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Los Angeles

**Vote Buying and Accountability in Democratic Africa**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

by

**Eric Jonathan Kramon**

2013

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

**Vote Buying and Accountability in Democratic Africa**

by

**Eric Jonathan Kramon**

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Daniel N. Posner, Co-chair

Professor Barbara Geddes, Co-chair

The distribution of cash to voters during elections, vote buying, is extremely widespread in many democracies. That vote buying is so widespread raises concerns about the quality of emerging democratic institutions and the potential for elections to deliver better and more accountable government. I develop a new theory to explain why politicians in new democracies distribute money to potential voters. I argue that cash handouts are effective because they convey information to voters about the extent to which a candidate will protect and serve their interests in the future, especially with respect to the provision of patronage resources. I test this informational theory with observational and experimental data collected in Kenya, as well with existing data from a larger set of African countries. As vote buying is secretive and sensitive, and so survey and interview responses are subject to response bias, I use several survey and experimental methods to improve descriptive and causal inferences about vote buying. In a variety of empirical tests, I provide evidence directly consistent with the informational theory; I show that patterns in the prevalence and geographic allocation of vote buying across and within African countries are best explained by the informational theory; and I provide evidence that helps to rule out existing explanations.

Chapter 2 analyzes data from a nationally representative survey and survey list experiment, a method that reduces response bias in survey questions, to show that cash handouts influenced the vote choice of about 20 percent of Kenyans during the country's 2007 elections. Chapter 3 presents the informational theory and provides preliminary evidence from existing ethnographic studies and survey data from 18 African countries. Chapter 4 shows that existing explanations for vote buying, which focus on the role of political machines or on the mobilization of voter turnout, are insufficient to explain widespread cash handouts in Kenya and other African settings.

Chapter 5 analyzes survey experimental data to show that, when Kenyan voters hear that a political candidate has distributed cash, they prefer that candidate to an otherwise identical candidate who has not done so. This effect is especially strong among poorer voters. Additionally, vote buying increases voters' expectations that a candidate will provide them with patronage and private benefits in the future, direct evidence consistent with the informational argument. Chapter 6 shows that, in conveying this information about patronage, vote buying reinforces and perpetuates patterns of ethnic voting—that is, the propensity of voters to support members of their own ethnic group at the polls. Experimental results show, in contrast to psychological or expressive theories of ethnic voting, that participants only prefer coethnic candidates and only expect to benefit from their patronage when they are engaged in vote buying. I demonstrate external validity by showing that vote buying has the most influence on vote choice when voters are targeted by members of their own ethnic group.

Chapter 7 uses data about the geographic allocation of local public goods projects in Kenya to show that vote buying is associated with more patronage allocations after an election. This result is consistent with the idea that handouts can be an informative signal about future performance. Chapter 8 shows that cash handouts not only help to convince voters that they should support a particular candidate, they also mobilize them to turn out to vote in order to gain access to the patronage resources that the patron will allocate in the future.

The last empirical chapter, Chapter 9, steps back from the question of why vote buying is effective to ask why vote-getting strategies takes the form of direct vote buying in some places but not others. With data from across Africa, I show that direct vote buying is most prevalent where local intermediaries, in this case traditional rulers, are not present or powerful enough to deliver large numbers of voters in a block. That is, politicians in Africa directly hand out cash in settings where they must win votes without the assistance of strong local brokers, a pattern that the informational theory is best suited to explain. I conclude the dissertation by discussing the implications of the results, which complicate normative interpretations of vote buying.

The dissertation of Eric Jonathan Kramon is approved.

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2013

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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

In the days leading up to Kenya's March 2013 elections, the Kenyan Human Rights Commission (KHRC) released video of two prominent Kenyan politicians engaging with potential voters. The first video features Ferdinand Waititu, the controversial and now former Member of Parliament from Nairobi's urban Embakasi Constituency. In 2013, Waititu was running to be the governor of Nairobi County, a powerful position that was created by Kenya's recently adopted constitution. A member of The National Alliance (TNA) party, the party of now president-elect Uhuru Kenyatta, Waititu is not a political outsider. The video shows Waititu, who seems regularly to be caught on camera engaging in activities that shock Nairobi's middle class elite but endear him to the unemployed youth and urban poor who are the majority in his constituency, giving a speech in the Donholm area of Nairobi.

Donholm is characteristic of urban environments in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world: access to basic infrastructure and public services is low and unemployment, especially among youth, is high. Census estimates suggest that up to 50 percent of households in some of Donholm's locations are living in poverty. In the video, Waititu promises the crowd that he will bring jobs, help women and youth, and improve food security (Al Jazeera, 2013). At the end of the video, Waititu personally hands out cash to a number of people in the crowd. As he does so, the crowd surges forward and Waititu instructs those who have received cash to share it with others in the audience.

The second video captures a campaign event held by James Ongware, a candidate for governor of Western Kenya's predominantly rural Kisii County. Ongware is a member of former presidential candidate Raila Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). In the video, Ongware is shown distributing cash to potential voters at a rally in Kisii. The video reveals an orderly system of cash distribution. Ongware's agents first create lines of men, women, and youth and subsequently hand out cash to them as they wait.

Waititu and Ongware's actions are in direct violation of Kenya's elections law, which states that "treating" voters with cash is illegal and punishable by a fine and a jail sentence. In addition, accepting cash from a political candidate also violates the election law. On internet venues such as Facebook and YouTube, Kenyans—or, at least those with access to the internet—have reacted strongly against these videos and have called on authorities to arrest them for their crimes. As of this writing, despite clear evidence of electoral malpractice, neither Waititu nor Ongware—nor any other Kenyan politician for that matter—have been charged or prosecuted for these actions.

Waititu and Ongware are not unique in Kenya and beyond. The use of cash handouts during political campaigns has a long history that transcends regional boundaries. The distribution of money and gifts to voters was widespread in the late Roman Republic (Yakobson, 1995). In Britain and the United States, the campaign strategy flourished in the 18th and 19th centuries (Bensel, 2004; O'Leary, 1962). In contemporary Latin America, the strategy, often referred to as "vote buying" (Schaffer, 2007), has been documented in Argentina (Brusco et al., 2004), Mexico (Magaloni, 2006), and Nicaragua (Gonzalez-Ocantos et al., 2012). Elsewhere, scholars have studied vote buying in Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt (Blaydes, 2010) and Lebanon (Corstange, 2010); and Asian countries such as the Philippines (Khemani, 2012) and Taiwan (Wang and Kurzman, 2007). In Africa, cash handouts have been described in a number of countries, including Benin (Banegas, 2002), Ghana (Lindberg, 2003; Nugent, 2007), Nigeria

(Bratton, 2008), São Tomé and Príncipe (Vicente, 2012), and Uganda (Conroy-Krutz and Logan, 2011).

This dissertation develops a theory to explain why political candidates use money, often in the form of cash handouts, to win the political support of voters in developing democracies. I argue that politicians hand out money because it conveys information to voters about the extent to which they will protect and favor their interests in the future, especially with respect to the provision of patronage resources. In other words, I emphasize the role of cash handouts as a costly signal to voters in a setting where voters face barriers to determining which candidates are likely to promote their interests. As access to valued resources in many developing democracies is often contingent on connections to political elites—that is, they are “patronage democracies” (Chandra, 2007)—this signal can be effective in winning electoral support.

The informational argument I present contrasts with existing theories of vote buying, which focus on the role of political machines in enforcing vote-buying contracts (Stokes, 2005), the influence of social norms in making vote-buying contracts self-enforcing (Finan and Schechter, 2012; Greene and Lawson, 2012), and the impact of handouts on mobilizing voter turnout rather than buying voter support (Nichter, 2008). I test the theory’s empirical implications with observational and experimental data I collected in Kenya, which I augment with existing ethnographic evidence and survey data collected from elsewhere in Africa. As I will show, the evidence is consistent with the informational theory. Additionally, I will show that the informational theory is best suited to explain variation across Africa and within African countries with respect to where politicians target cash handouts and with whom such handouts are effective.

In focusing on this dimension of money and its role in democratic politics—rather than on campaign finance, the impact of campaign advertising, or the role of wealthy interest groups in shaping policy, all important topics in poor and wealthy democracies alike—this project is fundamentally about the ways in which political candidates make linkages with voters at the micro-level in new democracies. As such, it contributes to

the literature on modern political clientelism (Hicken, 2011; Stokes, 2007b), or in other words, the distribution of individualized and particularist benefits by politicians to win the political support of voters (Kitschelt, 2000; Stokes, 2007b; Weitz-Shapiro, 2012).

## **1.1 Motivation: Clientelism and the Quality of Democracy in Africa**

Democracy's "third wave" reached Africa in the early 1990s. Prior to this period, only three African countries, Botswana, Mauritius, and Senegal had held multiparty elections continuously since independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Lindberg, 2006). In the 1990s, as competitive and multiparty political systems were introduced in countries long ruled by single-party, personalist, or military governments, optimism about Africa's "second independence" was widespread. Between 1989 and 2003, 44 of sub-Saharan Africa's 48 nations held elections that were, at least legally, open and competitive (Lindberg, 2006).

The record of democracy in improving government accountability and performance in Africa has been mixed (e.g. Humphreys and Weinstein, 2013; Radelet, 2010). On the one hand, Lindberg (2006) argues that the act of holding elections has deepened other dimensions of democracy, such as civil liberties, while Posner and Young (2007) find that formal institutional constraints matter more in Africa now than they have in the past. Stasavage (2005) finds that democratization has led to a shift in educational investments from higher education to primary education, and Kudamatsu (2012) finds that democratization in Africa has led to reductions in infant mortality rates.

Despite these trends, there are other less promising developments. For example, incumbent presidents still enjoy a massive advantage in elections (van de Walle, 2003). Additionally, Lindberg (2003) suggests that democratization increased "neo-patrimonial" behavior in Ghana. Consistent with this suggestion, Kramon and Posner (2011) find that democratization in Kenya did not reduce ethnic favoritism in the allocation of certain public goods. Wantchekon (2003) finds that voters in Benin are more responsive to

clientelist appeals—in other words, appeals focused on the provision of local benefits—rather than appeals centered on programmatic policies.

Corruption remains widespread in some countries (e.g. Wrong, 2009) and there is substantial “leakage” of public funds designated for education and other public services (Das et al., 2002; Reinikka and Svensson, 2004). Almost 50 percent of Kenyans believe that most or all of their cabinet ministers and assistant ministers are engaged in corruption (EACC, 2012). Almost 60 percent believe that most or all members of parliament are corrupt (EACC, 2012). And about 36 percent of Kenyans seeking services from the state—such as obtaining an identity document, educational services, or help from the police—were asked for a bribe (EACC, 2012). Given this poor performance, it is perhaps not surprising that public support for democracy has been waning, which may be indicative of democracy’s failure to deliver on its promise of better government (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2013).

Beyond Africa, evidence also suggests that the introduction of competitive elections may not be sufficient to improve political accountability and government responsiveness and performance. For example, cross-national studies find mixed results with respect to democracy’s impact on public goods provision and the welfare of the poor (Lake and Baum, 2001; Ross, 2006). In some settings, corrupt and even criminal politicians often enjoy electoral success (Aidt et al., 2011; Vaishnav, 2010).

The widespread use of cash handouts during campaigns may contribute to democracy’s mixed performance in Africa. Though they are clearly not the only threat to government accountability and responsiveness—see, for example, studies on the impact of poor voter information (Pande, 2011; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2013)—the allocation of money is one of the central strategies through which political candidates connect with voters on the continent. Of the 25,086 individuals surveyed in 18 African countries during the third wave of Afrobarometer surveys conducted in Africa, for example, 69 percent report that politicians often or always “offer gifts to voters during elections campaigns.” Only 13 percent report that politicians never do.



How might cash handouts relate to accountability and government performance? In the first place, if those living in poverty are more easily persuaded by cash handouts than are the middle class or wealthy, as most theoretical models assume (Dixit and Londregan, 1996; Stokes et al., 2012; Stokes, 2005), then incentives for politicians to be responsive to the needs of the poor may be undermined (Stokes, 2007a). As a result, government programs and policies may not benefit the poor (Khemani, 2012), who are the overwhelming majority of the electorate in Africa. More broadly, the effectiveness of cash handouts may lead to reductions in overall levels of public goods provision (Kitschelt, 2000).

The need to distribute cash and other private benefits to voters during campaigns may increase incentives for corruption. As I illustrate in Chapter 2, cash handouts are extremely costly to political campaigns, constituting the overwhelming majority of campaign expenditures in Kenya and elsewhere. As federal and political party financing of political campaigns is minimal or non-existent, especially for candidates running for positions below the level of the president, political candidates often shoulder the bulk of the financial burden personally. Many take out loans and go into substantial personal debt. It is therefore not surprising that the very politicians engaged in the distribution of money to voters are also those who complain about the system (Lindberg, 2003). Additionally, campaign finance demands can increase incentives to engage in corruption or worse, serve as corruption's moral justification. This very scenario played out within the administration of Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki. When Kibaki's anti-corruption czar John Githongo discovered the now infamous Anglo-Leasing corruption scandal, those within the administration who were implicated in the scandal tried to justify their actions to Githongo on the grounds that resources were needed to compete in the next election (Wrong, 2009).

Additionally, vote buying may undermine citizen's perception of the legitimacy of democratic elections. Because vote buying is associated in people's minds with corruption, that it is so widespread may help to explain growing dissatisfaction with the

democratic process in Africa. Moreover, when election results lack legitimacy, instability can ensue if the results are contested.

This project is thus motivated by normative concerns about the influence of cash handouts on political accountability, the political representation of the poor, and the legitimacy of democratic elections. Yet normative evaluations depend on answers to empirical questions, which have yet to be fully answered in many contexts: Are cash handouts effective in winning votes? Why are they effective in winning votes? Are they more effective with the poor? Do they reduce incentives to provide public goods in the future? How do they impact political participation? These are the questions upon which I focus in this project.

## **1.2 Puzzles**

In its focus on understanding why cash handouts are effective and so widespread in democratic Africa, this project addresses a series of interrelated puzzles about vote buying in developing democracies. The first relates to how vote buying can continue to be so widespread in settings where the secrecy of the ballot is formally protected. A second question is with respect to the relation of vote buying to ethnic identity and performance-based voting. A third relates to vote buying's association with corruption in the minds of many voters, an association that I empirically validate in this project. Results from many surveys conducted across Africa and elsewhere around the world demonstrate that voters roundly reject corruption, raising the question of why candidates who openly engage in a corrupt behavior can enjoy widespread electoral support.

