership. Particularly for vendors who identified as migrants from areas outside of Ekiti, membership in these groups were often hometown or identity based affirming Meagher's (1996) observations regarding the significance of ethnic and religious unions over trade unions after structural adjustment.<sup>4</sup> Yet these groups were not often represented as avenues for political engagement. Interviewees affirmed that such groups typically did not endorse or encourage candidates to support any party. Resnick (2014) similarly observed that in polities in which party competition is significant, associations representing the urban poor are hesitant to appear to formerly align with parties since such support may prove unfavourable if other parties come to power. Relatedly, there was a significant profusion of such associations even within the same professional or ethnic group. For instance, at least four separate catering associations were recorded in interviews with less than ten caterers. As Resnick observes, this profusion increases the costs and thereby reduces that likelihood that political parties will court support from individual groups.

In contrast to vibrant engagement with associations, another key trend among the cohort was that membership of political parties was rare, as was attendance at political campaigns and meetings. As a rationale for this, vendors often repeated 'I no be *oshelu*' followed by explanations about not having time for politics given the demands of work at the market, or critical comments such as those offered by an anonymous vegetable seller who responded: 'No, I don't attend oh! I don't like *wahala* [trouble]'. Market vendors' comments in this regards tended to view being *oshelu* as a

profession, or even a style of life either too time consuming or not worth the potential trouble it presented. Frequent references to market work in opposition to *oshelu* work also seemed to reflect the view that many traders considered these forms of political action as contrasting to hard work and making an honest living.

Yet of all 50 respondents, only three admitted to not having voted at the election, and all three gave a lack of appropriate credentials as the reason for this. Crucially, there was a unanimous consensus among all vendors interviewed that voting was important and that INEC had conducted a generally hitch-free election at the Ekiti 2014 polls. Voting was therefore presented as the major avenue for political action preferred by individuals within this cohort, agreeing with studies across Africa (Bratton 2006, Resnick 2014) which find voting participation to be highest among the urban poor.

Based on usual accounts of vote-buying and the *stomach infrastructure* narrative, this group therefore seemed particularly vulnerable to mobilization on the bases of offers of the clientelistic exchange of ‘small chops’ (Lindberg, Weghorst, 2010). In such comparative depictions of electoral clientelism in much of Africa and to many accounts of politics in Nigeria voters in conditions of penury, are assumed willing to sell their votes at election time for ‘selective goods’ (Stoke, 2007) –often of food, clothing, or petty cash. Like the narrative of *stomach infrastructure*, this view would suggest that the mobilization of such constituencies depends largely on the presence of clientelistic resources.

Yet crucially, among the issues that impelled these vendors’ decisions to undertake political action—and to vote for Fayose in particular—material inducements seemed to be the least central. On one hand, almost all vendors interviewed claimed they, or a close acquaintance, had been offered gifts or money by either or both major

parties in contention, with APC more frequently represented as the party that ‘shared’ most. Yet virtually all of these vendors also affirmed that gifts offered by both parties were neither enforceable agreements to vote either way (since the elections featured INEC’s secret-ballot system), or ultimately decisive in their electoral decisions. This perspective that voting decisions were not enforced after gifts were ‘shared’ reflects the increasingly affirmed view that the limited institutionalization of political parties in Africa, and the use of secret-ballot voting prevents systematic monitoring of voter compliance to vote-buying agreements (cf: Stoke 2007; van de Walle 2007). Likewise, voters’ claims to have decided on other bases independent of these inducements also served to affirm Bratton’s (2008; 15) claim that ‘defection’, or voters’ decisions to follow their hearts rather than abide by vote-buying agreements, is more likely when voters are cross-pressured by multiple parties.

Importantly, despite admitting being offered gifts by both major parties, vendors consistently pointed to out that more crucial to their decision to support Fayose were two sets of policies associated with the Fayemi administration, which they viewed as adverse to the interests of market people. Such grievances centered on Fayemi’s civil service reform policies and urban renewal projects. Yet opposition to these policies also depended on evaluations of trustworthiness reflected in broader views expressed by market people on the personalities of Fayemi and Fayose. .

