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The Political Economy of Individualism and Public Welfare in Nigeria: A Case Study of Kwara State's 2027 Electoral Transition

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Abstract
This paper examines the interplay between political individualism, public welfare deprivation, and electoral behaviour in Nigeria, using Kwara State's emerging 2027 electoral transition as its primary empirical lens. The Nigeria's Fourth Republic has been characterised by the monetisation of democratic participation, the instrumentalisation of social welfare, and the entrenchment of clientelist networks that subordinate collective public interests to the private calculations of political elites. Drawing on political economy theory, clientelism frameworks, and political clientelism literature, the study interrogates how individual politicians deploy welfare resources or their absence as electoral currency, how voters navigate welfare deprivation under conditions of political vulnerability, and how the transitional dynamics in Kwara State illuminate broader national contradictions. The study employs a qualitative research design, relying on documentary analysis, secondary data, and thematic synthesis of peer-reviewed scholarship. The findings reveal that the politicisation of social welfare, vote-buying, ethnic and partisan targeting, and the dominance of money politics consistently undermine electoral integrity and policy responsiveness in Nigeria. In Kwara State, the collapse of the Saraki political dynasty after the 2019 *Ó Tò Gé* movement and the subsequent consolidation of APC governance under Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq have created new competitive pressures ahead of 2027. The study concluded that unless structural reforms in campaign financing, social protection delivery, and electoral regulation are institutionalised, Kwara State and Nigeria more broadly risk reproducing the same cycles of individualist elite competition at the expense of genuine public welfare. The

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study recommends policy interventions targeting electoral finance transparency, social protection de-politicisation, and civic education.

Keywords: *Political Economy, Individualism, Public Welfare, Clientelism, Kwara State.*

Introduction

Since 1999, Nigeria has been in a democratic experiment that has resulted in a paradox: a republic with a constitution that stipulates the welfare of its citizens, but whose structure is built around the competitive accumulation and use of private political resources. Since its establishment, the Fourth Republic, which has been in existence for more than 20 years now, has been characterised by a growing fusion of money politics, ethnic mobilisation with transactional exchanges between candidates and voters, rather than by programmatic competition between ideologically divided parties. The paradox was enmeshed in the conflict between the political individualism, defined by the political actors' focus on personal electoral survival and the interests of elites, and the normative political expectation of public welfare, which democratic governance is supposed to provide.

Political financing is at the heart of this tension. As has been demonstrated by Nwangwu (2025), in Nigeria social protection programmes are prone to being captured and weaponised by election campaigns, and welfare is less a right of citizenship as gift of electoral patronage. This is a politicisation of social policy, but the systemic displacement of the interests of politicians is a facet of the wider political economy. The ramifications are far reaching, for the welfare-dependent vote becomes politically vulnerable, and the democratic process itself becomes a marketplace for the exchange of material benefits for votes (Awoyemi, 2025; Stockemer & Amaechi, 2024).

The Kwara State in North-Central Nigeria is a very instructive case study of these dynamic. The State which saw one of the most remarkable political changes in the country in 2019 when grassroots citizens' movement known as *Ó Tò Gé* ("Enough is Enough") toppled the Saraki political dynasty which had been in existence for a long time (Ogundare, Seriki & Jimoh, 2023). This change brought in the All-Progressives Congress (APC) under the leadership of Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, who was re-elected with a massive margin in 2023. With the nearing electoral cycle of 2027, new competition has emerged and old issues of welfare, money and loyalty to the party are all coming back in new languages (Agboga, 2024).

In this study, the politics of individualism and public welfare in Nigeria in the electoral transition of Kwara State in the year 2027 have been discussed. It asks this question: How do patterns of political individualism and the instrumentalisation of welfare state look in Kwara State's electoral politics? What are the structural changes that must take place to move away from the cycle of transactional democracy and in its place to put in place real democracy for welfare delivery in the state and the country as a whole?

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Literature Review

Money Politics and Electoral Behaviour in Nigeria

Politics in Nigeria has been monetised for a while now, but the level of monetisation and institutionalisation has increased since it returned to civilian rule in 1999. Okeke and Nwali (2020) offer an exhaustive analysis of how campaign financing laws, despite their intentions of controlling the overwhelming influence of money in the Nigerian election, have been ineffective. Their basic issue is not that there are no rules, but that rules are not enforced consistently and small-town godfathers and the rich control the election. The emerging political economy is one that depends on financial ability rather than programmatic success to gain access to state power.

