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Stomach Infrastructure as Metaphor for Social Security: Actualities of the 2014 Governorship Election in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study highlights the major factors responsible for the burgeoning of the concept of 'Stomach Infrastructure' in some milieu within the Nigerian polity. Stomach Infrastructure is a scheme by which elected political office holders dispense food, cash and other gift items to ordinary people. It appears to be their unique typification and interpretation of the concept of social security. Succinctly, the conceptualisation of social security as enshrined in Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is to the effect that it is incumbent on the state to ensure the amelioration of the human condition in its entire ramification, but in most cases in Nigeria and other parts of Africa, the state replaces the declaration with stomach infrastructure. This is a qualitative study that employs a combination of key-informant and in-depth interviews within Ekiti State which was purposively selected for this study. The study establishes that variants of Stomach Infrastructure had existed in Nigeria before 2014, and that its preponderance is a direct fall-out from the apparent absence of viable human development policies by the Nigerian state.

Keywords: *Stomach Infrastructure, Social Security, Poverty, Hunger, Illiteracy, Internal Migration, Human Development.*

Résumé

Cette étude met en évidence les principaux facteurs responsables de l'épanouissement du concept d'«infrastructure stomacale» dans certains milieux au sein de la politique nigériane. L'infrastructure stomacale est un système par lequel des élus politiques distribuent de la nourriture, de l'argent et d'autres cadeaux aux gens ordinaires. Il semble que ce soit leur classification et leur interprétation unique du concept de sécurité sociale. De manière succincte, la conceptualisation de la sécurité sociale tel qu'inscrite dans l'article 22 de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme précise qu'il incombe à l'État d'assurer l'amélioration de la condition humaine dans toutes ses ramifications. Cependant, dans la plupart des cas au Nigéria et dans d'autres parties de l'Afrique, l'État remplace la déclaration par « l'infrastructure de l'estomac ». A travers une étude qualitative, des informateurs clés ont été ciblés et des entretiens approfondis ont été menés dans l'État d'Ekiti considéré comme fief de cette pratique. L'étude établit que des variantes de l'infrastructure stomacale existaient au Nigéria avant 2014 et que sa prépondérance est une conséquence directe de l'absence apparente de politiques de développement humain viables par l'État nigérian.

Mots clés: *infrastructure stomacale, sécurité sociale, pauvreté, faim, analphabétisme, migration interne, développement humain.*

Introduction

“Stomach Infrastructure” is a nascent concept in the socio-political realities of Nigeria but the same can be appropriately situated in the country's political economy. Succinctly, it refers to the appeal to the basic needs of potential voters by political office seekers and satisfying the needs for political patronage. In other words, it is inducements that satisfy basic physical and material appetites of the masses of electorates by the political class for political patronage. It could also mean inducements that target meeting the fundamental

physical and material appetites of the people by those desiring to serve them in government. Idike (2014) and Olaiya (2015) were more explicatory in stating that it relates to and involves winning an election by directly and brazenly bribing the electorate, many of who are needy citizens, with material incentives like rice, vegetable oil and money, and attending to their other sundry personal problems.

Considered an outright aberration and a misnomer within the Nigerian political landscape, “Stomach Infrastructure” crept into the consciousness of Nigerians and became a pervasive political lexicon in 2014 (Agosu, 2014; Idike, 2014; Olaiya, 2015). Specifically, the term became popular during the governorship election in Ekiti State in the same year. The then incumbent governor, Kayode Fayemi of the All Progressive Congress (APC) political party, had reportedly excelled in governance through his numerous altruistic programmes which were believed to have ensured the radical development of the state within the human and social sphere (Agosu, 2014; Durotoye, 2014; Ekiti State Government, 2014). He was reputed to have concentrated more on the provision of physical and social infrastructure and even some form of social security schemes aimed at engendering the development of Ekiti State and had hoped to ride on the strength of that for victory at the poll (Abdulmumin, 2014; Ibekwe, 2014). However, he lost the election, and his loss at the poll was ostensibly blamed on his emphasis on the provision of physical infrastructure at the expense of “Stomach Infrastructure” (Agosu, 2014; Durotoye, 2014; Ibekwe, 2014). His major opponent at the election and the winner, Ayodele Fayose of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) embraced “Stomach Infrastructure” fully and embarked upon the distribution of essential consumables like rice, vegetable oil, and money to the electorate. Despite claims of outright rigging and intimidation through the ruling party's (PDP) deployment of “Federal Might”, it was widely believed that Fayose's embrace of “Stomach

Infrastructure” swung the result of the election in his favour (Agosu, 2014; Durotoye, 2014; Ibekwe, 2014).