#### **Civil servants, Igbo traders, and ‘Da green’: referendums on reformism in the market**

One critical area the focus on clientelistic exchange in Nigerian elections has missed, is the instances in which sub-sets of voters have viewed electoral politics as a means through which to contests unfavorable state policies. Omotola (2009) articulates a dominant view on Nigeria’s democratic trajectory when he notes that, ‘the politics of

issues,' in Nigeria, have been 'relegated... to the background across the various republics, and in it place the ascendancy of identity and money politics.' Yet, in counterpoint, Resnick's (2014) cross-national study finds that urban poor voters tend to support candidates who articulate policies favorable to their particular priorities, over and against other rationales. Yet these reevaluations of how politically mobilized social sectors may pursue priorities electorally have received infrequently consideration in Nigeria. Market vendor's perspectives on both Fayemi's urban renewal policies and relationship with the civil service are two issues in this regard which were central to Fayose's political mobilization of this constituency.

Vendors frequently recounted episodes of harassment faced for trading on busy streets as a major grievance against the Fayemi administration and its urban renewal policy. In particular, traders with mobile carts bitterly complained about being forced to pay arbitrary fines to reclaim wares seized by officials of the Ekiti Traffic Management Agency (EKSMA), which had been set up as a youth employment initiative by the Fayemi government. Referring to EKSMA officials as 'Da green' for the color of their uniforms, one respondent complained:

*We that couldn't rent shop[s]... But they did not allow us to sell market where we [could] sell market. Before it reaches two weeks Da green has seized your market. Before they release it now, you have to pay 3000, 5000 [naira] ... How much do I make? They were chasing us everywhere.*

This harassment seemed even more sinister to vendors with mobile carts, many of whom were from outside of Ekiti (frequently identifying as Igbo or Hausa) because, as they explained, the likelihood of gaining access to the few permanent stalls that



private landlords or the government made available was minimal, and even less so for ‘foreigners’. A number of Igbo traders in particular, virtually all of whom complained about this issue, explicitly stated that the reason for the harassment was that the administration ‘did not like Igbos’.

But by far the single most popular grievance expressed against the Fayemi administration by vendors was that civil servants –the key customers of the markets in Ado-Ekiti— had not been paid frequently under Fayemi. This had led to ‘bad market’, worsening the already difficult economic conditions in which most of these individuals lived. As a respondent in the market who expressed vehement support for Fayose complained:

*‘In this catering business civil servants do call us for functions. Under Fayemi when they used to call me to bring so so and so food for a function, if I say, ok, the money is 20 thousand naira, they will say “Ah! I can’t pay that this time oh, lets just leave it. Things are too difficult now. They are not paying salary.” Even here, market was bad everyday. Sometimes we usually cook two rubbers of rice to sell in the market before. That time [under Fayemi] I used to only cook one rubber.’*

But the fact that in both instances, vendors perceived the Fayemi administration as the key source of the threat to their livelihoods is a more crucial point. The ‘Da-green’ officials could just as easily have been seen to corruptly fine traders and unfairly target ‘foreigners’ on their own accord. Likewise, overdue civil service remunerations could also have been attributed to delayed allocations from the Federal Government, a frequent fixture in state-level politics. Moreover, virtually all vendors could, when asked, identify at least one way in which the policies of the Fayemi administration had been of benefit to their livelihoods; frequently referenced were the streetlights that had been built in the market under the Fayemi administration allowing

vendors to sell their wares longer into the evening than was possible in the past. Yet the association of the ‘Da green’ and civil servant’s troubles with the administration seemed to rest on a broader sense of dissatisfaction with the administration, which cast even its beneficial projects as doubtful. Acknowledgements of projects such as the streetlights were often followed by the refrain— ‘Everybody has someone that likes him, but no one can please everybody. Fayose is the one I like,’ or, as one trader observed, ‘Salt can no be [as] salty in everybody’s mouth.’ What turned out to be key to the quandary in these expressions were questions about the reasons for their support for Fayose and why the Fayemi government was still perceived as threatening despite its contributions. Responses to these questions centered upon evaluations of personality, which seemed, at heart, to deal with the question of trustworthiness.