Nwagwu, Uwaechia, Udegbunam and Nnamani (2022) noted that vote buying during the 2015 and 2019 general elections was not an exception to the rule, as material inducements ranging from cash, foodstuffs, and other goods were freely given by candidates on an inter-party basis. In a subsequent study they argue that vote-buying is an inherent fault of the political system in Nigeria's Fourth Republic which contributes to the lack of quality and the perception that votes are a commodity, and not a reflection of civic agency.

This is a two-way relationship that has its demand side just as significant. The study by Stockemer and Amaechi (2024) on Edo State indicates that material deprivation, low levels of trust in institutions, and social normalization of clientelist exchange are all factors influencing the acceptance of electoral bribes. These results are consistent with the results of Gherghina, Saikkonen and Bankova (2022), who conclude that low levels of democratic satisfaction and limited political knowledge are strong determinants of the acceptance of clientelism in transitional democracies in Africa.

Clientelism, Social Welfare, and Democratic Accountability

Clientelism (the delivery of goods, services or benefits in exchange for political support) plays a complex role in the discussion of democracy in Africa. Klaus et al. (2023) offer a new paradigm for political clientelism in Africa, focusing on the two types of demands: material and recognition and social belonging. This subtlety is significant for the Nigeria context where clientelist networks are interwoven into ethnic, religious and community interests that makes it difficult to find an easy economic explanation of vote buying and patron-client relationships.

In his chapter on political clientelism in democracies, Mariana Borges Martins da Silva (2024) offers a systematic overview of the concept and the nature of the difference between programmatic and non-programmatic clientelism, and the contexts in which they flourish. Clientelism often replaces, and not complements, formal social protection systems in weak institutional contexts, which refer to underdeveloped welfare states, weak rule of law and high inequality. In this sense, clientelism is not just about the failure of democracy but it can be a way of political incorporation of marginalised groups at the expense of the responsiveness and accountability of policies (Trantdis, 2025).

The evocative term “infrastructure of the stomach” is introduced by Busari (2020) to describe Nigeria's transactional politics, which describes a style of political engagement where politicians provide basic material needs food, cash, small goods, etc. instead of long-lasting infrastructural development. This idea reflects a basic paradox of the Nigerian democracy: the inability of the

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state to provide developmental welfare services, which politicians exploit through targeted welfare services. McPherson-Smith (2022) builds on this work, and he and his colleagues investigate the role of professional interest groups as brokers in between political elites and citizens, occasionally as links in clientelist networks, and not as representatives of structural welfare reform.

Ethnic, Partisan, and Demographic Targeting in Nigerian Elections

Targeting electoral benefits is not necessarily ad hoc; it is organised by ethnic, partisan and socioeconomic lines. Awoyemi (2025) offers strong empirical support for the idea that political decision makers deliberately direct their attention to co-ethnic and co-partisan constituencies, in the service of a decision-making process that is both cost-benefit and risk-management oriented. Such patterns exacerbate ethnic divisions and create structural disincentives for politicians who are concerned with their own survival in elections to engage in programmatic welfare politics that would compromise their ethnic politics.

In Lagos State, Ajayi (2023) looks at the urban poor as a targeted and vulnerable population, finding that electoral manipulation tends to be clustered in poorer urban areas where transactional incentives are more effective on voters because of material lack. Indeed, Olaniyan (2020) makes a similar case that vote-buying flourishes in poor and weak electoral institutions, and that it remains to be better reformed through overarching institutional changes and not through individual enforcement.

Kwara State's Political Economy

The Kwara State's political development is inseparable from the dynamics of political dynasticism and its disruption. For nearly two decades, the state's politics were dominated by the Saraki family first by Olusola Saraki and later by his son, Senate President Bukola Saraki. The Saraki dynasty exemplified political individualism at its most entrenched: a personalised political machine sustained through patronage networks, ethnic loyalties, and the strategic deployment of public resources for private political ends. When the *Ó Tò Gé* movement dismantled this structure in 2019, it represented a popular assertion of civic agency against individualised elite rule a rare instance of collective public welfare interests disrupting entrenched private political ones.