### **1.2.1 Vote Buying and the Secret Ballot**

Where ballot secrecy is not legislated, distributing money to voters can be an efficient and effective campaign strategy because politicians and their agents can directly monitor recipients to make sure they are getting votes for their investments. Where the ballot

is formally secret, on the other hand, voters are free to accept cash handouts and make their voting decisions based on other criteria.

This commitment problem (Stokes, 2005) has been recognized by politicians throughout history. In Ancient Rome, for example, Cicero bemoaned ballot secrecy laws arguing that “they [allow] a man to wear a smooth brow while it cloaks the secrets of his heart, and leaves him free to act as he chooses, while he gives any promise he may be asked to give” (Yakobson, 1995). In 19th century Britain, a Conservative Member of Parliament complained that ballot secrecy laws promoted “the most un-English practice of taking bribes from both sides, or voting against the side from which a bribe had been accepted” (O’Leary, 1962). It is precisely because of this problem that some scholars point to the introduction of ballot secrecy laws as the moment in which vote buying began to die out in Britain and the United States (e.g. Cox and Kousser, 1981; O’Leary, 1962; Stokes et al., 2012).

Though ballot secrecy laws marked the end of widespread vote buying in Britain and the United States, in other settings vote buying has survived and even flourished despite the institution of the secret ballot. For example, Yakobson (1995) notes that vote buying became prevalent in Ancient Rome only *after* the introduction of laws strengthening the secret of the ballot because such laws freed voters from coercive pressure from the aristocratic elite, affording them the autonomy to be “bought” rather than simply forced to vote in a certain way. Laws protecting the secret ballot are enshrined in virtually all contemporary democracies and most, but by no means all, use only the Australian ballot, rather than ballots issued by specific political parties—a common practice in earlier eras that made it easy for parties to indirectly monitor the vote choices of cash handout recipients. Why does vote buying persist when, in the words of a Kenyan anti-vote buying campaign, voters can simply “eat but vote wisely”? In other words, why do candidates invest so much money distributing cash to voters when voters can accept the money and in principle vote for whomever they choose?

### **1.2.2 Vote Buying, Ethnicity, and Performance Evaluations**

A second puzzle relates to a number of seemingly contradictory empirical findings with respect to the drivers of vote choice in African settings. On the one hand, ethnicity has been politically salient in most African settings and the phenomena of ethnic voting is widespread (Horowitz, 1985; Posner, 2005). In some African countries, ethnicity has been so strongly predictive of vote choice that scholars have described democratic elections as “ethnic censuses” (Horowitz, 1985).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, recent studies demonstrate that voters in a number of African settings consider performance when making their voting decisions (e.g. Ferree et al., 2013; Gibson and Long, 2013; Lindberg and Morrison, 2008). This research challenges the notion that Africans vote mechanistically for members of their own ethnic group. Further, a small experimental literature shows that clientelism and vote buying may impact vote choice in some African settings (Vicente, 2012; Wantchekon, 2003). How can voters vote on the basis of performance, ethnicity, and clientelism? One goal of this project is to develop a framework that reconciles and explains these diverse findings.

### **1.2.3 Vote Buying, Corruption, and Selection Problems**

Political economy models of democracy point to two general functions of elections: first, elections can provide a mechanism through which to punish poor performing incumbents and in so doing to create incentives for better performance (e.g. Ferejohn, 1986); and second, elections can provide a mechanism through which voters can select high quality leaders (e.g. Besley, 2005). With respect to the latter, the widespread distribution of cash to voters during elections is puzzling because of its association with corruption in the minds of many voters. This raises the question of how candidates

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<sup>1</sup>The extent and drivers of ethnic voting have been documented in a number of African countries, including Ethiopia (Arriola, 2008), Malawi (Ferree and Horowitz, 2010), South Africa (Ferree, 2006), Uganda (Carlson, 2010; Conroy-Krutz, 2008), and Zambia (Posner, 2005).

openly engaged in a corrupt activity can continue to win democratic elections. Why do voters support openly corrupt politicians?

This issue relates more broadly to the question of why “bad politicians” win democratic elections (Caselli and Morelli, 2004). In many democratic settings, candidates who are known to be criminals often win elections (Aidt et al., 2011; Vaishnav, 2010), as do candidates who are known to be involved in corruption scandals (Chang et al., 2010). These patterns suggest a problem of adverse selection in many developing democracies. One goal of this project is to contribute to our understanding of this problem by explaining the conditions in which voters reward electoral corruption, even if in principle they reject it.

## **1.3 Literature**

### **1.3.1 Theoretical Literature**

In this project, I define vote buying as the distribution of money—and sometimes other gifts—to voters in an attempt to win their vote. I therefore follow Schaffer and Schedler (2007) in employing a broad definition of vote buying, a term I use interchangeably in this project with cash handouts. Vote buying is often considered a variety of clientelism. Clientelist relationships involve two sets of actors: patrons that seek to maintain and build power and clients that seek protection, access to benefits and services, or insurance against risk (Piattoni, 2001). As a political strategy it is extremely adaptive, common in both traditional and modern settings (Lemarchand, 1972) and in both democratic and autocratic regimes (Blaydes, 2010; Grindle, 2012; Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Magaloni, 2006). Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) define “clientelistic accountability [as] a transaction, the direct exchange of a citizen’s vote in exchange for direct payments or continuing access to employment, goods, and services”; while Stokes (2007b) defines clientelism as the “the proffering of material goods in exchange for

electoral support, where the criterion of distribution that the patron uses is simply: did you (or will you) support me?”

Given the contract enforcement problems posed by the secret ballot, many studies of vote buying, and political clientelism more broadly, seek to identify the mechanisms that promote contract fulfillment by both buyer and seller (Stokes, 2007b). Lehoucq (2007) argues that vote buying is most likely to occur in settings where the vote buyer is likely to have the capacity to monitor voters. In the “machine model” of Stokes (2005) and less formally in the literature on clientelism going back decades (Scott, 1972) political machines are able to directly exchange money for votes because they are socially embedded and are therefore able to monitor voters. Political party machines are bottom-heavy party organizations that embed themselves socially into communities, which facilitates imperfect but largely effective monitoring of voter behavior (Stokes, 2005). Because political machines appear to solve a fundamental problem of clientelism—that of voter defection from a clientelist bargain—some scholars equate clientelistic politics with machine politics (e.g. Gans-Morse et al., 2010; Stokes et al., 2012).

Yet in many developing democracies, including many of those in Africa, most political parties are not organized as political machines. Most African political parties lack the requisite capacity and organizational structure with which to effectively monitor and subsequently punish voters who defect from a clientelist bargain (van de Walle, 2007). Consistent with this observation, perceptions of ballot secrecy are widespread in many African countries and many voters do not believe that powerful people can discover how they vote (Baldwin, 2013). I substantiate these observations in the Kenyan context in Chapter 4, illustrating with my own data that the “machine model” of vote buying is unlikely to explain the effectiveness of cash handouts in Kenya. These findings deepen the puzzle of widespread vote buying in a context of institutionalized ballot secrecy: Why do politicians continue to use material benefits to win votes when political parties

are not organized to solve the commitment problem presented by the institution of the secret ballot? How does vote buying work without the machine?

An alternative to the machine model posits that cash handouts induce a moral obligation on the part of recipients to support the candidate that has given them the money. According to this line of reasoning, vote-buying bargains are self-enforcing because of social norms of reciprocity. Earlier work on clientelist politics highlighted the importance of social norms in shaping the behavior of patron and client (e.g. Powell, 1970). These scholars emphasized the highly personalized face-to-face nature of patron-client ties (Powell, 1970; Scott, 1972), in which norms of reciprocity and deference to authority linked patron and client in an ongoing, but asymmetrical, relationship of mutual exchange. Indeed for Powell (1970), clientelistic ties are so personal and routinized that contract enforcement mechanisms are unnecessary. In an excellent study conducted in Paraguay, Finan and Schechter (2012) show that those who are more reciprocating in laboratory experiments are more likely to receive cash handouts and are more likely to voter for the party that gave them the gift. This is taken as evidence that social norms of reciprocity can make the monitoring of voters unnecessary.

Though Finan and Schechter's (2012) study shows how vote buying can be effective without a machine party to monitor voters, their description of politics in Paraguay characterizes a situation in which political agents develop personal and iterated relationships with voters in the area where they work. The party operatives know voters in their area so well, they can even predict how reciprocating they will be when playing experimental games in the laboratory. These personal and ongoing relationships are the key to the development of norms of reciprocity. The development of such sustained relationships depends on social penetration. Where parties do not have these personal connections with potential voters, as in many African countries, the distribution of money may be less likely to induce a strong moral obligation on the part of voters (Baldwin, 2013).

The machine model and the norms of reciprocity model seek to explain why cash handouts are effective at influencing vote choice. An alternative approach emphasizes the role of cash handouts in mobilizing voter turnout. According to the “turnout buying” model of Nichter (2008) and earlier explanations for delivering benefits to “core” voters (e.g. Cox and Kousser, 1981), parties use material transfers to buy the turnout of their known supporters. As monitoring turnout is possible even when the ballot is secret, candidates can make sure that those who receive handouts come through on their end of the bargain. Nichter (2008) provides evidence of such turnout buying in Argentina, where the Peronist Party is most likely to target its core supporters with material transfers during campaigns. Cox and Kousser (1981) find that in New York State, the nature of electoral corruption changed after the introduction of the secret ballot. When the ballot lacked secrecy, parties used money to win votes. Following the introduction of ballot secrecy laws, they used money to shape the composition of the electorate in their favor by influencing turnout.

The empirical results I present in Chapter 8 show that cash handouts do have a mobilizing effect on turnout, as predicted by the turnout-buying model. However, in contrast to the turnout-buying model, the results presented in Chapters 2 through 6 show that cash handouts also have an impact on vote choice and prospective evaluations of candidates. This implies that the turnout buying model is not sufficient to explain cash handouts in Kenya. Cash handouts are therefore an example of what Nichter (2008) calls “double persuasion” in the sense that they attract votes and mobilize turnout. The theory I develop in this dissertation explains why.

### **1.3.2 Empirical Literature**

Existing empirical literature is mixed with respect to the influence of clientelism and vote buying on vote choice. Lindberg and Morrison (2008) conduct a survey designed to identify the factors that shaped Ghanaian voters decisions in that country’s election in 2000 and conclude that clientelism and ethnicity are relatively unimportant compared



to performance evaluations. Similarly, Young (2009a) argues, on the basis of survey data, that voters in Kenya and Zambia are driven by concerns about local public goods provision, rather than clientelism. Conroy-Krutz and Logan (2011) use survey data from Uganda and conclude that cash handouts during that country's 2011 elections had no impact on the election.

Other studies similarly highlight that performance does matter to voters in Africa. For example, Bratton et al. (2011) investigate the drivers of vote choice in a large group of African democracies and conclude the policy considerations are important. They also conclude, however, that many voters strategically support incumbents because they believe they are more likely to win. Ferree et al. (2013) and Gibson and Long (2013) use exit polls in a number of African countries and conclude that performance evaluations are most important to vote choice.

The small experimental literature comes to different conclusions. Most notably, Wantchekon's (2003) study of elections in Benin finds that politicians campaigning on a clientelistic platform are more popular and do better electorally than do politicians campaigning on a universalist programmatic platform. Vicente (2012) finds that a reduction in vote buying decreases turnout and increases the voteshare of the incumbent in São Tomé and Príncipe. In other words, vote buying seems to be effective for challengers.

## **1.4 The Argument in Brief**

In this project, I develop an argument to explain the effectiveness of vote buying that can reconcile these seemingly contradictory empirical findings. In other words, the theory helps to explain how both clientelism and performance can both be important to vote choice. The argument also helps to explain why cash handouts can be effective in winning votes when the ballot is secret and when political party machines are not organized to monitor voters.

The theory builds upon a number of observations about voting behavior and the nature of distributive politics in most African settings. First, voters in Africa, and especially in rural Africa, tend to value the delivery of local public goods (Baldwin, 2013; Barkan, 1995; Wantchekon, 2003). These types of geographically targeted local public goods—schools, health centers, clean water sources, or agricultural services—have a substantial impact on the quality of life in rural areas, as well as in growing urban settlements.

Aside from welfare impact, there are additional reasons why voters tend to value local public goods provision. In the first place, these are often the only outputs of government that rural voters can observe. Moreover, ideology is notably absent from political discourse and most parties cannot be distinguished on programmatic or ideological grounds (Mueller, 2011; Posner, 2005). Those parties that make policy promises are generally not credible (Keefer, 2010). Additionally, power over the nature of public policy has in most African countries been highly centralized in the office of the executive president (Posner and Young, 2007; van de Walle, 2003). This institutional framework has limited MP and cabinet minister’s power over policy, and has limited their influence to distributional issues—in other words, patronage (Leonard, 1991). Knowing this, voters focus on a domain where they know their elected representative can deliver, at least with respect to voting for levels of government below the president.

Additionally, most African democracies are “patronage democracies” (Chandra, 2007). In these settings, the resources that voters value are not distributed programmatically (according to transparent rules) or equitably, but instead on partisan, ethnic, or other political lines. That the distribution of resources has been guided by patronage concerns, and ethnicity in particular, has long been assumed in the literature on African politics (e.g. Barkan and Chege, 1989) and recently a number of empirical studies have used new sources of data to validate these assumptions (Burgess et al., 2010; Franck and Rainer, 2012; Kramon and Posner, 2013, 2011).

Patronage relationships are hierarchical and involve asymmetries of power. But they are also relationships of mutual benefit. Just as patrons disperse benefits to enhance their power, clients seek to maximize their access to support, resources, and protection (Piattoni, 2001). When the clients can vote, as they can in patronage democracies, clients have some degree of choice over their patron. In these conditions, candidates face strong pressure to establish their personal credibility with respect to their ability to provide patronage goods to constituents. In most developing country contexts, patronage goods generally take the form of schools, health clinics, agricultural inputs, and so on—precisely the local public goods that are important to voters.

My argument is that politicians distribute money widely because it conveys information to voters about their future performance, and in particular with respect to the provision of patronage goods. Put another way, cash handouts affirm politicians' status as a quality patron and commitment to delivering resources to supporters in the future.