**‘Their style of doing things’: personality, political charisma, trust and distrust**

The personalized nature of patron-client relationships has been central to studies of political power in Africa. However, as Pitcher et al. (2013; 144) discuss, recent depictions of these relationships, focused either on material exchange or on coercion by economic forces and despotic patrons, have ‘portrayed [clients] as passive and accepting of autocratic behavior in the name of “traditional expectations” grounded in African notions of autocratic chiefly authority. Rather, wishing to reinsert ideas of legitimacy— which were central to Weber’s ideal of patrimonial authority— into such discussions, these authors counterpose that clients demands of patrons have been fundamental aspects of patrimonial authority which, to attain legitimacy, has crucially depended on trust.

In the context of Nigeria, trust and distrust have been central considerations of authors exploring state-society relations. Though more concerned with trust in relation

to institutions and international policies, Obadare (2005; 272) offers a useful definition of trust as ‘a bet about the future contingent actions of others’ that is also ‘dependent on knowledge and belief’. But authors focused on particular features of patronage politics in Nigeria have relied on similar conceptions when emphasizing the relationship between trust in informal interactions with patrons and the erosion of formal institutions (Daloz, 2005) and the role of distrust in inspiring vigilance over state patronage (Pratten, 2006). Yet these issues of trust have not often feature in considerations of electoral political action, particularly among constituencies outside of defined patronage networks.

For most market vendors, who claimed to not have received *stomach infrastructure*, and even for the few who did, evaluations of the broader symbols of style and personality of both candidates, more readily conditioned their decision to support Fayose than did such gifts. Thus Kitschelt’s (2000) characterization of the linkage of political charisma, also drawing from Weber’s ideal types, more closely represents these views than do notions of patrimonialism. Crucially, the perspective of market vendors on candidates’ political charisma, like notions of patrimonial legitimacy, also seemed to depend on evaluations of trust. This issue featured centrally in most conversations with vendors, but were particularly crystalized in an in-depth interview held with a local executive of the *okada* riders union who wished to be identified by the name Thunder, his popular moniker on the streets by one of Ado’s major markets. In one sense, Thunder was an outlier among most of the informally employed workers interviewed. Unlike most, he was in the leadership of the association to which he belonged. Moreover, the *okada riders* union was an association which had garnered significant state attention through the electoral period. Likewise Thunder’s inferred references to a possible future role in politics identified

him as a potential *oshelu*. Yet his general perspective as a ‘market-person’ (as he referred to it), on issues beyond the union’s role in electoral politics reflected and deepened many of the sentiments expressed by vendors. Importantly, issues of personality and trust captured in quotes from his interview seemed to reflect the key themes of access and authenticity often expressed in the market.

*It’s just their style of doing things. Osokomole [popular nickname for Fayose meaning dependable leader] is very visible to the common man. He will drive with his window down and when we hail him, ‘Osoko!’ he will stop to greet and share something. He moves very freely, he is not scared of the masses. When he is in the market, he will ask people about their problems, both old women and young people. This is how he knows the things that are worrying we market people [...] There is no corner in this Ekiti that he cannot go. Even if you say there is a thief in your area... he might not come immediately but you will soon see him there.....Fayemi was always traveling to Lagos. He won’t stop on the road once. All the years he was governor, you cannot see him around the masses. They [the Fayemi campaign] say, ‘see government house, see pavilion, we built this one we built that one...’ He prefers to stay in the government house they have built on the mountain... But you see, you must always prefer somebody you know.*

Captured in Thunder’s reflections on Fayose are ideas similar to Kitschelt’s (2000; 849) view of the charismatic political linkage as pertaining to: ‘an individual’s unique personal skills and powers of persuasion that instill followers with faith in the leader’s ability to end suffering and create a better future.’ But more concretely, Fayose’s presence in the market and on the street also seemed to exemplify a virtue of

personal *accessibility* perceived as key to his knowledge of ‘the things that are worrying market people. The comments about Fayose driving with his window down, stopping to greet ‘and share things’ when hailed, and being able to go to any ‘corner’ in Ekiti seemed both to speak to Resnick’s (2014) observations regarding the centrality of ‘anti-elitist’ discourses in populist mobilization, and symbolize *authenticity* and a sense of place, rooted in his familiarity with the realities of Ekiti life.