Ogundare, Seriki and Jimoh (2023) analyse the 2023 presidential election in Kwara State and find that the APC's consolidation of power was shaped by the lingering anti-Saraki sentiment, the mobilisation of federal resources, and the continuing absence of strong programmatic opposition. Agboga (2024), examining party switching and political loyalty in Nigeria, provides a useful analytical lens for understanding the fluid allegiances that are likely to characterise Kwara State's 2027 electoral landscape, as former members of opposition formations recalculate their positions ahead of the electoral cycle.

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Theoretical Framework

This paper is draws on two complementary theoretical traditions to frame its analysis: political economy theory and clientelism theory.

Political Economy Theory

Political Economy Theory, in its application to electoral politics, focuses on the relationship between political power, economic resources, institutions, and the distribution of public benefits. The modern political economy tradition has been developed through the contributions of scholars such as Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and Anthony Downs, with Downs (1957) providing an important rational-choice foundation for understanding political behaviour. The central argument of the theory is that political actors and other participants in the political process respond to material interests and incentives within particular institutional and economic conditions. In electoral settings, politicians may therefore act as self-interested maximisers seeking to acquire and retain political power, while voters may respond to the economic benefits associated with competing political choices. In the Nigerian context, the political economy framework reveals how electoral competition under conditions of weak state capacity, high informality, and unequal resource distribution generates systematic incentives for politicians to invest in private patronage networks rather than public goods provision. The formal-institutional rules of electoral democracy, including campaign finance regulations, social welfare mandates, and voter protection laws, coexist with and are frequently subordinated to informal political economy logics that reward those who can mobilise private resources most effectively (Okeke & Nwali, 2020; Nwangwu, 2025).

Applied to Kwara State, Political Economy Theory directs attention to how the structural conditions of the state, including its fiscal dependence on federal allocations, socioeconomic inequalities, and history of patronage politics, shape the incentives of politicians approaching the 2027 electoral transition. The theory also illuminates how voters' welfare deprivation, rather than necessarily serving as a driver of accountability politics, may paradoxically make them more susceptible to clientelist capture by better-resourced candidates. From this perspective, individualism in the political sphere can emerge where political actors prioritise private accumulation, electoral survival, and narrow networks of political support over collective welfare, while economically vulnerable citizens may prioritise immediate individual benefits over demands for universal public goods. The theory is therefore useful for examining whether the political and economic conditions surrounding Kwara State's 2027 electoral transition are likely to reinforce patronage-based exchanges and individualistic political behaviour or encourage a stronger orientation towards collective welfare, public accountability, and equitable distribution of state resources.

Clientelism Theory

Clientelism theory, as synthesised by Mariana Borges Martins da Silva (2024) and elaborated by Trantidis (2025), provides the conceptual tools to analyse the specific mechanisms through which political individualism displaces public welfare. The core insight is that clientelism involves a particularistic, non-programmatic distribution of benefits targeted at specific individuals or groups in exchange for political support as distinct from universalistic welfare provision. In contexts where formal social protection institutions are weak or captured by political interests

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(Nwangwu, 2025), clientelism fills the welfare vacuum but in ways that reproduce political dependency rather than citizenship rights.

Klaus, Paller and Wilfahrt's (2023) "recognition framework" adds an important dimension by arguing that clientelist demands are not merely material but also involve claims to social visibility and political acknowledgement. In the Kwara State context, this framework helps explain why voters in marginalised communities may respond positively to politicians who "see" them through targeted patronage, even when such gestures fall far short of structural welfare improvement. Together, these theories frame the 2027 electoral transition as a site where individualist political logics and public welfare deficits interact to shape political outcomes.

Methodology

This study adopts a **qualitative research design** because it seeks to explain the political and economic processes shaping individualism, electoral behaviour, patronage, clientelism, and public welfare in Kwara State. These issues involve political interests, institutional practices, and informal relationships that require contextual interpretation rather than numerical measurement. **Documentary analysis** is appropriate because relevant evidence is available in scholarly literature, INEC reports, government documents, civil society publications, and credible media sources. Using these sources also allows the study to examine electoral developments and welfare-related policies while triangulating information from different sources.

Kwara State is selected purposively because its recent political transition, particularly the shift from the Saraki-era political structure, provides a useful setting for examining changing patterns of political mobilisation, electoral competition, and resource distribution. The **case study approach** allows these developments to be examined within their specific political and socioeconomic context while drawing implications for wider Nigerian electoral politics. **Thematic synthesis** is used to organise the documentary evidence around key issues, including campaign financing, vote-buying and clientelism, social welfare, electoral targeting, and the post-Saraki political landscape. Combining inductive and deductive coding ensures that important patterns emerging from the evidence are captured while remaining connected to the political economy framework. Triangulation across multiple sources further strengthens the credibility of the findings and reduces dependence on any single source.