Why? In the first place, distributing large amounts of money to voters, often in a public manner, is a clear signal to voters that the politician has the resources required to distribute benefits toward constituents (Conroy-Krutz, 2008). The signal is particularly strong in Africa because candidates for parliament or local government receive little financial support from parties and must therefore finance their campaigns using their personal finances (Coalition for Accountable Political Finance, 2008). Second, distributing money also helps candidates to “look like a winner.” It demonstrates their desire for power and, because money can be used to attract large crowds and rallies and events (e.g. Szwarcberg, 2009), signals viability as a candidate who can win. As access to resources in a patronage democracy depends on political connections to those in power (Chandra, 2007; van de Walle, 2007), “looking like a winner” can attract strategic support from voters seeking to align themselves with the candidates who are most likely to be able to deliver resources in the future (Schaffer and Schedler, 2007).

How does the argument relate to ethnicity? In answering this question, I follow constructivist and instrumentalist approaches to the study of ethnicity (Berman, 1998;

Chandra, 2007; Posner and Young, 2007). Historical analyses of the evolution of contemporary ethnic identities in many African settings illustrate the central role of patronage relationships, largely shaped by the nature of colonial rule, in forging and solidifying the nature of ethnic boundaries and their salience as a political cleavage (Berman, 1998; Mamdani, 1996; Posner, 2005). Ethnicity in much of Africa is, therefore, fundamentally a patronage linkage.

Where patronage is the basis for linkage between elites and voters, the nature of political loyalty differs substantially from settings where parties primarily gain support through ideological connections or broad policy appeals. When ideological or programmatic ties link voter to party or candidate, these linkages can remain strong as long as voters retain their ideological commitments and parties continue to represent those ideas. In contrast, when patronage ties link voter to party (or candidate), these linkages are based upon a material exchange. What is more, they are contingent on this exchange. If the material goods dry up, the voter has little reason to remain a loyal client.

In conveying information to voters about the future provision of patronage goods, cash handouts re-affirm the ethnicity-patronage link. Put another way, if patronage relationships constitute a long-term relationship, cash handouts reinforce and affirm the patron's commitment to delivering to his or her clientele, which in most African settings are assumed by voters and politicians alike to be defined along ethnic lines. As a result, vote buying should not only be most effective when candidates target members of their own ethnic group, it should also reinforce and perpetuate patterns of ethnic voting. The argument therefore not only explains why vote buying works in African settings, but it also helps to explain why ethnic voting is so widespread.

### **1.4.1 Relationship to the Literature**

The argument contrasts with standard vote-buying models, especially those which build upon formal models of distributive politics (Cox and McCubbins, 1986; Dixit and Londregan, 1996). These models assume that voters and parties have fixed ideological ideal points and that voter affinity for a particular party can be measured by ideological distance. Additionally, vote buying is assumed to be orthogonal to ideology; in other words, cash handouts do not impact how voters make prospective performance evaluations. Rather, the models posit that candidates use vote buying to overcome ideological distance from voters (e.g. Stokes, 2005) or to mobilize those who are ideologically proximate (e.g. Nichter, 2008).

In settings where there are no ideological or programmatic differences between parties, these models do not appropriately capture the nature of political contestation. Some have suggested that ethnicity can be a substitute for ideology in these models (e.g. Wantchekon, 2003), but as I suggest above and argue later, this approach is built upon an understanding of ethnicity that is independent from policy or patronage considerations. I argue, on the other hand, that the importance of ethnic identity in voting behavior is not independent from patronage; it is reinforced by it.

Politics in most African countries is focused on valence issues, such as development and poverty alleviation. Because most all voters care about these issues, voter decisions often come down to judgements about which candidates or parties are best equipped to deliver and to deliver in a way that benefits them. Politics is thus about credibility, rather than ideological or programmatic proximity, as the spatial models prescribe. My framework fits this model of politics more appropriately. According to my argument, candidates use material transfers to signal to voters that they can deliver once elected. That is, candidates show by their willingness to hand out money and goods during campaigns that they will be willing and able to provide patronage goods after the election.

While the argument contrasts with conventional models of vote buying, it complements existing experimental findings on the impact of clientelism and vote buying on voter behavior in Africa. For example, Wantchekon (2003) finds that in Benin clientelistic appeals are more effective for incumbents. He argues that incumbents can make more credible promises with respect to the provision of clientelistic goods, which in his experimental intervention are local public goods. This finding confirms that voters do value local public goods provision and reward credibility with respect to their provision. A second result is that of Vicente (2012), who finds that exogenously induced reductions in vote buying reduce turnout and hurt the voteshare of challengers. To the extent that challengers are less credible with respect to the provision of patronage goods, the results suggest a role for vote buying as an up-front payment that helps to establish credibility with respect to the provision of targeted benefits to constituents.

My framework also helps to make sense of an additional puzzle identified in the literature: that parties in many settings tend to “buy” the votes of those who look like their “core” supporters; in other words, voters who we might expect to vote for the party in the absence of a handout (Stokes et al., 2012). Stokes et al. (2012) cite a number of examples across Latin America that show that the core supporters of machine parties are substantially more likely to receive material benefits during campaigns. This is surprising because the money might be better spent on “swing” voters. Nichter (2008) explains this phenomena by focusing on mobilization. In his model, parties are not trying to change voters’ minds, but rather to increase the turnout of their supporters. Stokes et al. (2012) emphasize principal-agent problems between politicians and the brokers they must rely on to buy votes: while politicians would prefer that “swing” voters be targeted, the brokers that they rely on to campaign find it easier and cheaper to mobilize the machine’s “core” supporters.

My argument has different implications for this puzzle. The core supporters of a patronage dispensing party or politician are only core supporters because they receive material benefits. These benefits are the basis of the linkage between politician and

voter. Candidates deliver cash handouts to these so-called core supporters to reinforce these relationships and to signal to voters that they can expect to benefit from their patronage following an election.

## **1.5 Empirical Approach**

The chapters that make up this dissertation test a number of the argument's empirical implications. In designing empirical tests, I faced a number of measurement and inferential challenges. With respect to measurement, the challenge arises from the fact that vote buying is illegal, associated with corruption, and sensitive. Most politicians do not get caught on camera as did Waititu and Ongware in the video described at the beginning of this chapter and so gathering data on vote-buying events is not possible.

Determining whether vote buying is effective with surveys is also difficult because of response bias. Survey respondents know that voting for candidates that distribute cash is not socially acceptable, and so they are likely to misreport their true experiences in a survey situation. Qualitative data collected from interview and focus-group participants can also be subject to the same bias. Similar response bias poses a challenge to the study of ethnicity (e.g. Carlson, 2010). Most Africans know that thinking or behaving "tribally" is considered backward and in violation of cosmopolitan norms. They are aware that ethnicity is associated with conflict, and are generally keen to avoid appearing tribal in their thinking.

With respect to inference, there are two sets of challenges. The first relates to measurement bias. If response bias in surveys, for example, is randomly distributed among the population, then it should not bias inferences but instead increase uncertainty. If the bias is correlated with individual characteristics that also correspond with voting behavior, however, inferences about the impact of vote buying on voters would be biased.

A second inferential issue relates to an observational equivalence problem. The models of both Nichter (2008) and Stokes (2005) predict that voters will vote for the

party or candidate that gives them a handout. According to Nichter (2008), voters receive handouts because they support a party. According to Stokes (2005), voters support a party because they receive handouts. With observational data collected at one point in time—which describes virtually all of the data available on this subject in the developing world—it is hard to distinguish these two models.

Because of measurement and inferential challenges, I focus the bulk of the project's empirical analyses on the Kenyan case. The focus on one country allows me to test the micro-level implications of the argument and to employ different methodologies designed to improve measurement and inference. These methodologies improve upon the measurement of and inferences about vote buying from previous studies, many of which rely upon survey data. In Chapter 2 and Chapter 6, for example, I analyze data from a survey list experiment on vote buying during Kenya's 2007 elections that I conducted with a nationally representative sample of 2,000 Kenyans. The list experiment, also known as the item-count technique, is a method that elicits less biased responses to sensitive survey questions by providing respondents anonymity and the ability to answer questions indirectly (Blair and Imai, 2012; Glynn, 2010a; Kuklinski et al., 1997). I use this method to determine how widespread and effective cash handouts were in winning votes during the 2007 campaign in Kenya, and to test hypotheses about where and with whom cash handouts are most effective.

In Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, I analyze data from an original set of survey experiments that I conducted in Nairobi and the Rift Valley Province of Kenya. The survey experiments allow me to test implications of the informational argument in a subtle and indirect manner, thus reducing response bias. Moreover, because the experiments allow me the control to randomize participant exposure to vote buying, I can solve the problem of selection bias and observational equivalence.

No method I use presents a perfect solution. Each has different strengths and weaknesses. For example, while the strength of the audio experiments is that they allow me the control to measure cause and effect, they are subject to the critique that they are



hypothetical in nature. While the survey list experiment has the advantage of capturing data about real behavior, the analyses I conduct with the survey data are less well causally identified. The key is that the different methodologies I employ and analyses I conduct have complementary strengths and weaknesses. Taken together, the empirical results paint a picture largely consistent with the informational theory I put forward.

## **1.6 Case Selection**

I selected Kenya for a number of reasons. Most importantly Kenya is similar to other African democracies along a number of historical, structural, and institutional characteristics. For example, Kenya's state is extremely weak and has limited bureaucratic capacity, a weakness that characterizes much of Africa (Baldwin, 2013). Kenya's population, like the rest of continent, is also a predominantly rural one.

With respect to colonial history, Kenya's experience reflects that of other African countries colonized by the British. Though the British approach to administering its colonies varied across time and space, its general approach was comparable across countries. The British ruled "indirectly," seeking local intermediaries and allies and integrating them into the administration of the colonial regime. In most instances, this involved co-opting traditional leaders or installing them when existing ones either did not cooperate or previously exist. Kenya's experience was complicated by the presence of European settlers in some areas of the country, but despite this the model of colonial rule was comparable to other African countries (Berman, 1984).

As in most of Africa's British colonies that emerged as independent states in the late 1950's and 1960's, Kenya's political institutions at independence were modeled on the British Westminster System. The independence constitution established a parliamentary system of government; a legislature with a house and a senate; and a system of devolved government consisting of regional governments run by directly elected assemblies. In the first post-independence elections held in 1963, Jomo Kenyatta's

Figure 1.1: Map of Africa.



Kenyan African National Union (KANU) defeated the Kenyan African Democratic Union (KADU), taking a majority in the parliament and electing Kenyatta as Prime Minister.

As in other African former British colonies, this system did not last long. Before one year had passed, Kenyatta and his allies in the parliament abolished the parliamentary system and replaced it with a presidential one that vested expansive powers in the executive president, a position that Kenyatta would inherit. By 1969, Kenyatta had co-opted moderate members of KADU into KANU and purged from government dissenting voices from both parties, making Kenya a de facto one party state. These early changes marked the beginning of a series of constitutional changes through which Kenyatta and his successor, Daniel arap Moi (who came to power after Kenyatta's death in 1978), further weakened or eliminated constraints on executive power. By the early 1990s, political power had been highly centralized and personalized around the presidency.

In different ways, this same process played out in other African countries. Multi-party elections would only survive continuously in Botswana, Mauritius, and Senegal (Lindberg, 2006). In Ghana, for example, Kwame Nkrumah was elected prime minister at independence in 1957. In 1960, the constitution was changed and Nkrumah became the executive president. In 1964, Nkrumah's party became the only legal party in the country.

Despite the move to authoritarianism and the centralization of power in the president's office after independence, many African countries, including Kenya, continued to hold semi-competitive elections in a context of single-party rule. These elections were semi-competitive because the voter could choose from among a list of candidates selected and vetted by the ruling party. These candidates generally competed in single-member-district first-past-the-post legislative elections. Tanzania was the first country to adopt this system, holding single-party elections in 1965. By 1969, Kenya's system was a de facto single-party system (the single-party system was legally enshrined

in the early 1980s under the Moi regime). Other African countries with a history of single-party elections include Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Comoros, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Togo, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), and Zambia (Lindberg, 2006).

These single-party elections were not devoid of competition. In countries such as Kenya and Tanzania—where such elections have received the most scholarly attention—incumbent rates of re-election were relatively low (Barkan and Okumu, 1978). These elections centered almost entirely on the MPs ability to deliver local public goods to their constituents (Barkan, 1994; Barkan and Okumu, 1978; Hyden and Leys, 1972). In Kenya, delivery took the form of government projects or of informal contributions to community-level “Harambee” self-help groups seeking funds for schools, clean water projects, and other local public goods and services (Widner, 1992). As I discussed above when summarizing the argument, this history of patronage centered politics has continued into the democratic era and has implications for the nature of political contestation and the role of cash handouts in campaigning.

Kenya's political history is also representative of a particular form of clientelism that came to dominate African politics in the post-independence era. For the most part, scholars of modern political clientelism have associated the strategy with the emergence mass political parties exchanging particularistic and divisible benefits for votes in democratic elections (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Shefter, 1977; Stokes, 2007b) or for citizen loyalty to an authoritarian regime (Blaydes, 2010; Lust-Okar, 2006; Magaloni, 2006). Much of the literature on contemporary political clientelism has thus focused on the role of “machine parties”; parties that are well organized, socially embedded, and patronage dispensing (Auyero, 2001; Brusco et al., 2004).

Broadly speaking clientelism in post-independence Africa historically took on a different form and served a different purpose than did modern clientelism in other regions (van de Walle, 2007). Post-independence leaders inherited extremely weak states (Herbst, 2000) with very low levels of economic development. Due to the arbitrary

nature of colonial boundaries and colonial policy, which often accentuated rather than diminished local and regional identities, post-independence leaders also faced societies with very low levels of national integration (e.g. Berman, 1998; Englebert, 2002; van de Walle, 2007). Independence political parties, which may have served as a tool for and mobilization (Scott, 1972), were young and generally too weak to serve as a force for national integration (Sandbrook, 1972; van de Walle, 2007).

Colonial policy in Kenya, for example, restricted political organization to the local district level until the years immediately preceding independence. This limited the development of national mobilizing capacity and organization. It also meant that the Kenyan African National Union (KANU) was, at independence, structured more as an alliance of regional elites rather than as a modern political party with an organizational structure. Because of this organizational weakness, Kenyatta eschewed the party as an instrument of political control in favor of the provincial administration established under colonial rule (Leonard, 1991).