Thunder’s short reflection on Fayemi ‘always traveling to Lagos’ was in many ways the antithesis of these views. References to Lagos had been a constant feature of Fayose’s appeals during the electoral campaign as a representation of Fashola-style reformism and progressive politics. But, in addition, these references to Lagos in the market seemed to touch on a more basic impulse. Beyond its political connotations, Lagos, being a more urbanized and cosmopolitan area was often used as a surrogate for an identity discourse analogous to notions of autochthony and rural-urban suspicion (Geischer and Gugler, 1998). Juxtaposed with Fayose’s perceived *accessibility* and *authenticity*, perceptions of Fayemi’s travels to Lagos seemed to symbolize his distance from the realities of Ekiti life and his consequent disconnection from the priorities of market people. References to these styles and personalities seemed to both confirm and underlie views of the motivations behind Fayose’s appeals and Fayemi’s policies.

Thunder’s references to the new government house and other infrastructural projects, also served to crystalize feelings of distance between the Fayemi government and market people. Since the house was built on a hill, which was visible from the market (Figure 2), workers would very often point upwards when referring ideas of distance and distrust. But his statement “you must always prefer somebody you know” which was another recurrent refrain, seemed to crystalize, the sentiments both reflected

in both statements about Lagos and about the infrastructure projects. The central factor in this notion of familiarity seemed to boil down to the issue of trust. The evaluations of personality and style inherent in these reflections can be seen to represent concerns more closely tied to Obadare's definition of trust, as 'a bet about future contingent actions' dependent on 'knowledge and belief', than Kitschelt's more nebulous notion of faith.

Through the perspectives of informally employed workers in Ado-Ekiti, this chapter has explored motivations for political action for groups outside of networks of direct patronage. Importantly, what these perspectives reveal was that motivations beyond electoral clientelism featured heavily in the decisions of informal workers to offer political allegiance to Fayose. Rather, perceptions of Fayemi's personality created a sense of distrust, which was exacerbated by policies vendors considered hostile. Conversely, Fayose's personal appeals tapped into registers of authenticity and accessibility, which built trust with his supporters. Bratton's (2008; 10) observation that, 'voters choose among candidates less on the basis of distinctive policy positions than on the candidates' assumed trustworthiness and reliability as prospective patrons'—seemed only half the case. In the absence of significant patronage and given specific policy concerns voters still appeared to be mobilized on the basis of trust.



**Figure 1:** Oke Ayoba Government House. Source: Author's own.

## Chapter 4: Rice and chicken, *garri* and *kwuli-kwuli*, party mobilizers and political action in Ado-Ekiti.

*An average Ekiti person prefers somebody that will bring garri and kuli kuli [local inexpensive snack] and say, 'let us eat together,' than somebody that will give you jellof rice and chicken [expensive meal], then turn his back to read the newspaper.'* – Dr. Bhumi Aborisade 2015, APC Party Executive Ado-Ekiti

*In a political marketplace, the main transaction is the exchange of loyalty over a period of time, or cooperation in a task, for resources. This exchange is usually monetary, creating a marketplace of loyalties. Supply and demand determines the allocation of power and influence. For example, who holds what position and what they do in that post is determined by current market conditions rather than formal rules.* –Alex de Waal, 'The Political Marketplace', 2014

This chapter extends the question of whether *stomach infrastructure* was the driving force of the political action the 2014 governorship election to consider the role of patronage and personality in the political actions undertaken by party mobilizers in Ekiti. The preceding chapter has argued that factors beyond material exchange impelled political action, in the form of electoral support for Fayose, among a constituency outside of the ambit of direct patronage but vulnerable to appeals on material bases. In this chapter, I present the perspectives of a group squarely nestled within direct patronage networks to consider the extent to which rationales driven by material provision adequately accounted for mobilizers' loyalty to their principals, as is often depicted in ideas of the 'political marketplace' (de Waal, 2014) and frequently in political science and sociological depictions of electoral clientelism in Africa (Wantchekon 2002; Lindberg 2003) , specifically in the Nigerian context (Daloz 2012



). Although patronage was a crucial aspect of decisions to canvas in support of political patrons, the perspectives of mobilizers from both main parties suggest that morally laded evaluations, often rooted in considerations of such patronage but also tied to questions of policy positions and political style, influenced mobilizers choices of political actions more so than the fact of material exchange alone. The perspectives of mobilizers in both main parties revealed that considerations of southwest progressiveness and Ekiti autonomy, and the themes of authenticity and accessibility were likewise central in decisions to undertake actions beneficial to their principals or—relying on Bratton’s (2008) expressions—to refuse, or defect.