The Political Economy of Campaign Financing and Welfare Instrumentalisation

Campaign financing is closely linked to the use of public welfare as an electoral resource. Nwangwu (2025) shows that social protection programmes, including cash transfers, food support, and other welfare interventions, can be redirected towards electoral objectives. From a political economy perspective, this occurs when political actors treat public resources as instruments for securing electoral support. Welfare allocation then becomes selective and politically calculated, rather than guided primarily by citizens' needs. The analytical concern is therefore not simply whether welfare is provided, but **who receives it, when it is provided, and whether its distribution is influenced by electoral considerations.**

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This pattern is relevant to Kwara State, where palliatives, constituency projects, road interventions, and welfare announcements can acquire electoral significance when concentrated around politically strategic periods or constituencies. Such practices may produce short-term political loyalty without addressing the structural causes of poverty and welfare deprivation. Busari's (2020) concept of the **"infrastructure of the stomach"** captures this dynamic, where limited material benefits can sustain political dependence while broader institutional welfare capacity remains weak. The problem is therefore one of sustainability and accountability: welfare becomes a means of securing political support rather than a consistent public entitlement.

Campaign finance further reinforces this relationship. Okeke and Nwali (2020) argue that weaknesses in the enforcement of Nigeria's campaign finance regulations have allowed substantial private resources to influence electoral competition. In Kwara State, access to state and federal political networks may therefore give incumbent actors greater capacity to finance mobilisation and distribute selective benefits. As the 2027 election approaches, the central analytical question is whether these resource advantages will strengthen welfare-oriented governance or deepen the use of public resources for electoral mobilisation. This makes campaign financing an important mechanism through which individual political interests can influence the distribution and character of public welfare.

Vote-Buying, Clientelism, and Democratic Deficits

Vote-buying represents a major expression of clientelist politics in Nigeria, where material benefits are exchanged for electoral support. Nwagwu et al. (2022; 2023) document its prevalence during the 2015 and 2019 elections, demonstrating that vote-buying cuts across political parties and geographical areas. In Kwara State, reports surrounding the 2019 and 2023 elections indicate similar practices, including the distribution of cash, food items, and other material benefits to voters. From a political economy perspective, this practice reflects an exchange relationship in which politicians seek electoral support while economically vulnerable voters seek immediate material benefits. The persistence of this exchange can weaken democratic accountability because voters may evaluate political actors according to short-term benefits rather than policy performance and long-term welfare outcomes.

The effectiveness of vote-buying is influenced by **material deprivation, weak institutional trust, and the normalisation of political exchange.** Stockemer and Amaechi (2024) identify these conditions as important factors influencing voters' acceptance of electoral bribes. These conditions are relevant to Kwara State, particularly where unemployment, inadequate social services, and established patronage networks may increase voters' vulnerability to clientelist strategies. However, voter behaviour is not determined by economic hardship alone. Gherghina, Saikkonen and Bankova (2022) show that greater democratic knowledge and satisfaction can reduce acceptance of clientelism, suggesting that civic education and institutional trust may weaken transactional politics. Klaus, Paller and Wilfahrt (2023) add an important dimension by showing that clientelism can also provide voters with a sense of recognition and political inclusion. Thus, addressing vote-buying in Kwara requires attention to both material deprivation and the broader problem of citizens' exclusion from meaningful political participation.

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Emerging evidence suggests that these dynamics are already shaping the approach to the 2027 elections. In June 2026, the Chairman of Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), speaking in Ilorin, warned that vote-buying schemes ahead of the 2027 elections had become more sophisticated, noting that transactions are increasingly conducted well before election day and outside official electoral frameworks, which makes them more difficult to detect (Businessday NG, 2026a). In response, civil society actors in Kwara State have begun mobilising against the practice: the International Women Communication Center launched a community advocacy campaign across five local government areas in the state, in partnership with the Independent National Electoral Commission, to discourage vote buying, voter apathy, and political violence ahead of the polls (Radio Kwara News, 2026). These developments suggest that, far from receding, the political economy of vote-buying identified in the 2015, 2019, and 2023 election cycles is adapting to new tactics as the 2027 contest approaches.