In these conditions, post-independence leaders needed to create regime stability and promote the legitimacy of their newly independent states (Englebert, 2002). To do so, they required a system for integrating and accommodating different ethnic and regional elites. Elite centered clientelism proved an effective strategy (Englebert, 2002). Following Weber, Joseph (1987) described this system of elite clientelism as prebendalism. Prebendalism involves the distribution of portions of the state, prebends, to elites, who are free to use their offices for private gain, in exchange for their loyalty. These elites are then expected to use these resources, or other means, to deliver the support of people from their ethnic community or region. Prebendalism relates to the patrimonialism of early state development in Europe, where there was no distinction between the public and private sphere and office holders were expected to use their positions for private gain (Fukuyama, 2011). Given this relation, many observers have referred to Africa's post-independence regimes as "neo-patrimonial" (e.g. Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Medard, 1982). In practice, prebends have usually taken the form of cabinet positions

and other high level state positions. When faced with crisis, for example, African presidents have often increased the size of their cabinets, a strategy that has helped them stay in power longer (Arriola, 2009).

This is the system upon which multiparty elections with universal suffrage were introduced in many African countries in the early 1990s. With democratization, the balance of power between a largely rural electorate and political elites has shifted and the population has more choice (Stasavage, 2005). But public goods and services tend not to be distributed in a programmatic or equitable manner, and democratization has not reduced ethnic favoritism in the allocation of certain resources (e.g. Kramon and Posner, 2011). Most African democracies are, to use Chandra's (2007) term, "patronage democracies."

Kenya shares an additional similarity with some other African countries: political parties have historically been weak, lacking in organization, and centered around personalities rather than programs. Extreme party system volatility has presented a barrier to investments in party organization in the democratic era, as most parties do not survive from one election to another. With elite coalitions constantly shifting, there is little incentive to invest in grassroots party infrastructure. Though there are a few exceptions, such as Ghana's two dominant parties, most parties are the personal vessels of individual elites (Lindberg, 2006).

Finally, I selected Kenya because of the mix of widespread vote buying and a politics notable for the salience of ethnicity. As in other African countries, ethnicity has been highly salient politically since the colonial era (e.g. Berman, 1998; Throup and Hornsby, 1998); politicians often mobilize voters through ethnic appeals (e.g. Branch and Cheeseman, 2009; Mueller, 2011); and individuals and communities tend to vote for coethnic candidates or parties associated with their own ethnic group (e.g. Bratton and Kimenyi, 2008; Posner, 2005). This setting is well suited to testing the argument's implications with respect to the relation of vote buying to ethnic voting.

In sum, Kenya is similar to other African countries on a number of dimensions. Structurally, Kenya has a largely rural population and limited state bureaucratic capacity. Historically, the evolution of formal institutions—increasing authoritarianism immediately after independence, single-party elections, and democratization in the early 1990s—and informal institutions—the prebendel nature of clientelism—have been, broadly speaking, comparable.

## **1.7 Plan of the Dissertation**

The plan of the dissertation is as follows. In Chapter 2, I document the extent and centrality of cash handouts in Kenyan political campaigns. I use data from a nationally representative survey that I designed about Kenya's 2007 elections. I complement the main survey findings with descriptive data from an additional survey I conducted in Nairobi and the Rift Valley Province; data from a campaign finance survey conducted with candidates for parliament in 2007 (Coalition for Accountable Political Finance, 2008); and data from a nationally representative pre-election survey conducted in 2007 by the Afrobarometer. The main findings are that cash handouts are both widespread and extremely expensive. Almost 25 percent those I surveyed received a handout from a politician during the 2007 campaign, handouts that were almost always in the form of cash ranging from 1 to 20 US dollars. Results from a survey list experiment I conducted as part of the nationally representative survey, a method that reduces response bias due to vote buying's sensitivity and illegality, show that cash handouts influenced the vote choice of between 20 and 25 percent of Kenyans in 2007.

Chapter 3 presents my central theoretical argument. I lay out my informational theory of vote buying and identify a number of the theory's empirical implications, which I contrast with the predictions of existing vote-buying theories. The chapter concludes with preliminary cross-national evidence from 18 African countries.

In Chapter 4, I address existing explanations for widespread cash handouts during elections with evidence from Kenya. I identify empirical implications of theories that focus on the role of political machines, turnout buying, and social norms of reciprocity. I then use data from a number of different sources to show that in Kenya, patterns are not consistent with the expectations of these models.

Chapter 5 tests a central implication of the informational model: that information about political candidates vote-buying behavior should impact electoral support for that candidate and that distributing cash handouts to voters should convey information about their ability to distribute patronage in the future. To overcome inferential and measurement problems, I designed a survey experiment to test these implications. Participants were randomly assigned to a vote-buying or control group, and asked to listen to a radio discussion about a parliamentary candidate's campaign event. Recordings were identical and only varied with respect to a short vote-buying reference. Differences in participant assessments of the candidate can thus be attributed to the vote-buying information. Consistent with the argument, results show that vote buying is effective with poor participants, though they only received vote-buying information. Results are similar with respect to expectations about future distribution of patronage and private benefits—direct evidence for the argument.

Chapter 6 addresses the implications of the informational model of vote buying for ethnic voting. I argue that vote buying reinforces and perpetuates patterns of ethnic voting. I analyze data from a second round of audio experiments that integrate subtle cues about candidate ethnicity and vote-buying behavior. In contrast to other theories of ethnic voting, I show that participants only prefer members of their own ethnic group when they are engaged in vote buying. In other words, candidates only enjoy a coethnic advantage when they reveal themselves to be willing and able to dispense patronage. In the second section of Chapter 6, I study the external validity of the survey experimental results by studying the impact of vote buying on vote choice during Kenya's 2007 elections. To do so, I return to the survey and survey list experimental data in-



roduced in Chapter 2, coupling them with micro-level data about ethnic demographics and economic and infrastructure development from Kenya's most recent 2009 census. With these data, I show that vote buying has the most influence on vote choice when voters are targeted by members of their own ethnic group, a result that complements the findings from the audio experiments.

Chapter 7 studies the relation of vote buying to local public goods provision. An implication of the informational theory is that vote buying in an area should be associated with more patronage allocations to that area after the election. This prediction contrasts with the more conventional notion that communities whose votes can be won with cash handouts will receive fewer benefits after an election. I test this implication using data on the geographic allocation of local public goods projects distributed as part of Kenya's Constituency Development Fund (CDF). CDF projects are now the main vehicle through which Members of Parliament provide constituency service and MPs enjoy substantial discretion over the nature and location of projects. The localized nature of CDF projects—schools, boreholes, cattle dips, and so on—and MP discretion combine to make CDF a natural venue to test the theory's hypothesis. As the informational theory suggests, I find that vote buying in a geographic location is associated with more, rather than fewer, CDF projects. I also find that vote buying is associated with more CDF spending in that area after the election. These results hold even after controlling for a range location-specific variables that might drive both vote buying and CDF projects.

Chapter 8 studies the implications of the theory for voter turnout. I argue that the calculus of voting is different in patronage democracies and for voters seeking access to patronage goods (Chandra, 2007; Weitz-Shapiro, 2012). According to the calculus of voting model, voting appears irrational because the probability of influencing an election outcome is tiny, at least in large elections, and anyone can enjoy the benefits of government activity regardless of whether they vote (Riker and Ordeshook, 1968). This model assumes, however, that governments only provide pure public goods—goods

that are non-excludable and non-rivalrous (Samuelson, 1954)—or that they distribute resources in a programmatic and non-political manner. In patronage democracies, however, governments largely disperse patronage; goods that are divisible and targeted and access to which is contingent on political participation, identity, or allegiance. I argue therefore that cash handouts not only help to convince voters that they should support a particular candidate, they also mobilize them to turnout to vote in order to gain access to the patronage resources that the patron will allocate in the future. They thus serve the purpose of “double persuasion” (Gans-Morse et al., 2010). With survey data about Kenya’s 2002 and 2007 elections, I show that cash handouts do indeed mobilize voter turnout. I also provide evidence from multiple sources that the relation of cash handouts to voter turnout is not driven by direct turnout monitoring.

Chapter 9 steps back from the question of why vote buying is effective to ask why clientelism takes the form of direct vote buying in some places but not others. I argue that politicians will choose to target voters directly with cash handouts where local intermediaries are not present or powerful enough to deliver votes in a block. Where such intermediaries do exist, politicians will target resources to them in exchange for the block of votes they control—a strategy I call wholesale vote buying. In rural Africa, the existence of such local intermediaries often relates to the structure of traditional institutions that have their origins in the pre-colonial era. By analyzing variation in vote buying across Africa, as well as within-country variation in vote buying in Kenya, Senegal, and Uganda, I show that direct vote buying is most prevalent where pre-colonial institutions were decentralized and lacking in hierarchy. While this finding contrasts with theoretical expectations that focus on the role of local monitoring capacity in facilitating direct vote buying—more centralized and hierarchical traditional institutions should facilitate voter monitoring capacity—the informational theory of direct vote buying can explain this pattern. Politicians directly hand out cash in settings where they must establish credibility with voters without the assistance of local brokers.

In the conclusion, I discuss the theoretical, normative, and policy implications of the findings, and highlight directions for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### Cash Handouts and Political Campaigns in Kenya

The previous chapter began by discussing a video in which two Kenyan politicians were caught on camera distributing cash to voters. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these politicians are hardly alone in their use of cash handouts to sway voters. According to one report, potential voters in Kisii County turned out in large numbers to a Jubilee Alliance (the TNA alliance) campaign rally because of a rumor that Makadara Member of Parliament Gidion Mbuvi—know also as Sonko, a swahili slang (Sheng) term for “rich man”—would be distributing cash to voters from a helicopter. In Nyandua County, an elderly woman was arrested for distributing 100 Kenya Shillings to voters outside of a polling station.<sup>1</sup> In Murang’a county, another man was arrested for allegedly giving cash handouts to voters. The man, who subsequently plead guilty to the charges, was found in possession of envelopes containing 200 Kenya Shilling notes.<sup>2</sup>

Anecdotal evidence and reports from elections observers illustrate that cash handouts have also been widespread during the four multiparty elections held in Kenya prior to 2013. During the 1992 elections, for example, a report by the National Election Monitoring Unit (1993) notes that “One of the most common practices in the campaigns was the wooing of voters through bribery, or whatever name it was called . . . Direct payment or promise of money were the most common” (67). In an interview with a *New York Times* correspondent in the period before the 2002 elections, one citizen reported: “A NARC [National Rainbow Coalition] agent stopped me at a bus stop and asked me

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<sup>1</sup><http://elections.nation.co.ke/news/Two-seized-for-alleged-voter-bribery/-/1631868/1711422/-/8pdiogz/-/index.html>

<sup>2</sup><http://elections.nation.co.ke/news/Man-fined-for-bribing-voters-on-election-day/-/1631868/1712146/-/77n18lz/-/index.html>

who I was voting for. When I said KANU [Kenya African National Union], he offered me 500 shillings [about US\$6] for my vote” (Lacey 2002). Another Kenyan described his vote-buying experience before election day as follows: “A man approached me in Naivasha at a bar and asked me what party I am from. He said he’s an agent for KANU and would buy my vote for 700 shillings” (Lacey 2002).

These anecdotes and observations all suggest that vote buying is widespread during elections in Kenya. However, most Kenyan politicians are savvy enough not to get caught on camera, as did Waititu and Ongware. Moreover, because giving and receiving cash handouts is illegal and in violation of democratic norms—and is therefore fundamentally secretive—determining how representative these anecdotes truly are is a challenge. How widespread is vote buying in Kenya? How central are cash handouts to political campaigns? How much does vote buying cost? And, most importantly, do these cash handouts impact how people vote? This chapter provides descriptive evidence that answers these questions.

## **2.1 Measuring Sensitive Behaviors with Surveys**

Anecdotal evidence suggests that vote buying is widespread during election campaigns in Kenya. But how many voters actually receive cash handouts before elections? And does all of this spending actually have an impact on how people vote? Answering these questions is a challenge because vote buying is sensitive and illegal. Most Kenyans know that vote buying violates democratic norms and vote buying is associated with corruption in the minds of many voters. According to Kenya’s new election law, those who accept gifts from politicians will face 6 years in jail or a one million Kenya shilling fine (approximately 16,000 US dollars), a hefty fine in a country where the GDP per capita is about 900 US dollars.

Given the sensitivity and illegality of vote buying in Kenya, survey questions designed to measure the frequency and effectiveness of vote buying are likely to be im-

pacted by “social desirability bias” (Bradburn et al., 1978; DeMaio, 1984; Tourangeau and Yan, 2007). Social desirability bias occurs when survey respondents provide socially acceptable, rather than a truthful, answer to questions about sensitive attitudes and behaviors. Studies outside of Africa have demonstrated the extent to which response bias can impact survey responses about vote buying. For example, in Nicaragua, Gonzalez-Ocantos et al. (2012) estimate that direct survey items about vote buying under-estimate the true prevalence of vote buying by about 22 percentage points. Corstange (2010) finds comparable bias in his study of vote buying in Lebanon. The problem of response bias is not unique to surveys. It can also pose problems for ethnographic and qualitative methodologies, as interview respondents and focus group participants may also alter their responses in socially acceptable ways.

Given the potential for response bias in survey questions about vote buying’s frequency and effectiveness, in this chapter I present results from a list experiment that I conducted in Kenya. I conducted the list experiment with a nationally representative sample of 2,000 Kenyans. The list experiment, also known as the item-count technique, is an increasingly popular method for indirectly eliciting truthful responses to sensitive survey questions. In political science, Kuklinski et al. (1997) use the technique to study racial attitudes and Weghorst (2010) uses it to study support for political violence. In studies related to my own, Gonzalez-Ocantos et al. (2012) and Corstange (2010) use the list experiment to demonstrate the bias in direct survey items about vote buying in Nicaragua and Lebanon.

In its most basic form, list experiment participants are randomly assigned into one treatment and one control group. Control group respondents are given a list of  $J$  non-sensitive attitudes or activities, about which we would not expect response bias (in my experiment,  $J = 4$ ). Treatment group respondents are given a list of  $J + 1$  items, the same non-sensitive items along with the sensitive item of interest. All respondents are instructed to tell the enumerator how many of the items apply to them (0-4 or 0-5). Respondents are told explicitly not to identify which items are true for them and only

to indicate how many of the items are true for them. As respondents are only required to state a number, rather than answer any questions directly, the assumption is that participants will be more truthful with respect to the sensitive survey item.