**‘Speaking grammar’ and the ‘no-nonsense man’: mobilizers and political action  
in the Ekiti election**

While interacting with APC mobilizers two distinctions became apparent on how the idea of a ‘mobilizer’ was defined which bear repeating for the context they provide. Firstly, there was the distinction between ‘grassroots mobilizers’ on one hand—who often referred to themselves in this manner had no formal position within the Fayemi administration—and, on the other hand, *everyone else* either appointed by the administration or occupying an official position in the party. The second distinction between the APC mobilizers with whom I spoke was even more crucial to understanding how the dynamics of political action among APC mobilizers played out. On one hand, there were those who held on firmly to the idea that the election was entirely rigged. The second more self-critical group thought that the APC and the Fayemi administration had lost on account of its own shortcomings. The latter group was mostly interviewed in Ekiti. The former group was largely interviewed telephonically or via Skype as a result of the fact that most of the individuals in this group were in Lagos or elsewhere, while I was in Ekiti. I highlight their location –

particularly Lagos – because of the political salience this location gained both in the general election and in the internal politics of the party, which were central in mobilizers decisions to undertake political action.

Some of my richer conversations were with the mobilizers who identified as ‘grassroots’ and were based in Ekiti. I was introduced to a group of such APC mobilizers —whose names are pseudonymized on request, as Ibro, Yaks, and Adamu—through the state party secretariat. Though the party members with official positions insisted I would learn all I needed regarding the manifesto and official programs at the secretariat, they obliged to link me with ‘ward-level staff’ when I insisted this perspective would be of value to me. These men were extremely sensitive about the confidentiality of our conversation, and insisted on checking my phone, my watch, and even my pen to make sure that no recording device was concealed in any of these items. Their rationales for their misgivings, as I soon found out, were closely related both to my having been introduced by the party secretariat, and to some of the reasons which impelled their political action in the 2014 elections. They all asserted that they had passionately (even violently, in the case of Adamu) supported Fayemi in his initial run at office in 2010. But as they quickly informed me at the start of the conversation, they had taken the path of ‘defection’ deciding to mobilize against Fayemi during the 2014 election.

One of the key reasons for this centred on the idea of ‘speaking grammar’ used frequently by the mobilizers to illustrate a notion both central to explaining their initial support for Dr, Fayemi and at the root of their ultimate disaffection with the administration. Adamu’s summary of the reasons for this diminishing admiration over the course of Fayemi’s years in office well-illustrated some of the key motivations for his decision to ‘defect’ during the 2014 poll:

*We needed a change in Ekiti in [2010]. The government was performing so poorly before, even our party. When people were [at a party meeting] and Fayemi started speaking grammar, everybody was shouting that this is the man we want. Fayemi's English was so good! The [PDP] governor then, Segun Oni, was even a stammerer. We had to chase that man out of government house... During that campaign I know what I did for Fayemi and for the party... That is why I am limping now, it was a real battle. We used to see him regular[ly] before.*

*But they came to office it was a different matter, sincerely. They hired all these people, Commissioners, Aides from Lagos, or UK, US ... They were only interested in those ones that can speak their grammar... Like you [for example] you are somebody who has lived all his days abroad. We, home-based, we different here oh...*

‘Those ones who speak grammar’ seemed to be a designation assigned to individuals who through higher education or having lived abroad and therefore gained ‘exposure’ were deemed out of touch with ‘the way things are done,’ ‘the Nigerian system,’ or other such referents to ideas of authenticity and familiarity. Interestingly, having introduced myself as a student from the University of Oxford carrying out my research, I was often used as an example to illustrate this point. Initially, Fayemi’s ‘good English’ had been a source of hope in the possibility that he would change the poor performance of the government. But from this perspective, their inability to ‘speak grammar’ became the criterion for the exclusion of ‘home-based’ party members as the administration progressed. Part of the reason for this disappointment seemed to stem from their being passed over for limited patronage positions given their contribution to the election bid. But the other aspect of this disappointment reflected a dimension of both implicit ideas of Ekiti autonomy, and, borrowing from Pratten (2013; 252), ‘localized cultures of accountability that are shaped

epistemologically by concepts of the person—especially the patron’. Ibro’s elaboration of Adamu’s summary was instructive in this regard:

*It doesn’t always have to be [an] Ekiti person [given positions]. After all many of them are from Ekiti anyway, but living abroad or in Lagos... But you see, how they do things there is different. Lagos or abroad it might be good to build [a] new government house, or the new pavilion [stadium] they built. A white man might tell you that is how they do it in their place [...] but [if you] ask any Ekiti person, they will tell you ‘is it pavilion that I will eat?’ What we need is a loan to start businesses.’ But those people that were running the show [...] Sincerely, they didn’t listen.*

*Once it’s Friday every week, they have gone back to Lagos. That’s where they [would] go to spend their salary. Instead of you to build your house here, or buy food, or even go to car wash... That is employment for the people here. Like the Special Advisor who was staying in a hotel for all the years in office... She was from Ekiti, but did she know the road to her father’s house?*

*Three months to the election, they brought money and said ‘take’. They said ‘ok, go and mobilize.’ They were really wasting so much money that time... Is that not hypocrisy? I collected 40 bags of rice. The members in this polling unit, I am telling you, they brought I point something million Naira for them to collect. We said, ‘Is that so? So you can share money they [right]?’ It was too late by then... I am telling you we shared the money but we told everybody to vote for who they like... We are still [APC] members, but we supported Fayose and didn’t even collect 500 Naira from him.*

I have quoted this conversation at length because it crystalized many sentiments frequently expressed by defecting APC grassroots mobilizers. Two key points seem important to highlight in this narrative. Firstly, that the reasons for their

disappointment and ultimate defection were tied to notions of local authenticity, but also to their views on the broad distributive policy they expected a government by their party to run. Secondly, given the distrust and alienation the mobilizers had felt during the administration, the money ‘shared’ toward the election time had actually become self-defeating. It not only failed to inspire their action in favour of the administration, but also communicated wastefulness and ‘hypocrisy’, which only confirmed their feelings of distrust. Rather than a political marketplace described by de Walle (2014: 7) as ‘a highly materialist, instrumental framework that provides little space for ideals and norms,’ these narratives seemed better illustrated by notions of political action as ‘conditioned not just by the structure of the state, but by attitudes and identities brought to the political arena by members of local communities’ (Peel, 1983: 7).

A few excerpts from an interview with a PDP mobilizer are also worth highlighting because they illuminate some of the broader considerations, related but not reducible to material exchange, which impelled the political action mobilizers chose to undertake. I visited the headquarters of the PDP in Ado-Ekiti to speak with party executives about what the main appeals of their candidate had been in the governorship election. While waiting for a meeting postponed several times by PDP state chairman, I got into conversation with a fellow visitor at the state party headquarters who turned out to be a PDP mobilizer from Ado-Ekiti. She wished to be identified as Lady b, and was a ward-level organizing secretary and women’s leader. She spoke freely about her ‘compliance’ with the party during the campaign. She also spoke about *stomach infrastructure*, sharing that during door-to-door campaign outings, ‘we used to bring rice, and cooking oil. We used to carry it along and give to them. Each person, one, one bag. Not [a] big bag, just [a] small nylon bag. So we will tell them, take 2000 Naira for soup. That’s how we [usually] do.’

Her comments revealed that sharing stomach infrastructure was not unique to this election, was expected by most constituents during canvassing outings, and had been the standard practice throughout her time as a PDP mobilizer. Nonetheless, she also insisted on emphasizing that both the voters and mobilizers who supported Fayose did it ‘from their hearts’ rather than as a result of these goods. As she affirmed,

*“For this man that is there [Fayose], if he [does not] give anybody one naira, nobody will bother. Because some people did not collect anything.... They say ‘That name alone is enough.’ Not because they have distribute[d] a lot [of stomach infrastructure] during election time.*

As we discussed a bit further, the main reasons for this devotion to Fayose irrespective of his ‘sharing’ seemed to be rooted in the idea of both his accessibility and the personal charge he was perceived to have taken for the well-being of PDP mobilizers:

*He is a down-to-earth man, and that is what make[s] people to like him. So even me, his number is in my phone now. If I call him even if he [does] not pick [up], he will send [a] text and say: ‘Sorry I can’t pick your call. Who are you? Reply and let me know what is happening’ [...]*

*I have been in the party for ten years. Sometimes, before, if [a] governor send[s] something to our ward, to say he is grateful for our work, before it can reach us, they have already shared everything. But now, they can’t try that. They know that he is a no-nonsense man. That is why workers love him.*

Even when reference was made to Fayose sending patronage to the party mobilizers, the crucial aspect which sealed Lady B’s support appeared to be the personal

dimension. The idea of the governor being literally a phone call away was something the other mobilizers with whom I spoke also wished to strongly emphasize.