Ethnic and Partisan Targeting in Electoral Mobilisation

Nigeria's ethnic diversity makes identity an important factor in electoral mobilisation, particularly where political actors use selective distribution of resources to secure loyal constituencies. Awoyemi (2025) provides evidence that politicians may direct vote-buying resources towards co-ethnic and co-partisan groups as a strategy for reducing electoral uncertainty and securing political support. This is relevant to Kwara State, where Yoruba, Nupe, Bariba, Fulani, and other communities form part of the state's political landscape. However, the experience of the **Ó Tò Gé movement in 2019** demonstrates that ethnic identity can be temporarily subordinated when different groups share a broader political objective. The movement brought together diverse constituencies around opposition to the dominance of the Saraki political structure. Its success suggests that shared political grievances can create cross-ethnic mobilisation, although such alliances may become less cohesive once their immediate objective has been achieved.

The post-Saraki political environment also demonstrates the limits of such coalitions. Agboga (2024) shows that party switching in Nigeria is often influenced by politicians' strategic calculations and political survival. This suggests that alliances formed around opposition to a dominant political actor may weaken when individual interests begin to diverge. In the approach to 2027, this may encourage new political alignments based on personal, partisan, ethnic, or constituency interests. The class dimension further complicates electoral targeting. Ajayi (2023) finds that politically vulnerable urban populations are particularly exposed to targeted electoral inducements. This is relevant to low-income communities in Ilorin, where economic vulnerability may increase susceptibility to clientelist mobilisation. The interaction between **ethnicity, partisanship, and socioeconomic status** therefore produces a layered form of electoral targeting in which political actors appeal to different aspects of voters' identities and material circumstances to secure electoral support.

These dynamics are visible in the early positioning for the 2027 governorship race. Zonal balancing has become an explicit feature of candidate selection: the ruling APC's eventual flagbearer, Assembly Speaker Yakubu Danladi-Salihu, was presented partly to satisfy long-standing calls for a Kwara North governor, while opposition figures associated with the PDP have drawn on Ilorin Emirate identity and the legacy of the Saraki-era coalition in Kwara Central

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(Shuaib, 2026). Traditional rulers in Kwara North have organised prayer sessions calling for a "power shift" to the zone, while stakeholders in Kwara South have separately cautioned monarchs in their district against overt partisanship amid disputes over senatorial zoning (Businessday NG, 2026b; FreshInsightNewsTv, 2025). Such contestation illustrates how ethnic, zonal, and dynastic identities continue to structure elite competition ahead of 2027, even as parties formally compete on programmatic grounds.

Professional Interest Groups, Political Mediation, and the 2027 Competitive Landscape

Professional and organised interest groups play an important role in mediating relationships between political actors and voters. McPherson-Smith (2022) shows that civil society organisations, trade associations, religious bodies, and professional groups can serve as intermediaries through which political interests and resources are exchanged. In Kwara State, institutions such as the Ilorin Emirate Council, trade and market associations, farmer cooperatives, and religious organisations can influence electoral mobilisation by connecting political candidates with organised constituencies. From a political economy perspective, these groups reduce the cost of reaching dispersed voters and can facilitate the distribution of patronage in return for political support. Their importance therefore extends beyond representation because they can also shape who gains access to political resources and whose interests receive political attention.

The approach to the **2027 election** is likely to increase competition among political actors for the support of these intermediary structures. Governor AbdulRazaq's administration has sought to maintain relationships with important social, business, and religious constituencies, while opposition actors and emerging political groups seek alternative networks of mobilisation. Trantidis (2025) explains this process through **clientelism as a form of political incorporation,** in which political actors integrate organised groups into networks of exchange and support. In Kwara, control or influence over such intermediary organisations could therefore provide candidates with access to established voter networks and collective political support. The analytical implication is that electoral competition is shaped not only by direct politician-voter relationships, but also by struggles over the intermediary institutions that connect political resources to organised communities.

The Ilorin Emirate Political Advisory Council (IEPAC) offers a clear illustration of this intermediary role in the 2027 cycle. The council, comprising elders, technocrats, professionals, and other stakeholders within the Emirate, has issued public endorsements of preferred governorship candidates, distanced the Emirate from endorsements it considered insufficiently consultative, and convened reconciliation meetings at the Emir's palace between rival APC- and PDP-aligned politicians (Guardian Nigeria, 2026; Legit.ng, 2026a, 2026b). The APC leadership has similarly conducted formal "thank you visits" to traditional rulers across Kwara's senatorial districts, securing pledges of support from kingmakers ahead of the polls (Leadership, 2026). These episodes demonstrate how professional and traditional intermediary institutions in Kwara State do not merely represent constituent interests but actively broker access to political resources and voter blocs in the run-up to 2027.