Despite the polemics against “Stomach Infrastructure”, and irrespective of its being referenced in a pejorative sense, its essence underscores the reality that satisfying the need of the stomach is at the very foundation of human existence. Indubitably, food is the number one, perhaps the most important daily need, amongst the basic needs of life for the immediate survival of human beings in any society. That food is vital to the very sustenance of man has prevailed in this part of the world from time immemorial and there are copious accounts in the ancient divinity of the Yorubas, of how the importance of the stomach has been emphasised. For example, Orunmila, the Yoruba God of divinity, accentuated the significance of the stomach in odu Oyeku-Irete recited as follow:

Musun laa j'efo
Tutu laa j'ogede
'Dia fun ofun ana teere
Abu fun ikun baba orisa
Orisa bi ofun o si
Ojoojumo lo n bg'ebo l'owo eni

Translated, the recitation states that: “with relish do we eat the vegetable, with ease do we consume the banana, prompting Ifa's message for the stomach, the father of all deities. No deity can we compare the throat (stomach) with, as it must be propitiated daily”. It is no surprise therefore that food security often ranks top on the policy frameworks of many nations on programmes aimed at poverty alleviations and it is perhaps in this vein that Fayose, in a report monitored by The Nation (2014:6) did state that:

Food is a social security; you can't be talking to a hungry man; he would be distracted by any means. So, when we say stomach infrastructure, it is a welfare programme, a programme that would keep the heart of a man stable.

Indeed, Fayose was reported to have described “Stomach Infrastructure” as “social security”, thereby setting up a separate department with a Special Adviser and Personal Assistant on Stomach Infrastructure appointed and likening the same to programmes in Britain which address the welfare needs of the people (Daily Post, 2014:14). He was reported to have posited that:

Stomach infrastructure is very important in the life of a man. If you look at Britain, as rich and as comfortable as they are, in the entire time, they find their way to address the issue of the poor and less privileged people in their country by what they call social security. I will relate well with my people to alleviate poverty and hunger.

Social security is widely practiced globally and its arrangements are collective remedies, including pensions, compensations, benefits as well as free/quasi healthcare and education, against different forms of adversity and deficiencies (Vrooman, 2009). It was birthed vide the declaration proclaimed at the “General Assembly resolution 217 A” by the United Nations in Paris on 10 December 1948 (Gordon, 2016). Specifically, articles 22 and 25 (1) of the Declaration (United Nations, 1998) encapsulates the conceptualisation of social security thus:

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and internationalco-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources ofeach State, of the economic, social and cultural rights

indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

Like many other Nations, Nigeria was not one of the 48 original signatories to the Declaration, having only joined the United Nations upon gaining sovereignty in 1960 (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 2015; Mertus, 2005; Williams, 1998). However, for the country, one of the fundamental objectives and directive principles which underpin the policy of the government towards its citizens is the welfare and security of the people. Indeed, Chapter II of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 declared this as the primary purpose of Government, and given the nationwide import of this duty, driving social security initiatives should be one of the constitutional responsibilities of the Nigerian Government.

Central to the kernel of social security is the idea of a better quality of life for the citizens, typified by an improved standard of living impactful on the health and well-being of everyone within the society. The basic indices of improved quality of life are presented in the availability of adequate food, clothing, housing, and medical care, and necessary social services. Even though the framework of “stomach infrastructure” is shallow, compared to that of social security, the dividing line between the former and the latter seems to have been made rather blurred particularly as the Ekiti context has presented.

This indeed has become a matter for urgent sociological inquiry, thereby prompting the need for this study.

Problem Statement and Objectives

That poverty is prevalent in Nigeria is without contention. The World Bank has estimated that over 120 million of the country's 185million population live below the poverty line, as the enormous natural wealth in the country has not impacted positively on the well-being of the average citizens (World Bank, 2016). Poverty remains endemic in Nigeria and the incidence of poverty has significantly increased in Nigeria since the 80s. Despite the average GDP per capita, for a developing African nation, a vast majority of Nigeria's population is in dire strait as they suffer from abject poverty (Ogunleye, 2010). From the staggering statistics of poverty in Nigeria, it would appear that at no time has there been more need for initiatives that are capable of reducing the multi-dimensional deprivation of a vast majority of the people by the state. However, for a developing country like Nigeria, the state's capacity to reach the vast majority of the poor people may be limited because several challenges, including poor governance, the evidence of which is palpable everywhere, and is manifested in the corrupt, inept political leadership, weak civil institutions, dilapidated infrastructure, social and human insecurity. One of the most critical consequences of the stated malaise is the apparent absence of viable human and social development policies by the Nigerian state. In such a context, there is usually the multiple bourgeoning of formal and informal entities, bodies, and agencies with gestures of social security semblance. It is in this category that we find the phenomenon of "stomach infrastructure", with a framework which makes it more acceptable in a developing country like Nigeria.

Whether the framework of the concept of "stomach infrastructure" entirely qualifies it for comparison with the concept of social security,

which is more applicable in the conditions, where large numbers of citizens depend on the formal economy for their livelihood is a poser to which a categorical positive or negative answer may not suffice. It is, however, instructive to admit that the phenomenon has been touted capable of reducing, albeit in the short-term, and to a minimal extent, the deprivation - chiefly nutritional - of a vast majority of the people, particularly in the context of an informal economy such as Nigeria. In Nigeria, formal social security schemes are almost absent for the population, the vast majority of who are poverty-stricken but are the real voters in successive elections in the country. This factor perhaps makes the Nigerian socio-political environment idyllic for the flourishing of neo-patrimonialism, clientelism and prebendalism. To this end, the study seeks to establish the antecedents, if any, of “stomach infrastructure” in Nigeria. The study also seeks to investigate the factors responsible for its burgeoning and determine the general attitude of the populace towards the phenomenon.