Through the perspectives of party mobilizers, this chapter has highlighted how the crucial issues of access and authenticity in addition to patronage, mediated mobilizer's decisions to 'comply' or 'defect'. The perspectives of party mobilizers therefore lend support to Whitfield and Mustapha's (2009) observations that 'mass engagement in the political system continues to be influenced not just by economic need, but also by calculations of personal advantage and notions of public honor which constrain or structure elite behavior.' Likewise, the reflections of actors even within political patronage networks extend the view that political mobilization in Ekiti drew heavily on linkages, appeals, and symbols enacted on a far more dynamic stage than the narrative of *stomach infrastructure* and analogous depictions of electoral clientelism represent.

### **Conclusion**

I have argued in this dissertation that instrumental logics of exchange reflected in popular narratives of *stomach infrastructure* and in frequent depictions of electoral clientelism did not ultimately impel the political actions of market vendors and party mobilizers during the June 21<sup>st</sup> governorship election. Even amidst economic marginality and with limited access to state recourses, urban workers did not see action and political allegiance to be a commodity in an amoral political marketplace. Likewise, for mobilizers within networks of patronage political action was not divorced of morally laden evaluations of 'how things are supposed to be done'. Rather, I have shown that these groups, relying on locally embedded codes of accessibility and

authenticity, evaluated the trustworthiness of political patrons and undertook political action in pursuit of long-term interests not reducible to clientelistic exchange alone.

I also argue that Nigeria's evolving electoral institutional context and the tensions between federal, regional, and local-level politics perceived in Ekiti shaped the narratives, which framed political action in the June 21<sup>st</sup> governorship election.

Perceptions of Lagos incursions over imperatives of local autonomy activated indices of distrust, which Fayose, through a charismatic linkage and direct appeals to the perceived threatened interests of informal workers was able to exploit. From the perspectives of these constituents, Fayemi's appeals to infrastructural projects and reform initiatives therefore further underlined nascent senses of alienation and uncertainty regarding his intentions, which catalyzed distrust.

Given the centrality of issues of personality and political charisma in early examinations of electoral politics in Nigeria (Post 1959, Ojo 1981) it is surprising that these factors have not featured more prominently in recent studies of electoral political mobilization. The roots and consequences of Bratton's (2005) observation that for citizens' evaluations of democracy in Nigeria, 'the single most important consideration remains trustworthy leadership' --is deserving of further examination. Likewise, the roles of citizen constituency groups presented with the unique possibilities and challenges of urban life in increasingly populated urban state capitals in Nigeria warrants further exploration.

By looking behind the veil of the 'masses' (following, for e.g., Pratten 2006, 2013, Fourchard 2010) it becomes possible to discern the ways in which political processes outlined in the literature on mobilization in Nigeria are refracted through the particular moral economies of differentiated political constituencies on the state-level.



By so doing, this dissertation positions its contribution in both broadening the conversation around political mobilization in Nigeria to include state-level elections and in relocating a measure of political agency among the non-elected groups rather than in political structures and processes typically presented as the sole purview of the elected and their political ‘godfathers’.

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Lady B	PDP -Organizing Secretary, Women's Leader, Ekiti
Dr. Bhumi Aborisade	APC Ado-Ekiti Executive, Professor of Communication, Afe-Babalola University
Dr. Adeolu Durotoye	Expert -Professor of Political Science, Afe-Babalola Univserity.
Yaks, Ibro, Adamu	APC – Grassroots Mobilizers
Otunba Adeniyi	APC – Strategy, Senior Special Assistant
Daniel 'I.D.' Komolafe	Labor Party Chairman Oye Local Gov't
Mr. Taiwo	Secretary, National Union of Teacher, Ado-Ekiti Chapter.

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