The list experiment estimates depend on two assumptions. First, we must assume that participants are in fact truthful with respect to the sensitive item (Blair and Imai, 2012). Second, we must assume that the inclusion of the sensitive item on the treatment list does not impact how treatment list participants respond to the control items (Blair and Imai, 2012). If the latter assumption holds, random assignment to treatment and controls groups implies that on average the number of applicable non-sensitive items will be the same in treatment and control groups. If both assumptions are not violated, the simple difference of means between treatment and control groups provides an unbiased estimate of the proportion of the population to whom the sensitive item applies (e.g. Blair and Imai, 2012; Glynn, 2010b).

A simple example helps to make clear why the list experiment works as a method for generating population estimates. Say 50 percent of the population agrees with the sensitive item and the number of applicable non-sensitive items in the population is fixed at 2. In this case, the mean response in the control group would be 2. In the treatment group, 50 percent of respondents would respond 2 and 50 percent would respond 3—for half of them the sensitive item applies. The average response in the treatment group is therefore 2.5. The difference of means between treatment and control group responses is 0.50, the same as the population proportion.

In the list experiment, I estimated two different proportions: first, the proportion of Kenyans who received money or a material good during the previous election in 2007; and second, the proportion of Kenyans who voted for a politician *because* they received money or a material good from them. I therefore implemented the list experiment with two treatment groups and one control group, the latter which can be used as the control group for both treatment lists. The prompt in the list experiment was as follows:

Election campaigns are a busy time in our country. I am going to read you a list of some of things that people have told us happened to them during the 2007 campaign. I am going to read you the whole list, and then I want you to tell me how many of the different things happened to you. Please do not tell me which of the things happened to you, just how many. If you would like me to repeat the list, I will do so.

The baseline list of non-sensitive items included the following four items:

1. Politicians put up posters or signs in the area where you live.
2. You read the newspaper almost every day to learn about the campaign.
3. You met a politician personally to discuss his or her candidacy.
4. You discussed the campaign with a chief or another traditional leader.

In selecting these  $J$  non-sensitive items for inclusion in the list experiment, there were several design issues I considered. First, in order to make the aggregation process as easy as possible for participants, I selected items that were relatively simple and all related to politics. Second, I tried to avoid “floor” and “ceiling” effects (Glynn, 2010b). The former refers to a situation in which all of the items would not be applicable to many participants. The latter refers to the opposite situation whereby all of the items would be applicable to many participants. These instances undermine the indirect nature of the list experiment and can cause suspicion among respondents in the treatment group, which could lead to biased responses.

The two sensitive items, one of which was randomly assigned to one-third of the sample, were as follows:

1. You received money or a gift from a party or politician.



2. You voted for a party or politician because they gave you money or a gift during the campaign.

Enumerators read each of the items. In addition, they presented respondents with a card on which they could read their assigned items. Following the survey list experiment, enumerators asked all respondents direct versions of each question. Appendix A describes the sampling procedure I used when conducting the survey and list experiment.

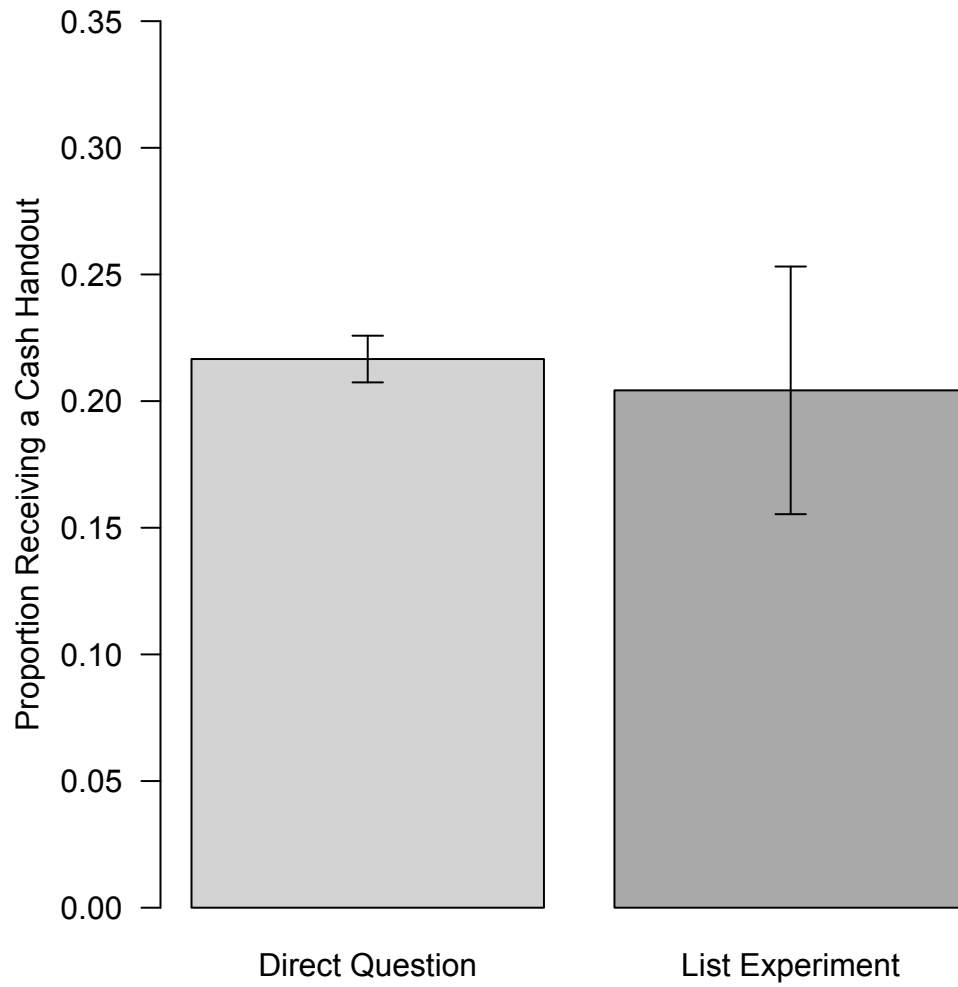
## **2.2 How Widespread is Vote Buying?**

In this section I present the main results from the list experiment. First, I present results estimating how widespread cash handouts were during the 2007 elections. I then turn to the question of whether these cash handouts are effective in winning votes. In this chapter, I focus on the main descriptive results from the list experiment. In later chapters, I use the data from the survey to test a number of the theory's implications.

How widespread is vote buying? Figure 2.1 presents survey estimates of the proportion of Kenyans who received a cash handout during the 2007 election campaign. The left panel illustrates the estimate generated from the direct survey question and the right panel presents the list experiment estimate. Both suggest that between 20 and 25 percent of adult Kenyans received a cash handout during the 2007 elections. That the estimates derived from each method are strikingly comparable demonstrates that, in Kenya, direct survey questions about individual's experience receiving cash handouts are not subject to response bias. This finding contrasts with that of Gonzalez-Ocantos et al. (2012), who find substantial bias in a similar survey item.

Figure 2.2 shows that cash handouts are widespread in each of Kenya's eight provinces. At the low end, about 10 percent of adults in North Eastern Province receive a cash handout, while at the high end close to 30 percent of adults report receiving cash hand-

Figure 2.1: **The Proportion of Kenyans Who Received a Cash Handout in the 2007 Elections.** Direct Survey Question and List Experiment Estimates.



outs in Nyanza and Eastern Provinces. In the remainder of the provinces, vote-buying rates are closer to the national population mean. Despite this variation, it is clear that cash handouts are an important part of campaigning in each region of the country.

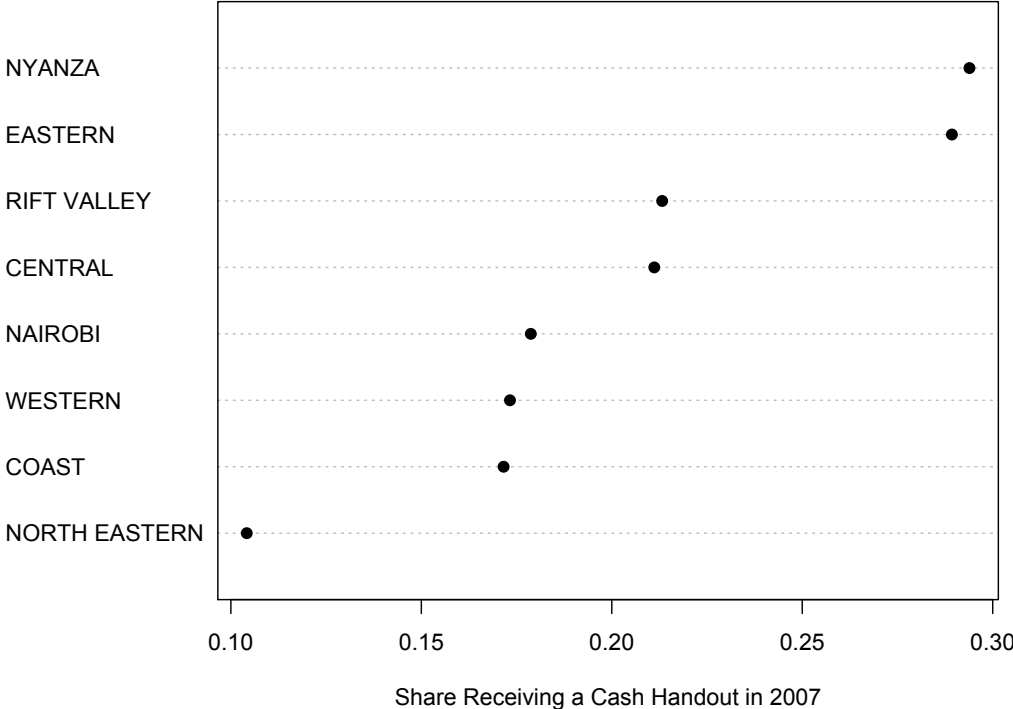
As in most other democracies, Kenyan political parties distribute a wide array of material goods at election time, including hats, t-shirts, and other items of clothing. However, the evidence suggests that Kenyans interpret cash handouts differently than they do the distribution of clothing and other campaign-related goods. Data from a nationally representative pre-election survey conducted in December 2007 by the Afrobarometer and the Centre for the Study of African Economies at the University of Oxford highlight this point. Respondents were asked: “During the present campaign for the December 2007 elections, how often (if ever) has a candidate or someone from a political party offered you something in return for your vote?” Of the 1207 respondents, about 27 percent said that they had been offered something in exchange for their vote at least once. Of the 325 respondents who said they received something, over 90 percent report that they received money. Only about 1 percent of all respondents report that they were offered clothing in return for their vote, despite the fact that the distribution of hats and t-shirts is ubiquitous during campaigns. In other words, voters interpret the distribution of cash differently than they do the distribution of other campaign related gifts.

### **2.3 How Much Money Do These Cash Handouts Cost?**

Results from a nationally representative survey and survey list experiment document that between 20 and 25 percent of Kenyans receive cash handouts during election campaigns. How much money do people generally receive? And how much do political candidates spend on cash handouts?

To answer the first question, I turn to survey data I collected in conjunction with the experiment I present in Chapter 5. While implementing that experiment, I conducted

Figure 2.2: **Vote Buying Rates, by Province.** Direct Survey Question Estimates.

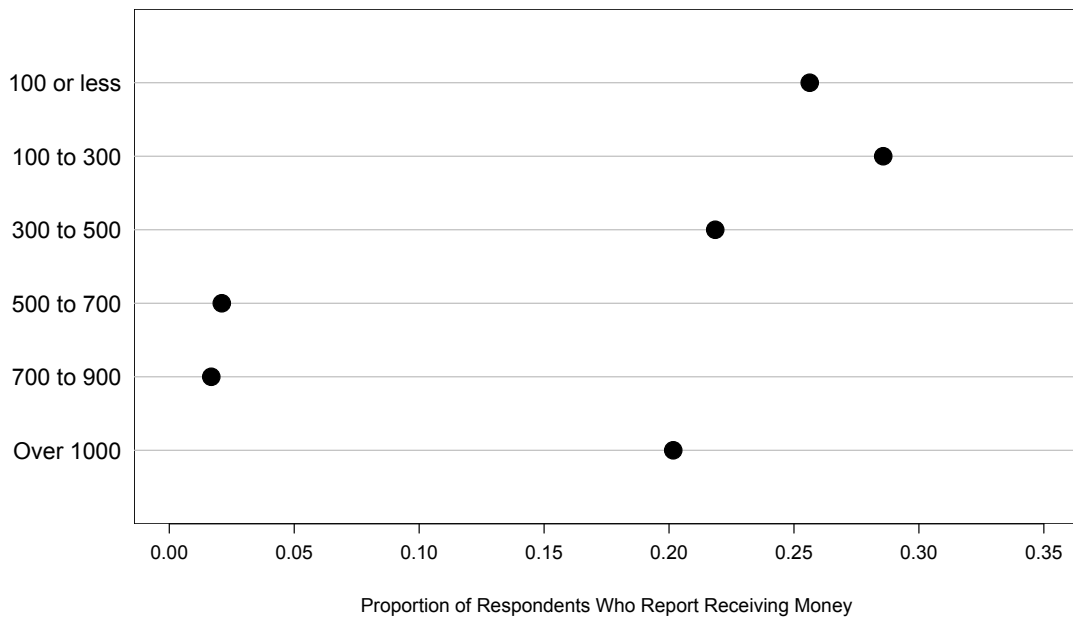


a survey with 655 respondents sampled from Nairobi, Kenya's capital, and in rural areas of the Rift Valley Province. Of those surveyed, 238 respondents reported that they received a cash handout during the 2007 elections. A follow-up question asked them directly how much money they received. Figure 2.3 displays the distribution of responses. About 30 percent of those who received money received between 100 and 300 Kenya Shillings (between roughly 1 to 3 US dollars). A large proportion, 20 percent, report receiving over 1000 Kenya Shillings, which amounts to greater than 10 US dollars. A substantial proportion, about 25 percent, also receive less than 100 Kenya Shillings, less than 1 US dollar.

How much do political candidates actually spend on vote buying? How costly is this campaign strategy? And how do these expenditures compare to other campaign expenditure items? Campaign expenditure data are very challenging to obtain in Kenya, especially data about expenditures on an illegal activity such as vote buying. However, Kenya's Coalition for Accountable Political Finance (CAPF) conducted an extensive study of campaign finance and expenditures during the 2007 elections (Coalition for Accountable Political Finance, 2008). The study involved surveys of a sample of candidates for parliament as well as members of their campaign staff. Though the sensitivity and illegality of vote buying means that the data they collected are likely subject to some error, the data are useful in getting a general sense of scale of vote-buying expenditures and how they compare to other campaign activities that candidates finance.