Stomach Infrastructure: An Extant Phenomenon

Nigeria's politics has been evaluated from different perspectives, some of which when critically viewed, appropriately situates “stomach infrastructure” within the realm of Nigeria's political-economy, and bares the fact that it is not a new phenomenon. While many seminal works have considered politics in Nigeria from the perspective of political allegiance of the citizens to language, region and ethnicity (Ekeh, 1975; Kasfir, 1979; Nnoli, 1978; Sklar, 1965), some others have analysed the political economy of democratic elections in Nigeria from the incentives-strategic behaviour paradigm (Yagboyaju, 2015). Other scholarly efforts have also considered the consumerist behavioural patterns of the dominant class (Joseph, 1987), and so have others adopted the traditional Weberian explanation (Callaghy, 1987; Clapham, 1985; Ergas, 1987; Ikpe, 2005; Theobald, 1990; Weber, 1978) to advance a model of analysis that show that neo-patrimonialism have indeed been engendered

through an array of personal linkages and patron-client networks (Ikpe, 2005). In this vein, Yagboyaju (2015) suggested a correlation between these scholarly views and neo-patrimonialism, clientelism and prebendalism, alluding that they all produce similar consequences in any political system where they thrive, Nigeria for example. While a detailed explication of the different paradigms of the Nigerian politics is beyond the purview of this work, what has become glaring however is that all the few cited so far lend credence to the fact that the genre of politics which possesses a semblance of “stomach infrastructure have endured in Nigeria over time.

“Stomach infrastructure” is not an entirely new phenomenon in Nigeria. Lewis (2007), states that the phenomenon has always been present, and dates back to the pre-independence regional election epochs across the country. It was reported that politicians who appealed to the conscience of the masses via their stomach always had the upper hand against those who tried to use other measures. Underscoring this assertion is Ejiofor (as cited in Olaiya, 2015), in stating that “stomach infrastructure” actually pre-dates Nigeria's independence. The author traced the existence of the phenomenon to the various regional elections across the country before independence, positing that Nigerian political history is replete with instances of political office seekers who employed politics of the stomach in appealing to prospective voters and winning the polls through the same mean. He submitted that since then, and across the board, a good number of the elections conducted at all levels in Nigeria have been won or lost courtesy of one variant of “stomach infrastructure” or another.

Notably, the highly controversial but largely celebrated presidential election of 1993, which was presumably won by Moshood Kashimawo Olawale, Abiola of the Social Democratic Party, had the ubiquitous influence of “stomach infrastructure” (Stober, 2016). It

was believed that candidate M.K.O Abiola won the election not on the strength of the policies and programmes he promised at the election campaigns, but rather on the based on the love and sympathy of the majority of the voters, which he gained as a result of his large-heartedness and philanthropic propensities (Stober, 2016). It could be recalled that then-candidate MKO Abiola relied heavily on strategies with the semblance of “stomach infrastructure”. He was known to have traversed around the country campaigning and distributing bags of rice and other edibles to the electorates, who were held spellbound by the seemingly bottomless pockets that he was ever willing to dip into and generously dish out the goodies that flowed to the long-suffering and economically disadvantaged plebeians. Without a doubt, he may have gained the love and admiration of the electorates and massively garnered their votes, not because of his proposed policies but more because of what was considered as his large-heartedness which appealed to the masses. It was evident the candidate knew exactly what the electorate needed, as he was known to have once worn the shoe and knew where it pinched.

In the same vein, Yagboyaju (2015) also situated the defeat of Dr Alex Ekwueme, who was vice-president in the Second Republic and one of the most prominent founders of the PDP, to Olusegun Obasanjo in the presidential primaries of the in 1998 partly to the “politics of the belly”, which is synonymous with the phenomenon of “Stomach Infrastructure”. Yagboyaju (2015) opined that beyond such other key factors as regional zoning of the Presidency, which did not appear to favour Ekwueme at that time, the financial capability of the supporters of Obasanjo particularly made a huge difference in the primary election. Obasanjo and his party, the PDP won the presidency and an overwhelming majority of seats in the National Assembly, as well as more than half the 36 state government seats.

Instructively, the phenomenon of “stomach infrastructure” is not peculiar to Nigeria. It can indeed be a phenomenon with a global outlook, and while its practical meaning varies worldwide and from place to place, it is similar and boils down to the same issue of food or the food security. In Western democracy, its semblance is the creation of jobs that provide reliable incomes to a worker that guarantees daily food on his table. Indeed, it is unclear whether any politician or public office-seeker in the developed world can win an election easily or be re-elected into power by directly putting the building of physical infrastructures above joblessness, the rising unemployment rate, falling standard of living, skyrocketing inflation and the cost of daily living as well as the rapidly growing poverty rate.

In the Nigerian, political environment, the politics of inducement has been prevalent even before the concept of “stomach infrastructure” gained prominence. Interestingly, some notable Nigerian politicians had been reputed to have employed inducement through such basic needs, as food and handing out of stipends to sway electoral victories in their favour and the favour of their candidates. Notably, Lamidi Adedibu and Olusola Saraki were two of such Nigerians. While Adedibu held sway in Oyo State and is popularly referred to as the strongman of Ibadan politics and promoter of 'Amala' politics; Saraki was regarded as the strongman of Kwara politics. The two were formidable political godfathers and kingmakers, who played key roles in the emergence of political office holders, including governors in their states of Oyo and Kwara respectively, and even at the federal level. Simply by the provision of food for a vast number of the downtrodden, securing their unflinching loyalty and using their influence to win elections for their protégés became somewhat seamless.