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Public Welfare Deficits and the Demand for Accountability

Public welfare deficits provide an important foundation for understanding the political economy of electoral competition in Kwara State. Persistent weaknesses in education, healthcare, roads, water, electricity, and social protection create conditions in which citizens may depend on politicians for individual assistance rather than demand universal and institutionalised welfare provision. From the political economy perspective, this dependence can reinforce clientelism because politicians may gain greater electoral leverage when access to basic resources is mediated through political networks. Busari (2020) therefore links welfare deficiencies to a broader system in which individual political interests can take precedence over the development of durable public institutions. The analytical issue is whether welfare deficits merely reflect limited state capacity or whether they are also sustained by political incentives that make citizens' dependence electorally useful.

At the same time, growing demands for accountability provide a potential challenge to this pattern. Olaniyan (2020) argues that electoral institutions, civil society organisations, and the courts have created additional opportunities for citizens to challenge electoral manipulation. The **Ó Tò Gé movement** demonstrated how collective mobilisation could temporarily weaken an established political structure and redirect electoral competition towards demands for political change. Its experience raises an important question for 2027: whether such demands can develop into sustained institutional accountability beyond opposition to a particular political elite. Nwangwu (2025) further argues that social protection should be insulated from electoral manipulation through professional delivery institutions, independent transfer mechanisms, and community-based verification. Thus, strengthening public welfare in Kwara requires reducing the extent to which access to essential resources depends on individual political connections and establishing systems through which welfare is treated as a public entitlement rather than an electoral instrument.

Conclusion

This study has argued that the political economy of individualism in Nigeria can weaken public welfare by encouraging money politics, welfare instrumentalisation, ethnic and partisan targeting, and clientelist mobilisation. The Kwara State experience shows both the potential for democratic change, as demonstrated by the 2019 *Ó Tò Gé* movement, and the persistence of structural incentives that reproduce patronage and welfare dependence after political transitions. As the 2027 elections approach, poverty, institutional weaknesses, political fragmentation, and limited civic engagement continue to create conditions for vote-buying and clientelism. Without reforms in campaign finance, welfare delivery, electoral regulation, and civic education, electoral competition may continue without producing meaningful welfare accountability. The study contributes to political economy scholarship by applying political economy and clientelism perspectives to a sub-national electoral transition and by highlighting the recognition dimension of clientelism identified by Klaus, Paller and Wilfahrt (2023), particularly in explaining why marginalised voters may participate in clientelist exchanges beyond immediate material needs.

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Recommendations

i. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should be empowered with adequate funding, legal authority, and political independence to enforce campaign finance regulations rigorously. This includes mandatory financial disclosure by candidates, independent auditing of campaign expenditures, and meaningful sanctions for violations. The Constituency and Campaign Finance Act should be amended to close existing loopholes and provide for real-time reporting of campaign contributions.

ii. Social protection programmes in Kwara State and at the federal level should be governed by independent, professionally managed delivery mechanisms insulated from electoral capture. This requires the separation of welfare programme administration from political offices, the use of community-based beneficiary verification, and robust transparency in the targeting and distribution of welfare resources. Digital cash transfer systems with independent verification can significantly reduce opportunities for welfare instrumentalisation.

iii. INEC's institutional capacity should be further strengthened through adequate resource allocation, professional training of electoral officers, and the adoption of evidence-based anti-vote-buying enforcement strategies. Civil society organisations with track records in electoral monitoring such as the Transition Monitoring Group, Athena Centre for Policy and Leadership and Yiaga Africa should be formally integrated into the monitoring architecture of the 2027 elections in Kwara State.

iv. Civic education programmes targeting youth and low-income urban communities in Kwara State should be prioritised. These programmes should address not only voter rights but also the structural consequences of vote-buying for long-term welfare helping voters understand the connection between electoral choices and policy outcomes.

v. Political parties in Kwara State should be incentivised through INEC's party registration and funding criteria to demonstrate genuine programmatic platforms and cross-ethnic inclusivity in their leadership and candidate selection processes. This could gradually shift electoral competition from the terrain of money and identity to one of policy ideas and governance records.

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