Figure 2.4 presents the composition of campaign spending for the average parliamentary candidate in the CAPF study (Coalition for Accountable Political Finance, 2008). The data show that cash handouts are one of the most important, if not the most important, campaign expenditure for parliamentary candidates. The average candidate spent about 3 million Kenya Shillings on cash handouts. In 2007, 1 million Kenya Shillings was equivalent to about 16,000 US dollars. Thus the average candidate for parliament, according to the CAPF data, spent about 48,000 US dollars distributing money to voters during the 2007 elections. This amount is far and away the candidates'

Figure 2.3: **The Size of Cash Handouts in Nairobi and the Rift Valley.** Source: Author's Nairobi - Rift Valley Survey. Data shows the distribution of reported amounts received by the 238 respondents in the survey who reported that they received a cash handout in 2007.



biggest expenditure item, tripling the amount candidates spent on rallies, travel, and campaign materials. Perhaps surprisingly, candidates spend far more on cash handouts than they do on campaign and polling station agents.

Though the average candidate spent about 3 million Kenya shillings, Figure 2.5 shows that there is a great deal of variation in the amounts that candidates spend on cash handouts. At the high end, about 8 percent of candidates spent 7 million shillings and over 10 percent spent 5 or 6 million. The modal investment in cash handouts is about 4 million shillings. At the lower end, between 10 and 15 percent of MPs spent 1 or 2 million Kenya shillings.

## **2.4 Do Cash Handouts Impact Vote Choice?**

The previous sections confirm that cash handouts are extremely widespread during election campaigns in Kenya and document how costly they are, both in magnitude and in relation to other campaign related costs. But how effective are they at winning votes? To address this question, a second list experiment and direct survey question, asked after the list experiment, asked respondents in the nationally representative survey whether they voted for a politician *because* they received money from them.

Figure 2.6 presents the estimates from the list experiment and the direct survey item. The left bar is the result from the direct question, which illustrates that, when asked directly, only 7 percent of respondents report that they voted for a candidate because of a cash handout. This estimate is markedly lower than the estimated proportion of adults who received a cash handout. The list experiment estimate, on the other hand, suggests that cash handouts are quite effective in winning votes. According to the list experiment estimate, between 20 and 25 percent of Kenyans had their vote influenced by a cash handout. This estimate, which is statistically different from the direct survey item estimate, illustrates that cash handouts may influence the vote choice of between

Figure 2.4: **Campaign Spending by the Average Parliamentary Candidate in the 2007 Elections.** Source: Coalition for Accountable Political Finance, Kenya.

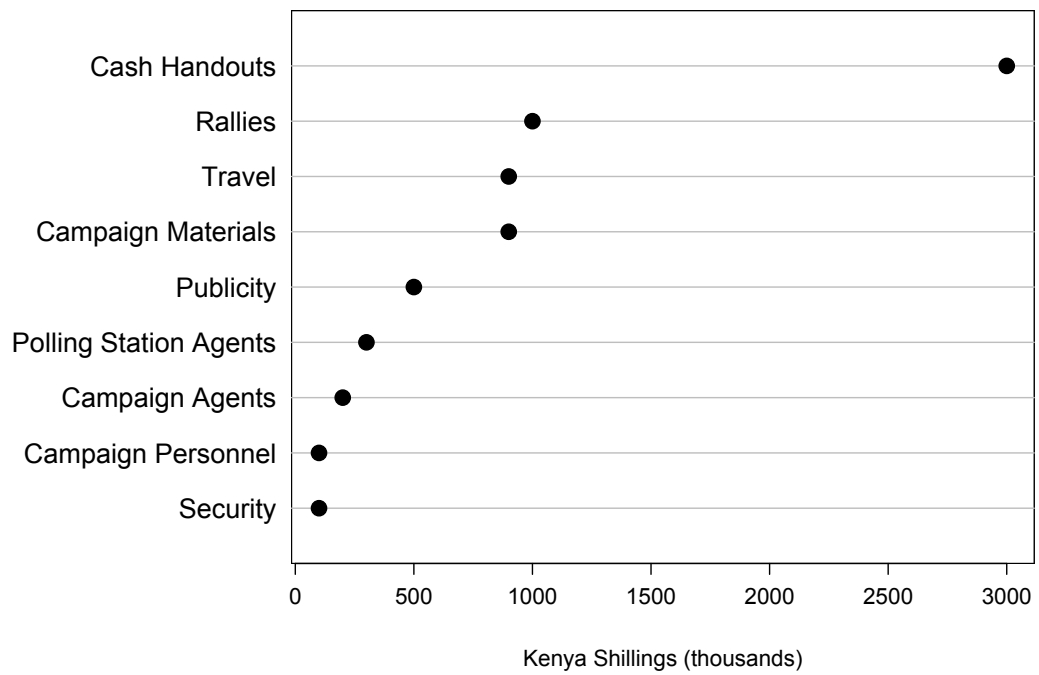
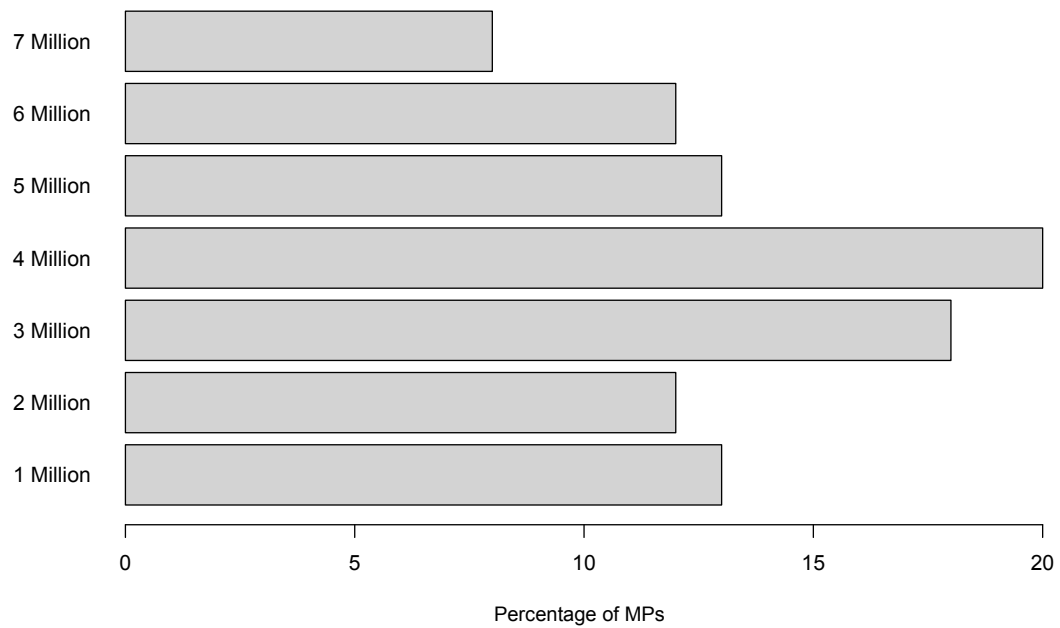




Figure 2.5: **Distribution of Spending on Cash Handouts by Parliamentary Candidates in the 2007 Elections.** Source: Coalition for Accountable Political Finance, Kenya. Data come from a survey of 98 elected MPs.



20 and 25 percent of voters. In other words, cash handouts are not only reported to be widespread, but survey respondents also report that they are effective in winning votes.

The left panel of Figure 2.7 shows that cash handouts are effective with both men and women. The estimate among men is about 20 percent whereas among women it is about 28 percent, both high figures that cannot be distinguished statistically because of the relative statistical inefficiency of the list experiment estimates. Similarly, vote buying is effective in both urban and rural areas of Kenya. The estimate in urban areas is about 18 percent and in rural areas it increases to just over 25 percent. Substantial proportions of both the urban and rural populations, therefore, had their vote choice influenced by cash handouts in 2007.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented descriptive data that demonstrates the centrality of vote buying to election campaigns in Kenya. The average candidate for parliament spends almost 50,000 US dollars on cash handouts and some report spending over 100,000 US dollars. These are massive investments in a country where GDP per capita is about 900 US dollars per year and where parliamentary constituencies generally have between 100,000 and 200,000 registered voters. The results from the nationally representative survey and survey list experiment, which reduces response bias in sensitive survey questions, show that these handouts, which range from about 1 US dollar to over 10 US dollars, reach between 20 and 25 percent of Kenyan adults. Most importantly, the list experiment results document that not only are cash handouts widespread, but that they also influence how people vote. The next chapter explains why.

Figure 2.6: **The Effectiveness of Cash Handouts in the 2007 Elections.** Direct Survey Question and List Experiment Estimates.

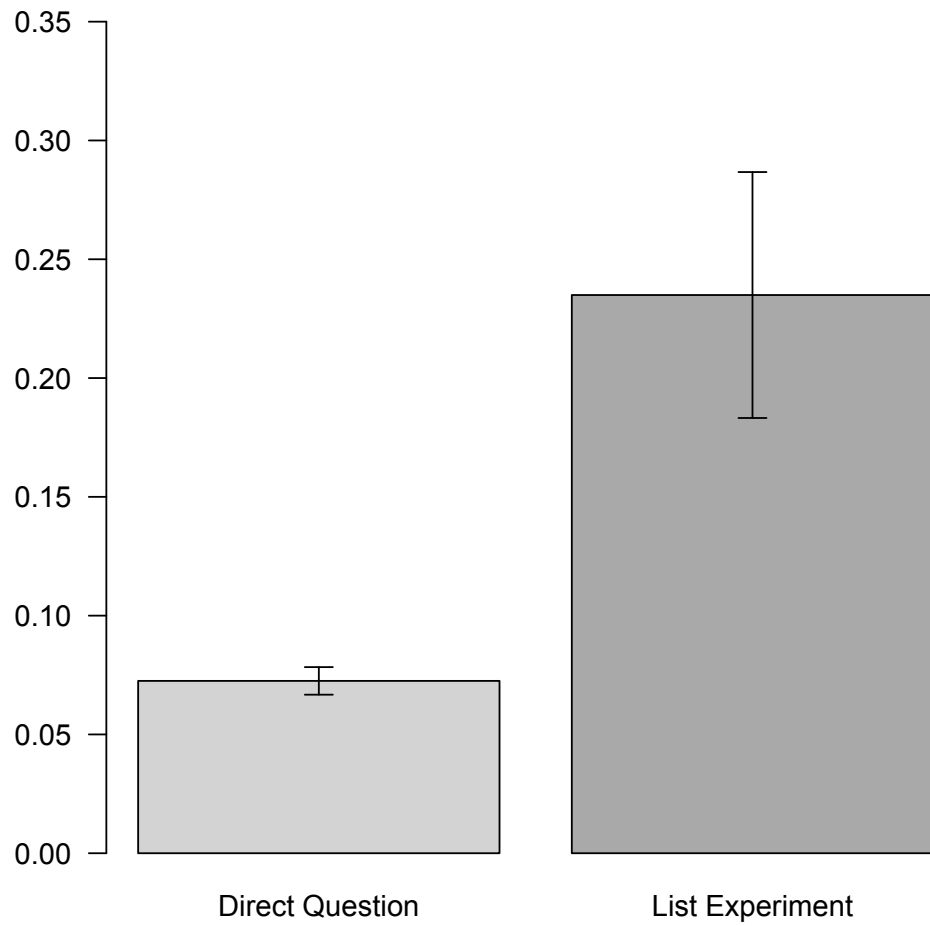
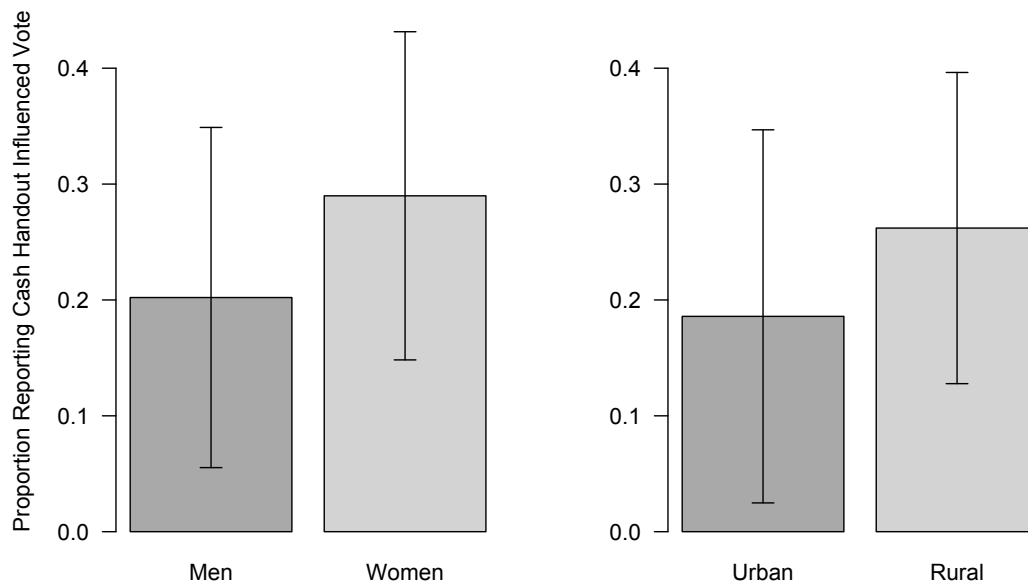


Figure 2.7: **Cash Handout Effectiveness by Gender and Urban/Rural Location.**  
List Experiment Estimates.



## CHAPTER 3

### The Informational Theory of Vote Buying

*According to the constitution, it is illegal. The constitution interprets [it] as corruption, as if you were buying the vote. But [he] does not buy your vote because he is a kind of a person who is ready to listen to your problems. If the problem touches his heart, he's ready to get in his pocket and help you according to your need, but not to buy your vote.*

—Kenyan voter Eric Wanambezi on National Public Radio's Planet Money

The previous chapter documented empirically how widespread and effective vote buying is during Kenyan elections. In this chapter, I develop my informational theory of vote buying. I argue that vote buying can be explained by, and indeed is effective because of, the information it conveys to voters about a candidate's credibility with respect to the future provision of patronage goods.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, I discuss the points of departure for the argument, highlighting some key features of the voting environment in countries such as Kenya. Second, I put forth and defend the informational theory of vote buying. Third, I draw upon existing qualitative and ethnographic research from outside of Kenya to provide some initial evidence in favor of the theory. The fourth section outlines a number of the informational theory's empirical implications, contrasting them with the predictions of other vote-buying theories. I conclude by presenting some preliminary cross-national evidence from Africa that is consistent with the argument.