Indeed, According to Agosu (2014), when Lamidi Adedibu died on the 11th June 2008, many people reportedly mourned his demise at his

Ibadan house in Oyo State for many days, ostensibly not because of the love they had for him but were merely bemoaning their apparent loss of the free food they had enjoyed before his death. In a similar vein, it was reported also that many people lost their lives while several others sustained injuries two different times at the late Chief Olusola Saraki's residence in Kwara State, in a stampede that occurred when they were trying to collect their share of the free food Saraki usually distributed during Salah celebrations. Stober (2016) also identified Ibrahim Babangida, Nigeria's former military Head of State as one who not only understood the phenomenon of stomach infrastructure and deployed the same very well. He was reportedly famous for his generosity and people skills traits which kept him relevant in Nigeria's power play.

What has come to the fore is that over the years, the socio-economic deprivation of the majority of the populace is a major factor which has significantly influenced voter's behaviour during any election in Nigeria. There is a high level of poverty in Nigeria and this has made a majority of the people susceptible to manipulations. Indeed, not much seemed to have changed till date as a vast majority of the masses is still in need of the same thing. Nutrition is a priority. It is the fundamental responsibility of the state to ensure that the physiological and safety needs of its citizens are met. Food, as part of the physiological needs, is the most basic in man's hierarchy of needs, according to psychologist Abraham Maslow (Mittleman, 1991). It would appear that the principle on which the phenomenon of "stomach infrastructure" is hinged is that only a well-fed man makes use of whatever physical and social infrastructures that are built for him. Before one can to work, he must first of all eat. A hungry farmer cannot muster the strength to till the ground. A hungry father cannot send his wards and children to school – except when the education is free, which is not the case in most parts of Nigeria. Only a well-fed voter will be able to withstand the torture of queuing up under the

scorching African sun for several hours at a polling unit in a bid to exercise his constitutional right. A hungry voter will either collapse or go home to eat. All over the world, food is deemed more important than anything else. It is a precursor to good health. This perhaps explains why physicians recommend the consumption of adequate food before medication. The reality remains that many Nigerians are in the dire strait of hunger and it is in this sense, stomach infrastructure is likely to thrive within a context of deepening and pervasive poverty, ever-widening inequality and the widespread perception of political actors across party lines as greedy, grasping, mindlessly corrupt and self-seeking.

Theoretical Underpinning

The theories that support and give shape to this work are two-fold: Theory of Hierarchy of Needs and Social Exchange Theory. Propounded by Abraham Maslow, the Hierarchy of Needs theory (Maslow, 1948, 1954, 1989) has been argued to be one of the simplest ways of understanding human behaviour (Azilah, Hisham, Chansoo, Nor, Mohamad, Rashid & Jasmine (2013). The explanations as well as the interpretations of the human condition the theory offers remain fundamentally helpful in appreciating and answering loads of social and behavioural enquiries. The quest by psychologists to possess a better understanding of humans in the entire first half of the 20th century birthed the theory of psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud (1910) and the behaviourism by J.B. Watson (1913) and B.F. Skinner (1974). The theory of psychoanalysis and behaviourism seemed deficient to Maslow, as they appeared to have reduced humans to mere mechanical contraptions. Maslow was thus inspired to find what constituted positive mental health and happiness, not just mental illness and misery, and he argued that human beings are motivated by different factors at different times, the driving forces of

which are hierarchical, in a bottom-up approach. He posited that higher needs only appear after lower needs are fully satisfied.

Maslow used the terms "physiological", "safety", "belonging" and "love", "esteem", "self-actualization", and "self-transcendence" to describe the pattern that human motivations generally move through. Maslow's theory was fully expressed in his 1954 book: "Motivation and Personality" (Maslow, 1954). The hierarchy remains a very popular framework in Sociology research and secondary and higher psychology instruction. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is often portrayed in the shape of a pyramid with the largest, most fundamental needs at the bottom and the need for self-actualisation and self-transcendence at the top (Maslow, 1954; Steere, 1988).

Morality,
Creativity,
Spontaneity,
Problem Solving,
Lack of Prejudice,
Acceptance of facts, Self-actualisation
Self Esteem, Confidence,
Achievement, Respect for others, Esteem
Respect from others
Friendship, Family, Sexual intimacy, Love/Bonding
Security of: body, employment, resources,
morality, family, health, property, Safety
Breathing, Food, Water, Sex, Sleep, Homeostasis,
Excretion, Physiological

The most basic four layers of the pyramid contain what Maslow called "deficiency needs" or "d-needs": esteem, friendship and love, security, and physical needs. If these "deficiency needs" are not met, there may not be a physical indication. However, where the most

fundamental physiological needs are not met, there are immediate physical indications by way of anxiety and tension. As such, Maslow's theory suggests that the most basic level of needs must be met before the individual will strongly desire (or focus motivation upon) the secondary or higher-level needs.

Maslow also coined the term “meta-motivation” to describe the motivation of people who go beyond the scope of the basic needs and strive for constant betterment (Goble, 1970). The human brain is a complex system and has parallel processes running at the same time, thus many different motivations from various levels of Maslow's hierarchy can occur at the same time. Maslow spoke clearly about these levels and their satisfaction in terms such as "relative", "general", and "primarily". Instead of stating that the individual focuses on a certain need at any given time, Maslow stated that a certain need "dominates" the human organism (Maslow, 1954). Thus Maslow acknowledged the likelihood that the different levels of motivation could occur at any time in the human mind, but he focused on identifying the basic types of motivation and the order in which they should be met. According to Maslow (1954), physiological needs are the physical requirements for human survival. If these requirements are not met, the human body cannot function properly and will ultimately fail. Physiological needs are thought to be the most important; they should be met first. Air, water, and food are metabolic requirements for survival in all animals, including humans. As such, Abraham Maslow (1943) articulates that food, as part of the physiological needs, is the most basic for human survival.

It would appear therefore that with the Hierarchy of Needs theory, Abraham Maslow indeed attempted to emphasise that satisfying the needs of the body, including the stomach, is the basis of human existence. This is the same principle that the proponents of “stomach

infrastructure” have latched on to justify its burgeoning. Social exchange theory was pioneered by George Homans in 1958 with the publication of his work "Social Behavior as Exchange", in which he defined social exchange as the exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons (Cook & Rice, 2002; Homans, 1961). Afterwards, such other theorists as Peter Blau, Richard Emerson, John Thibaut, Harold Kelley, Levi Strauss and Caryl Rusbult have built upon the theory, each emphasising a unique but confluent perspective of social exchange (Cook & Rice, 2003). Homans emphasised the individual behaviour of actors in interaction with one another, centring his work on the dyadic exchange, of the various modes of exchange. Thibaut and Kelley employed psychological concepts, dyad and small group, while Levi-Strauss, in adopting an anthropological perspective, focused on systems of generalized exchange, such as kinship systems and gift exchange. Blau focussed more towards the economic and utilitarian perspective, which stressed the role of anticipated reward as the motive for social interaction. Emerson, however, interwove the ideas of both Homans and Blau, focussing on the relationship between power and the exchange process (Cook & Rice, 2003; Emerson, 1976; Lawler & Thye, 1999).

Essentially, social exchange theory views exchange as a social behaviour that may result in both economic and social outcomes (Lambe, Wittmann, & Spekman, 2001), and it has been generally analysed by comparing human interactions with the economic activities in market-place. Therefore, the key tenet of the theory is that human behaviour, is in essence, an exchange, particularly of rewards (Homans, 1961) or resources of primarily material character (wealth) (Cook, 2000; Stolte, Gary & Karen, 2001) and secondarily of symbolic attributes. Presumably, such exchange transactions permeate all social phenomena (Coleman, 1990), including group processes and intergroup relations, which are conceived as sets of

outcomes or joint outcomes of voluntary individual actions induced by rewards (Blau, 1964). In this view, exchange transactions constitute the foundation and open secret (Homans, 1961) of social life, of group processes and relations particularly. Exchange theorists have elaborated and summarized the above argument as follows.

Arguably, social action is an exchange of (tangible or intangible) activities and rewards/costs between individuals because people have always explained their conduct through its benefits and costs to them. “Exchange” represents the basis of human behaviour (Homans, 1961) and is pervasive throughout social life (Coleman, 1990). Social exchange theory views social life as consisting of exchanges among social actors (individuals or collectivities) of a variety of valuable resources, including material goods, financial resources, and intangible social goods, (humour, respect, information) (Dowd,1975). “Social exchange” may happen on a variety of levels; individuals may exchange with organizations (such as exchanging work effort for a paycheque) and governments with each other (such as foreign aid exchange for loyalty). Exchange theorists argue that social life is founded on these exchanges, in which the parties desire to maximize their returns on their exchange by getting as much or more than they give. If one party to the exchange is not receiving an equitable return, that party will withdraw and seek other exchanges.

It should be mentioned at this juncture that social life is not quite that simple. In exchange theory, it is important to consider whether those making exchanges hold equal power (equal resources) because power influences how the exchange will occur. More powerful exchange partners, whether individuals, corporations, community groups, or nations, have a larger reserve of valued resources to give. Being thus endowed, they have a wide range of potential partners eagerly awaiting an exchange opportunity. Because they can pick and choose among exchange partners, they can control the terms of the

exchange to their benefit. In applying the concepts of exchange theory to voters' behaviour and voting outcome, we could examine the relative power of participants in the exchange which may be conditioned by socioeconomic status, or other social factors as well as the various types of exchanges that are on-going between the electorates and political office seekers and those undertaken under special conditions such as during campaigns or election periods. The principle of exchange and reciprocity are sometimes visible in the gifting of various types that occur during an election, including financial and materials gifting to the electorates. To further explain how exchange performs its role during an election, some people have argued that voting for a particular party or candidate by electorates in an election is essentially delayed reciprocity, i.e. repayment on a deferred debt for gifts (monetary and materials) received during campaigns. In this sense, the norm of reciprocity is a special case of exchange theory operating between the various stakeholders. Morgan and Kunkel (1998) suggest that keeping the exchange at least somewhat —even is important to the wellbeing of participants. Electorates who are recipients of both financial and material gifts often value the opportunity to support a particular party or candidate, even if that support involves simply campaign for or voting for such party or candidate. Family members with physical impairments requiring a lot of assistance can be broadly defining support that is exchanged if understood that they are still contributing (Walker & Ahmad, 1992). Social Exchange has received considerable research attention, in part because of the renewed stomach infrastructure in Nigeria political lexicon.