## **3.1 Points of Departure**

### **3.1.1 Local public goods provision**

Many observers of African politics conclude that local public goods provision is of great importance to voters (Baldwin, 2013; Barkan, 1995; Ichino and Nathan, 2012; Lindberg and Morrison, 2008). Scholars contend that these goods, which include schools, health clinics, clean water projects, and other sorts of local development projects, are a central focus of voters when making their decisions.

Why the focus on local public goods provision? Perhaps most importantly, in both rural and urban areas, these goods can have a substantial welfare impact. Additionally, Kenya and much of Africa remains largely agrarian and rural.<sup>1</sup> In such settings, constituencies tend to be geographically segregated and elections often focus on the development needs of the particular constituents that a candidate hopes to represent (Barkan, 1995). As a result, Barkan (1995) notes that “people [in agrarian societies] evaluate parties and candidates in terms of their potential for, or past record of, constituency service.”

The emphasis on local public goods provision also has an institutional basis. Institutional structures in many African countries, including Kenya’s, constrain the ability of many politicians to impact policy or the nature of governance. In most African countries, for example, political power has been highly centralized in the office of the executive president (Posner and Young, 2007; van de Walle, 2007) and legislatures have generally been weak and lacking in effectiveness with respect to policy and the nature of government. Elected politicians, cabinet ministers, and MPs have struggled to im-

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<sup>1</sup>As of Kenya’s 2009 census, about two-thirds of the country lived in a rural area—and Kenya is one of Africa’s more urbanized nations.

pact broad real policy, but these actors do have influence with respect to distributive issues (Leonard, 1991).

Yet another reason is the absence of ideology in political discourse. As in much of Africa, ideological divisions are not salient in Kenyan politics. Political parties are the personal vessels of small groups of political elites, and most cannot be distinguished with respect to ideology or programmatic platform (Mueller, 2011). Mueller (2011) argues that because parties tend not to compete on programmatic grounds, “politicians are seen primarily as personal distributors of private rather than public goods.”

Kenyan history provides an example of these dynamics. Parliamentary elections, which have been held regularly since independence, have largely focused on the ability of candidates to deliver development resources and patronage to constituents (Barkan, 1994; Hyden and Leys, 1972; Throup and Hornsby, 1998). Kenya’s first president, Jomo Kenyatta, purposely cultivated the notion that members of parliament should be judged on their ability deliver resources to constituents. In particular, he emphasized their participation and funding of “self-help” Harambee projects, where elites have been and continue to be expected to provide substantial cash donations at Harambee events (Widner, 1992). Writing about Kenya and Tanzania, Hyden and Leys (1972) describe the nature of elections in these countries:

“In different ways the rules of both systems [Kenya’s and Tanzania’s] made it clear that the voter was not being offered the choice of a government; and consequently this reinforced his conviction, based on tradition and experience, that the significance of the election was to choose a local patron who would do most for his particular constituents within the framework permitted by the government.”

### **3.1.2 Patronage democracy**

In many new democracies, including those in Africa, the resources voters generally value most, local public goods, tend not to be distributed programmatically; that is, on the basis of transparent, predictable, and to some extent equitable rules. Rather, access to resources is often contingent on personal or political connections to political elites. When distributive politics centers on pork or patronage, many voters perceive that access to resources depends on their political connection to a representative who is both able to compete against other elites for resources and willing to distribute them to his or her constituents (Chandra, 2007)

Empirical investigations of distributive politics in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa lend credibility to these perceptions. For example, Franck and Rainer (2012) find that coethnicity with African presidents improves educational and health outcomes. Kramon and Posner (2011) similarly find that ethnic connections to president's influence educational outcomes in Kenya. In addition, coethnicity with cabinet members, who in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa often do not share an ethnicity with the president (Arriola, 2009), also greatly improves educational outcomes. Other studies conducted in Kenya further show that coethnics of presidents tend to receive more foreign aid projects (Jablonski, 2011) and roads expenditures in their districts (Burgess et al., 2010).

### **3.1.3 Low information and weak parties**

Political economy models of voting broadly focus on two types of voting models: retrospective models that emphasize elections as mechanisms to punish or reward the performance of incumbents (e.g. Ferejohn, 1986); and prospective voting models that emphasize elections as an opportunity for the selection of the type of politician de-



sired by the pivotal voter (Downs, 1957). Fearon (1999a) unifies the prospective model with the retrospective model in a unified theoretical framework. He argues that voters require information if they are to vote retrospectively and that voters will mix retrospective and prospective considerations, depending on the quality of the information that they have (more information means more retrospection). The main implication of Fearon's (1999a) model is that as the voter's information converges to zero (no information), the voter's optimal strategy converges to one of pure selection, or a purely prospective voting rule.

A low information environment accurately describes the situation in many developing country settings (Pande, 2011), suggesting that elections are likely to be more prospective than retrospective in nature. In countries such as Kenya, where the party system is unstable and parties continually change from election to election, low information is compounded by the fact that party labels convey very little information about the extent to which a politician will serve a voter's interest or preferred policies. In these environments, voters try to make inferences about which candidate is likely to benefit them most, subject to the constraints posed by their available information (Chandra, 2007). Recognizing this dynamic, scholars of ethnic voting have for example noted the role of observable ethnic identity in serving as a heuristic device helping voters to make inferences about the likelihood that a candidate would help them in the future (e.g. Carlson, 2010).

### **3.2 Cash Handouts as a Signal**

This discussion highlights three important features of the voting environment in Kenya. First, broadly speaking, voters are seeking representatives who can deliver valued and scarce goods and resources to their community. Second, voters do not expect these

goods to be distributed on a programmatic basis, an expectation that is empirically valid with respect to some, though not all (Kramon and Posner, 2013), public-goods domains. And third, because party labels are meaningless and general levels of political information are low, voters are highly uncertain about which candidates are most likely to represent their interests.

In this environment, candidates face strong pressure to establish their personal credibility with respect to the future provision of the local public goods, or patronage goods, to constituents. I argue that politicians distribute cash to voters to establish credibility in this respect. Put another way, cash handouts convey information to voters about their willingness and ability to provide resources in the future.

Why? In the first place, providing patronage and other targeted benefits to constituents requires resources. Distributing large amounts of money to voters, often in a public manner, is a clear signal to voters that the politician has the resources required to distribute benefits toward constituents (Conroy-Krutz, 2008). The signal is particularly strong in Kenya and many other African countries because candidates for parliament or local government receive little financial support from parties and must therefore finance their campaigns using their personal finances (Coalition for Accountable Political Finance, 2008). Additionally, distributing money and material goods during a campaign signals to voters that the politician is willing to distribute these resources.

Willingness to distribute resources is critical in an environment, such as Kenya's, where corruption is assumed to be widespread. As I discussed in Chapter 1, almost 50 percent of Kenyans believe that most or all of their cabinet ministers and assistant ministers are engaged in corruption and about 60 percent believe that most or all members of parliament are corrupt (EACC, 2012). A large number of Kenyans are asked for bribes when seeking services from the state (EACC, 2012). With such strong perceptions of corruption, politicians must demonstrate their redistributive orientation to

generate support from voters. In discussing trends across Africa, Chabot and Daloz (1999) articulate the point as follows:

“outside one’s own community, where rules of civic behavior apply, there is an assumption that graft presides over all forms of exchange . . . those who do not show themselves sufficiently munificent following their appointment to public office are *ipso facto* deemed to be ‘suspicious.’ They are seen to be either inept or selfish—neither of which is deemed acceptable” (Chabot and Daloz, 1999, pp. 102-3).

Cash handouts also convey information about electoral viability. For example, they can be used to generate large crowds at rallies, which sends a signal to voters about a candidate’s support base. Other scholars have emphasized the role of rallies as a signal (Camp, 2010; Szwarcberg, 2012). However, they tend to focus on how rallies convey information to party elites about the amount of effort their mobilizers put forth in their job. In other words, rallies help to mitigate agency loss associated with a lack of information that party bosses have about the behavior of their mobilizers (Szwarcberg, 2012). In contrast, my argument emphasizes how rallies and the public distribution of money sends a signal to other voters about their electoral strength of a candidate.

In addition to attracting voters to rallies, the handouts themselves help to convince voters that a candidate is electable by conveying information about his or her resource base and connection to financial backers. To paraphrase a sentiment expressed by a number of Kenyans I talked with: voters may have a positive feeling toward those who do not distribute cash, but they do not support them because “they are not serious.”

Electoral viability is important because, in a patronage democracy, siding with a winner is beneficial with respect to gaining access to resources. Indeed the logic of distribution in a patronage democracy suggests that access to valued—and scarce—goods

for one's self and one's community may depend on political support of powerful politicians (Chandra, 2007; van de Walle, 2007). Consistent with this notion, Bratton et al. (2011) find that many voters across Africa support incumbents because they believe they are most likely to win. Signaling electoral viability can therefore attract strategic support from voters seeking to align themselves with winners; that is, those who will have access to state resources in the future.

Finally, because distributing money to voters is technically illegal—and at the very least violates widely accepted democratic norms—the act of distribution signals to voters that the politician is willing to engage in the potentially morally (and legally) questionable activities required to compete for resources against other elites and to subsequently favor constituents with these resources. This is important for two reasons. First, most Kenyans perceive politicians to be corrupt. In selecting a representative to compete for (scarce) resources against corrupt politicians representing other constituencies, it may be advantageous to select a candidate who is also willing “to do what it takes.” Second, targeting one's constituents with patronage and other targeted benefits also requires a politician to violate certain norms (and potentially laws). Distributing money and material benefits on the campaign trail can thus be effective, despite the fact that many voters classify it as a form of corruption.

### **3.2.1 The Politicians' Dilemma**

Thus far, I have emphasized the “positive” signal that distributing material resources can send. However, in an environment where many candidates distribute material goods, failure to do can send a negative signal. In Africa, candidates' wealth and lifestyle are almost always vastly different from their constituents. Given this social distance, those who do not distribute handouts are often perceived to be out-of-touch or

lacking in understanding of the needs of their predominantly poor constituents (Nugent, 2007).

The strategic situation parallels the prisoner's dilemma. Financially, all politicians would be better off if no one bought votes and they competed on other grounds. However, no politician can commit to not buying votes, at least in this setting where political parties are not strong enough to constrain the behavior of their members, and so the dominant strategy for an individual politician is to hand out cash. In other words, failure to buy votes is a dominated strategy when others are doing so. Politicians therefore find themselves in a stable but expensive equilibrium in which most of them spend significant sums distributing resources to voters and it is effective inasmuch as it establishes their credentials as acceptable candidates.

Lindberg (2003) highlights this dilemma in his study in Ghana, where one of his interviewees notes that failure to hand out gifts to voters would “amount to suicide” (Lindberg, 2003). Chabot and Daloz (1999) speak to the dilemma as well, arguing that “those who fail to redistribute, or are perceived to redistribute too little, run the risk of facing hostility or suspicion” (pp. 107). In an editorial in Kenya's *Standard* newspaper, Kiberenge (2012) further sheds light on the position in which many candidates find themselves:

“[politicians are] in a catch-22 situation: bogged down but at the same time too afraid to decline or publicly condemn the trend [of cash handouts] for fear of being branded broke and therefore unelectable.”

### **3.3 Qualitative and Ethnographic Evidence**

I develop the argument drawing upon my observations from the Kenyan case. However, existing qualitative and ethnographic research suggests the plausibility of the argument in other settings in Africa and beyond. In this section, I briefly discuss these cases.

#### **3.3.1 Ghana**

Ghana, formerly the Gold Coast, was the first British colony in Africa to gain independence in 1957. Ghana has now held six multiparty elections since the transition to multiparty elections in the early 1990s. The first two elections were won by Jerry Rawlings, the incumbent authoritarian ruler, and his National Democratic Congress (NDC). When Rawlings abided by term limits and did not run in 2000, the opposition National Patriotic Party (NPP) led by John Kufuor defeated the NDC. For many, the NPP's victory in 2000 marked a major milestone in the country's democratization process. After winning elections in 2004, the NPP was defeated by the NDC in 2008. Recently, the NDC retained the presidency and its parliamentary majority in elections in December 2012. Ghana has thus experienced two peaceful transfers of power and six successive competitive presidential and parliamentary elections.

Candidates for parliament in Ghana contest in single-member districts. The two major parties in Ghana, the NDC and the NPP, are far more institutionalized than their Kenyan counterparts. Unlike in Kenya, these parties have social and intellectual roots that date back to the struggle against colonial rule and which shaped political contestation at independence (Morrison, 2004). While these parties are more distinguishable programmatically than are many parties in Africa, there is still evidence that private material incentives tend to provide the glue that links party members and cadres to the

party establishment (Bob-Milliar, 2012). To some extent, the two major parties are patronage parties.

As in Kenya, there is evidence that distributive issues and the allocation of local public goods are issues that are most important to voters (Ichino and Nathan, 2012; Lindberg and Morrison, 2008; Nugent, 2007). Ichino and Nathan (2012) shows that voters in Ghana are most likely to support candidates that share an ethnicity with the majority group in their geographic area, due to an assumption that politicians will favor members of their own group with local public goods. For their part, Lindberg and Morrison (2008) find that Ghanaian voters reward local public goods provision when deciding how to vote.

Cash and other types of handouts, which are often referred to as “chop money”, are common to campaigns in Ghana. Among Lindberg’s (2003) sample of 72 parliamentary candidates from the 2000 election, he finds that 57 percent spend 25 percent or more of their entire campaign budget on providing “personalized patronage” to voters. Lindberg (2003) describes the campaign behavior of parliamentary candidates as follows: “campaigning is often about walking around various neighborhoods, talking to people about what they do and what their life is, while one of ‘the boys’ (runners and bodyguards) continues to feed the MP with small notes for handouts from a small envelope” (Lindberg, 2003, pp. 129). These funds are drawn primarily from the MPs salary, family money, or other donations.