Methods of the Study

This study is qualitative in nature and it employed in-depth interview, a key ethnographic method, to generate primary data from the samples. The samples of twenty (20) respondents were purposively drawn from the population of interest (Bernard, 1994) because, for a

study of this nature, smaller but focused samples rather than large samples are often most appropriate (Cassel & Symon, 1994; Denzin & Lincon, 2005; Paton, 1990). Respondents were selected based on such different purposive characteristics as age, residency status, voting status, length of stay in Ekiti State, availability, and most importantly without any knowledge of their political affiliation. For ease of access, market sites were chosen and this proved to be advantageous as it provided access to the most appropriate demographic. Virtually all of the respondents were small scale traders with roadside stalls, produce sellers, okada (commercial motorcycle) riders, or owners of other forms of informal enterprise.

The major market places in the study locations, therefore, provided the opportunity to gather the requisite data for the study, particularly since political parties specifically appeal more to members of various informal sector constituencies during electioneering campaigns than they do to those in the formal sector. This makes them an interesting sub-segment through which to better understand the dynamics of “stomach infrastructure”. The interviews were conducted by four research assistants, who are themselves, citizens of Ekiti state, from Wednesday 3rd May to Friday 19th May 2017. The major instrument employed in eliciting information from the interviewees is the in-depth interview guide. Different salient questions were administered, as the interview guide employed was designed to elicit information relevant to the study. The responses were rendered in both the local language (Yoruba) and Pidgin English and these were appropriately transcribed and presented in the formal English language. This was carefully done to ensure that there are no ambiguities in the real meanings of the responses. The data gathered in this study were analysed using appropriate qualitative data analysis tools. This study followed a careful presentation and meaningful interpretation of data, in such a way that it proffers a deep understanding of the subject matter of this paper.

Study Location

Ekiti State is one of the six states in Southwest Nigeria and came into being after the split of the old Ondo state into two on 1st October 1996 with Ado-Ekiti as the capital city. The state lies south of Kwara and Kogi States, east of Osun State and bounded by Ondo State in the east and the south. Ekiti State was created with sixteen (16) constitutionally recognised Local Government Areas (LGAs), while an additional four were created out of the old ones. The 2006 census exercise put the population of Ekiti at over 2 million people (National Population Commission-NPopC, 2009). Ekiti state was originally homogenous in ethnic composition, but such other tribes as Ebara, Nupe, Igede, Igala, Urhobo, Igbo and Hausa have successfully blended into the population - through the internal migration process. Geopolitically, the State is divided into three senatorial districts: Ekiti Central senatorial district, Ekiti North senatorial district and Ekiti South senatorial district.

Findings and Discussions

This study seeks to establish the antecedents, if any, of “stomach infrastructure” in Nigeria, and to investigate the factors responsible for its burgeoning, in the process, determine the general attitude of the populace towards the phenomenon. Indeed, specific questions as to the interviewees' knowledge of the existence of the politics of “stomach infrastructure” revealed that it is not a new phenomenon in the political mobilisation process in Nigeria. Some of the reactions are as presented thus:

...I have been voting since the 1960s and I can tell you categorically that there is nothing new in giving voters something to encourage them to vote...although, I must state that it was not as brazen as we have it now... (IDI, 70 years old, Male, Ado-Ekiti)

...the truth is that giving money to the voters has always been part of the politics in Nigeria and that is why we have the politics of godfatherism. I am in my 50s and I was already aware of the dynamics of voting in the 1970s and I know that money has always played a major role in politics. (IDI, 58 years old, Female, Ilejemeje).

...stomach infrastructure is just a new way of calling what has been in existence for quite some time in Nigeria...I am sure you have heard of “amala” politics made popular by the late Adedibu in Ibadan and also “wara” politics made popular by the late Saraki, the father of the present senate president, in Ilorin...I also understand the late Ahmadu Bello's house was a mecca of sorts in his era because the masses had “kunu” readily available for them anytime they visited...these are all different variants of stomach infrastructure (IDI, 62 years old, Male, Ilejemeje)

...it is only in a society like Nigeria where we celebrate mediocrity that something like that (stomach infrastructure) can be popular...I have never heard of it before and so I believe it is a new phenomenon which became popular with our nascent democracy...for instance, the politics of Awolowo, Shagari, Waziri, Azikwe and the rest of them were politics of ideologies and principles and people followed them based on these and not on any inducements (IDI, 57 years old, Female, Ado-Ekiti)

On the study's quest to investigate the factors responsible for the burgeoning of “stomach infrastructure”, the interviewee opinions were indeed revealing:

...that is like asking the obvious...there is so much poverty in the land and of course, the hunger in the households is biting very hard...with that sort of situation, many will not hesitate to collect whatever inducements they offer them for voting...to me, a hungry person cannot think rationally at (IDI, 38 years old, Female, Ado-Ekiti)

...let me even confess to you, I collected Fayose's rice, money and some other gifts he made available for the people during the campaign...what else do you want me to do?...I am a graduate of over seven years and I don't have a job till now, neither am I sure of my future...in fact, many people like me queued to collect the gifts from Fayose's agents and many of them were like me, jobless and hopeless...so it is the situation in the country that made “stomach infrastructure” popular (IDI, 29 years old, Male, Ilejemeje)

...honestly, in which sane society will you have something like stomach infrastructure being preferred to the provision of basic social infrastructure?...the people are poor, hungry and disillusioned, and as such, they have no opportunity for human development...is not it the physical infrastructures and social amenities that will pave the way for people to achieve human development...it (stomach infrastructure) can only thrive in a society like ours with the prevalent dire economic vicissitude (IDI, 62 years old, Female, Ado-Ekiti)

...in my opinion, to state that Ekiti people voted for stomach infrastructure is to insult our collective intelligence as a people with a penchant for educational achievement...I can tell you that majority of the people that voted in the last election were amongst the ranks of Okada riders, artisans, street traders and all sorts, and only a few of them are from Ekiti...majority of these people are Ebiras, Tivs, Agatus, and even Igbos and they are migrants from other states whom the politicians in all the parties induced to vote...you can quote me on that (IDI, 49 years old, Male, Ilejemeje)

Regarding the key factors responsible for the fostering of “stomach infrastructure”, opinions of the interviewees, as presented are illuminating:

...my own take on this is that it is not stomach infrastructure that was

popular but rather candidate Fayose, who is a man of the people and with whom the masses identify...Fayemi was not the peoples' governor, as he was too far removed from the masses and I can say that because the day he came to my community and we went to welcome him, he sat in his car until he got to the venue of the community meeting, while people, some old enough to be his parents walked the distance, which was about two kilometres...He was too elitist and he was more concerned about his cronies in Lagos and abroad (IDI, 41 years old, Male, Ilejemeje)

...please, forget that talk about stomach infrastructure being the reason people voted for Osoko'(Short form for Osokomole-Fayose's nickname). Osoko' is a man of the masses and he is very close to the common man, whom most times have the opportunity to hail him whenever he drives past them and doesn't forget he goes about with his car window wound down most times...he is the kind of man that will stop and greet the people, ask them about their problems, share their food with them, drink palm wine with them... Fayemi will travel on Ekiti roads to Abuja and Lagos all the time and not once will you see him stop and feel the pulse of the people...you can't even see him and when you see him on television, he is busy speaking grammar...so even if Osoko did not give anybody one naira, it would not have mattered because, of a truth, some people did not collect anything from him or his agent and they still voted massively for him (IDI, 63 years old, Female, Ilejemeje)....

...the question I have asked so far is how does physical infrastructure feed a poor, hungry man?...so when people go on about Fayemi's physical infrastructure, is it the road construction, the new statehouse, the refurbishment of Ikogosi, or the building of the pavilion that will feed the people?...even all of these projects were not executed by people in Ekiti but rather by people outside Ekiti, who assume, they are from this state, have been too far removed from

Ekiti to know the realities on ground...people are hungry and they need to be fed and taken care of...taking care of the people is what won the election for Fayose...(IDI, 55 years old, Male, Ado-Ekiti).

...as for me, another name for stomach infrastructure is illiteracy and majority of the electorate in Ekiti are either not educated at all or scarcely educated...his main support base is among the okada (commercial motorcycle) riders, market men and women, traders, artisans, street urchins and people of like character...it is to such people that stomach infrastructure holds any appeal and that explains why it became successful...it also became successful because unfortunately, the educated ones among us, the elites as they see themselves, do not vote, they only analyse and analyses don't win elections (IDI, 37 years old, Female, Ado-Ekiti)

One of the study's objectives was to access the acceptability of the phenomenon of “stomach infrastructure” amongst the people of Ekiti state. Finding from the in-depth interview are as follow:

...the truth is that stomach infrastructure is widely accepted among the proletariats in Ekiti and that explains why Fayose is very popular with the masses (IDI, 32 years old, Male, Ado-Ekiti)

...the elites in Ekiti do actually abhor the phenomenon of stomach infrastructure but it was not even meant for them in the first instance...it was meant for the masse because the elites don't vote during elections...the masses do (IDI, 24 years old, Female, Ilejemeje)....

... stomach infrastructure is what the masses in Ekiti thrive on in this era and we all love how it helps us with solving some of our hunger inflicted problems...it is not meant for the well to do because they already have the wherewithal to take care of their needs...they don't want to hear anything about stomach infrastructure (IDI, 27 years old, Male, Ilejemeje).

...that thing (stomach infrastructure) is utter rubbish as far as I am concerned...it can only be celebrated by the dredges of a warped society (IDI, 45 years old, Female, Ado-Ekiti)

The study establishes that “Stomach Infrastructure” is not new in the Nigerian political space as indeed, virtually all the interviewee alluded to the fact that inducement has been part of the dynamics of the politics in Nigeria from the 1950s. It is deemed to be a way of encouraging the electorate to vote. The submission by a majority of the interviewee is that while the practice may not have been as brazen as they appear in the present times, political patronage had played a major role in the mobilisation of the electorate in Nigeria, and this they believe is the genesis of godfatherism in the Nigerian political terrain. In underscoring their claims about the prior existence of the phenomenon, interviewees referred to the concept of “amala” politics made popular by the late Adedibu in Ibadan, Oyo State and also “wara” politics made popular by the late Saraki in Ilorin, Kwara State. They also pointed out the fact that the late Ahmadu Bello's house used to be a “mecca” of sorts in his era because the masses had “kunu” readily available for them anytime they visited.

Without a doubt, this finding underscores the position of past works which revealed that concerning political mobilization in African, people were concerned more about factors that relate to their well-being, most especially in terms of pocketbook issues such as their incomes and other indicators of economic well-being (Posner & Simon 2002; Youde 2005). The findings also further lend credence to the schools that analysed Nigeria's politics with an emphasis on the activities of the dominant class and, in particular, its consumerist behaviour patterns (Joseph 1987), as well as to the schools that latched to the principal-agent model and the theory of incentives and strategic behaviour to explain the political economy of democratic

elections in Nigeria (Besley, 2006; Olopoenia, 1998). Some also believed that “stomach infrastructure” and all it represents in the current political space in Nigeria is nascent. They believed politics of the past in Nigeria were based more on ideologies and principles of the political parties and those of the political gladiators of the past.

Further findings from the study brought to the fore the fact that the prevalent economic vicissitude in Nigeria, typified by acute poverty is one of the major reasons the phenomenon of “stomach infrastructure” became significantly successful. Some of the interviewees affirmed that the poverty in the land has engendered much hunger in the households, and that's in such precarious situation, it would indeed be difficult to not be susceptible to inducements. These findings are instructive as Ekiti State is largely rural and agrarian, and as such almost, all its inhabitants depend on government patronage for sustenance. The fact is further exacerbated by the fact the state itself happens to be one of the smallest in Nigeria, thereby receiving the smallest allocation from the Federal central government. That poverty is a major factor in the success of the phenomenon should offer no surprise as it has been affirmed to be a major factor that makes many electorates particularly vulnerable to mobilization on the bases of offers of the clientelistic exchange of 'small chops' (Lindberg & Weghorst, 2010). Indeed, according to Stoke (2007), voters in conditions of penury, are assumed willing to sell their votes at election time for such 'selective goods' as food, clothing, or petty cash (Stoke, 2007). As such, the suggestion is that the mobilization of such constituencies depends largely on the presence of clientelistic resources.

Generally, Nigeria has since 2013, been reported to harbour one of the largest populations of the poor in the world, and according to Yagboyaju (2014), it may not be impossible that up to 70% of Nigeria's entire population still lives on less than the United Nations poverty

threshold of \$2 a day, since the minimum wage for workers in the public sector of the economy is a mere N18 000 (less than \$120) a month. Along this line, Yagboyaju further posited that the situation would be better appreciated when the fact that only a minor proportion of the population in the country is employed either by the government the organised private sector, while a vast majority is either unemployed or engaged in various forms of informal business activities, for which incomes and earnings are generally low oftentimes unstable.

Furthermore, this study finds that for some of the interviewees, material inducements seemed to be the least central in the factors that impelled them to vote for Fayose. Many of them claimed that their decision to vote for Fayose was not buoyed by “stomach infrastructure” but rather by the personality of Fayose, whom they considered ebullient and closer to the electorate. Regarded by many to be a man of the people and with whom the masses identify, Fayose it was reported was always in the face of the people he sought to govern. He was reported to have the knack for driving around with his car window wound down, thereby using the opportunity to wave at the people and vice versa. He is also said to be one with no qualms about consorting with the masses, oftentimes joining them to eat and even drink in the public, particularly in the market place.

Another key finding of the study is that while “stomach infrastructure” is particularly unpopular amongst the elites in Ekiti, who most often are the educated ones, but evidently in the minority, the phenomenon is widely accepted among the proletariats in Ekiti. Some of the interviewees believe that the reason for this is not unconnected with the fact that the elites are seen to be beyond the scale of such economic deprivation as may make them susceptible to the allure of inducements and political patronage. It is believed that “stomach infrastructure” is not meant for the well to do because they

already have the wherewithal to take care of their needs, and as such do not want to hear anything about stomach infrastructure. Perhaps, along this line, it becomes logical that the phenomenon is popular with the masses because they constitute a significant percentage of the actual voters in the state, while the educated elites Nigeria prefer to live in big cities such as Abuja, Ibadan, Lagos and Port Harcourt, among others, and do not participate in voting as much as the commoners.

Conclusion

Without a shade of doubt, it is incumbent on the state to ensure the amelioration of the human condition in its entire ramification. Perhaps these have informed the basis of the conscientious agenda of most nations to fight against deprivation, poverty, and hunger. In many parts of the world, this is the foundation of the social security programme, which is a deliberate action programme of government aimed at promoting the well-being of its population through deliberate assistance schemes that guarantee access to sufficient resources for food and shelter and to promote health and well-being for the population at large, as well as of the potentially vulnerable segments such as children, the elderly, the sick and the unemployed. In other words, social security refers to the range of succour offered by a society when people are faced with certain risk.

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