Given the organizational capacity and institutionalization of Ghanaian political parties, one might expect that the machine or turnout models of vote buying could explain cash handouts in the country. However, observers of Ghanaian politics describe “chop money” through a lens that resonates with the informational argument put forth in this project. For example, Lindberg (2003) argues that gifts reinforce “pacts of loyalty.” He argues that the use of cash handouts “is not simply a buying of votes . . . It is an insti-

tutionalized behavior signifying willingness to take care of ‘your people’” (Lindberg, 2003, pp. 124).

Nugent (2007) uses the analogy of money laundering in his description of chop money in rural Ghana. He notes that “money cannot literally buy votes under conditions of a secret ballot ” (Nugent, 2007, pp. 255) and argues that candidates distribute gifts in rural Ghana to legitimize their wealth, which may have been gained through corrupt means, and to affirm their commitment to helping poor voters. In other words, gift giving helps politicians convince voters that they “recognize his/her local responsibilities” and to “establish local credentials” (Nugent, 2007, pp. 256).

As in Kenya, Ghanaian politicians face pressure to allocate private benefits to voters, often at great personal expense. Nugent (2007) notes that “voters expect to be showered with gifts as evidence that the candidate genuinely does have local interests at heart.” Lindberg (2003) argues that voter expectations and demands can begin to border on extortion. These observations speak to the politicians’ dilemma I discuss above. Handouts are extremely expensive and pose a burden to individual candidates. However, no single candidate has incentive to deviate from the norm of distributing cash, as failure to do so sends a negative signal to voters.

The difference between Kenya and Ghana is that political parties are increasingly well organized and institutionalized. Party organization and discipline can help solve the politicians dilemma by facilitating the collective action required to move away from a vote-buying equilibrium. The recent rise of social policies in Ghana, many of which provide resources to citizens that MPs have traditionally provided personally, suggests that Ghanaian elites are beginning to coordinate away from the vote-buying equilibrium. Additionally, the share of Ghanaians who report receiving a gift during campaigns dropped from around 11 percent as of Afrobarometer’s 2005 survey to about 7 percent as of the most recent survey. This is suggestive evidence that cash handouts



are becoming less important to campaigns as the state begins to provide resources in a more programmatic manner.

### **3.3.2 Cameroon**

The informational argument also resonates with Hansen's (2010) detailed description of the 1996 municipal election campaign in the town of Ngaoundéré in northern Cameroon. As in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa, politics in Cameroon has been described as neo-patrimonial (Bayart, 1993). The elections were the first multiparty municipal elections held in the country since its transition to multiparty politics in 1990. Thirty-five parties competed in these municipal elections; parties whose "names, slogans and political programs were close to identical" (Hansen, 2010). All candidates focused on the issue of local public goods provision:

"all politicians claimed to want improved health facilities, education and orderly marketplaces. They all wanted drinking water and electricity throughout Ngaoundéré. All professed to want to provide paved roads, telephone lines into nearby villages, for the streets to be cleaned and athletic facilities built for adolescents. In short, they wanted 'development'" (Hansen, 2010).

Gift giving, and especially cash handouts were central to political campaigning during the election. In fact, many residents attended political events in the hopes of receiving a handout. These gifts ranged from cash, to clothing, to meat and other food items. Yet "the fact that the ballot remained secret made it possible for voters to accept gifts without having to vote for the parties that offered them" (Hansen, 2010).

Why then did politicians give out these gifts? Consistent with the informational theory, candidates in Ngaoundéré were handing out gifts to show voters that they "are

both able to extract resources and willing to share them” (Hansen, 2010). Hansen (2010) highlights that “the extraction and generous distribution of resources are vital capacities to confirm in a segmented society in which assets are distributed according to particularistic principles of patronage.” In other words, in a political system dominated by patronage, office-seeking officials show through their distribution of gifts that they will benefit their supporters in the future.

### **3.3.3 Peru**

Much of the recent literature on political clientelism studies Latin America. Within that subset, much research focuses on Argentina (e.g. Auyero, 2001; Brusco et al., 2004; Calvo and Murillo, 2004; Gans-Morse et al., 2010; Stokes, 2005; Szwarcberg, 2012; Weitz-Shapiro, 2012). What makes Argentina distinctive is the Peronist Party, which has transformed itself into a well organized and socially rooted political machine (Auyero, 2001; Levitsky, 2003). Though much of what we know about contemporary clientelism has emerged from scholarship on the mechanics of machine politics, machine parties such as the Peronists are not present in all Latin American countries. Indeed evidence from one of Argentina’s South American neighbors, Peru, illustrates the limits of the machine model in all Latin American settings. Moreover, patterns of vote buying in Peru resonate with the informational model, illustrating the theory’s applicability beyond African cases.

Contemporary Peru is similar to Kenya in that it lacks institutionalized, organized, and socially rooted political parties (Levitsky, 2009). In the 1980s, Peru had four major parties. Due to structural changes in Peruvian society and its economy, as well as economic crisis, these parties began to weaken in the late 1980s (Levitsky, 2009). The election of Alberto Fujimori and the 1992 *autogolpe* ultimately destroyed the previ-

ously established political parties and the party system collapsed completely (Levitsky, 2009).

Much like Jomo Kenyatta in the years after Kenyan independence, Fujimori used the state apparatus, rather than a political party organization, to exert power. His first party, Cambio 90, “lacked a program, a national structure” and had “a minimal activist base” (Levitsky, 2009, pp. 345). In each election between 1990 and 2000, Fujimori would create a new political party to contest the elections. Opposition leaders chose similar strategies. Existing parties splintered and parties became candidate-centered electoral vessels that generally did not survive from one electoral cycle to another (Levitsky, 2009). As a result, contemporary parties in Peru “are likely to be loosely structured organizations with fluid electoral bases and tenuous linkages to society” (Levitsky, 2009, pp. 356). Reflecting the nature of the party system, only 20 percent of Peruvians surveyed in 2010 by the the Latin America Population Project (LAPOP) report identifying with a political party. In other words, the party system shares many features with the Kenyan system.

Perceptions of ballot secrecy are strong in Peru (Chirinos, 2012). Further, the organization of voters into voting booths in Peru is done in a rather unconventional manner, which makes it difficult to monitor the voting decisions of groups or neighborhoods. Voters are assigned to voting booths depending on the date when their voter identity card was issued or revalidated. Voters in the same neighborhood therefore vote at different polling places in their district, making it difficult for politicians to determine how communities or neighborhoods vote (Chirinos, 2012).

Despite ballot secrecy and a lack of organized and socially rooted political parties, cash and other handouts are widespread during elections in Peru. According to data collected by LAPOP, about 12 percent of Peruvians report being offered material benefits in exchange for their vote, right about the average in the Latin American countries

surveyed. Of those, 13 percent report that the gift made them more inclined to support the party, 33 percent report that it made them less inclined, and 52 percent report that it had no effect. As in Kenya, much of this distribution occurs before the day of the election and at campaign rallies and events (Chirinos, 2012).

Chirinos (2012) argues that candidates in Peru use cash handouts to mobilize potential voters to large public rallies. These rallies signal electoral viability to strategic voters seeking to align themselves with a potential winner. Chirinos (2012) further argues that large rallies can help attract financial contributions from donors. Candidates thus buy the political participation of potential voters at public campaign events to convey information to onlookers about their electoral viability. As in Kenya, cash handouts in Peru seem to help politicians “look like a winner,” and therefore to attract strategic support from voters.

### **3.4 Theoretical Predictions**

The previous section provided suggestive evidence of the plausibility of the informational model of vote buying by drawing upon existing qualitative and ethnographic research conducted in two African countries and one Latin American country. The remainder of this dissertation subjects the theory to more rigorous tests through analysis of data I collected in Kenya. I do so by testing a number of the informational theory’s empirical implications.

In this section, I highlight the main implications of the theory, contrasting them from the predictions of existing models. Table 3.1 identifies a number of dimensions where the predictions of the informational theory of vote buying differ from the machine, the turnout-buying, and the norms of reciprocity models.

The first is with respect to the targeting of handouts. Standard models of vote buying tend to build upon formal models of distributive politics (Cox and McCubbins, 1986; Dixit and Londregan, 1996). In these models, politicians have fixed and known ideological types. According to the machine model, politicians hand out money to win the votes of swing voters; that is, those voters that are ideologically distant (Stokes, 2005). According to the turnout buying model, politicians hand out money to mobilize the turnout of those whose ideal points are proximate (Nichter, 2008); in other words, they target core supporters. The norms of reciprocity model predicts that voters with strong internalized norms of reciprocity will be most likely to be targeted. The expectation of the informational theory, on the other hand, is that the targeting of cash handouts should be relatively diffuse.

Other predictions differ as well. For example, because the mechanism in my theory is informational, I expect that most vote buying should occur in public, where politicians can send the signal to as many voters as possible. The other theories, on the other hand, suggest that transfers should be more private. With respect to the monitoring of voters, both the informational theory and the norms of reciprocity theory predict that no direct monitoring of voters is required, while the machine and turnout models predict that parties should monitor vote choice and voter turnout, respectively. Relatedly, the machine model predicts that voters should not perceive the secrecy of the ballot to be protected, while the other three theories are consistent with strong perceptions of ballot secrecy. Additionally, the theories differ with respect to the personal relationships required to make vote buying work. My model does not require strong personal relationships with voters, while the machine model and norms of reciprocity arguments do. The turnout buying model is less clear with respect to the personal relationships required. Chapter 4 assesses the predictions outlined in the “nature of vote buying” section of Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Contrasting Theoretical Predictions.**

		<b>Informational Model</b>	<b>Machine Model</b>	<b>Turnout Buying</b>	<b>Social Norms</b>
Nature of Vote Buying	Targeting	Diffuse	Swing	Core	Reciprocating
	Location	Public	Private	Private	Private
	Monitoring	No	Vote choice	Turnout	No
	Perceptions of ballot secrecy	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
	Personal relationships required	No	Yes	Unclear	Yes
Impact on voters	Influence vote choice	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	Increase turnout	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Influence prospective evaluations	Yes	No	No	No
	Influence retrospective evaluations	No	No	No	Yes
Relation to future performance	Future public goods provision	More	Less	Unclear	Less
Conditions where most prevalent	Machine party organization	No	Yes	No	No
	Weak and unorganized parties	Yes	No	No	Yes
	Low politician credibility	Yes	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear

The informational model predictions also differ with respect to vote buying's impact on voters. All models predict that cash handouts should increase the turnout of recipients (as I show in Chapter 8), while only the turnout buying model does not predict that handouts will influence vote choice. Already, I have provided evidence that cash handouts do impact vote choice in Kenya and in later chapters I provide further evidence that they do, findings that are not consistent with the turnout-buying model. The key difference in the other theories' implications is with respect to why vote buying influences vote choice. The informational model predicts that the mechanism runs through prospective expectations; that is, voters expect to benefit from future patronage allocations. The norms of reciprocity argument implies that the mechanism is retrospective; voters feel morally obligated to reward those who have given them gifts (Greene and Lawson, 2012). In the machine model, swing voters support the vote-buying party because their vote is monitored; in other words, for reasons unrelated to prospective or retrospective evaluations. The experimental results in Chapters 5 and 6 speak to these expectations.

The models also differ with respect to their implications for politician responsiveness to voters and communities whom they target with handouts. If the signal in the informational model is to be credible, we should expect areas with more vote buying to receive more, rather than less, local public goods allocations. In contrast, other models expect less responsiveness to those who have had their votes purchased (e.g. Stokes, 2007a). The turnout buying model is ambiguous with respect to how vote buying should relate to future public goods allocations. Chapter 7 provides evidence on this set of implications.

Finally, the theories make different predictions with respect to where vote buying should be most prevalent. The machine model predicts more vote buying where political parties are organized to monitor the vote choices of voters (Lehoucq, 2003). The

other three theories do not require well organized party machines. More importantly, the informational theory predicts that vote buying should be most prevalent where parties are weak and unorganized, and where the credibility of politicians with respect to policy and clientelist promises is very low. In these conditions, where party labels convey little information and politicians have little credibility, the informational model suggests that politicians use cash handouts to build a personal reputation for delivering to constituents.

### **3.5 Vote Buying Across Africa**

An examination of the cross-national data on vote buying in Africa suggests the plausibility of the informational theory by providing evidence consistent with this last set of predictions. That is, the prediction that vote buying should be most prevalent where parties are least organized and institutionalized and where voter perceptions of politician credibility is low.

To conduct this preliminary test, I use data from Afrobarometer's Round 3, which surveyed citizens in 17 African countries in 2005.<sup>2</sup> In that round, the survey included a vote-buying question. I measure the amount of vote buying in a country with a question that asks: "And during the [most recent] elections, how often [if ever] did a candidate or someone from a political party offer you something, like food or a gift, in return for your vote?" Respondents could answer "never," "once or twice," "a few times," "often," or "dont know." I use responses to these questions to generate country level vote-buying rates that measure the share of respondents in each country that reports being offered

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<sup>2</sup>The countries in the sample are Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.



something at least once or twice. I refer to this measure of vote buying as the *direct vote-buying rate*.

As this direct measure of experience with vote buying could be subject to response bias, I generate an additional measure of vote buying at the country level that relies on respondent perceptions of how common vote buying is in their country. The question asks: “In your opinion, how often do politicians do each of the following? Offer gifts to voters during election campaigns?” Respondents can answer always (3), often (2), rarely (1), or never (0). I average responses at the country level to generate a measure of vote buying that runs from 0 to 3, with 3 representing the highest levels. The disadvantage of this question is that it is perceptual and responses may not be accurate. The advantage is that questions about sensitive behavior tend to be less prone to response bias when the question is phrased generally and with respect to the activities of others. This second measure of country-level vote buying, which I refer to as the *perceived vote-buying rate*, is highly correlated with the direct vote-buying rate ( $r = 0.7$ ).

I examine how levels of vote buying across countries vary with how institutionalized party systems are and with how citizens perceive the credibility of political elites. I focus on the former because, while political parties serve in a number of different functions in a democracy (Aldrich, 1995; Diamond and Gunther, 2001), one role of the party label is convey information to voters about which types of individual political candidates are most likely to serve their interests or pursue their favored policies. Where parties are relatively stable, they can develop reputations for following through on their policy and their clientelist promises (Keefer, 2010), reputations that voters can then attach to the individual politicians running on the party ticket. Yet where parties are unstable and unorganized, coalitions are constantly shifting, and party names change every election cycle, as they do in Kenya, party labels have little informational value. In these cases, politicians must rely on their personal reputations and credibility, which

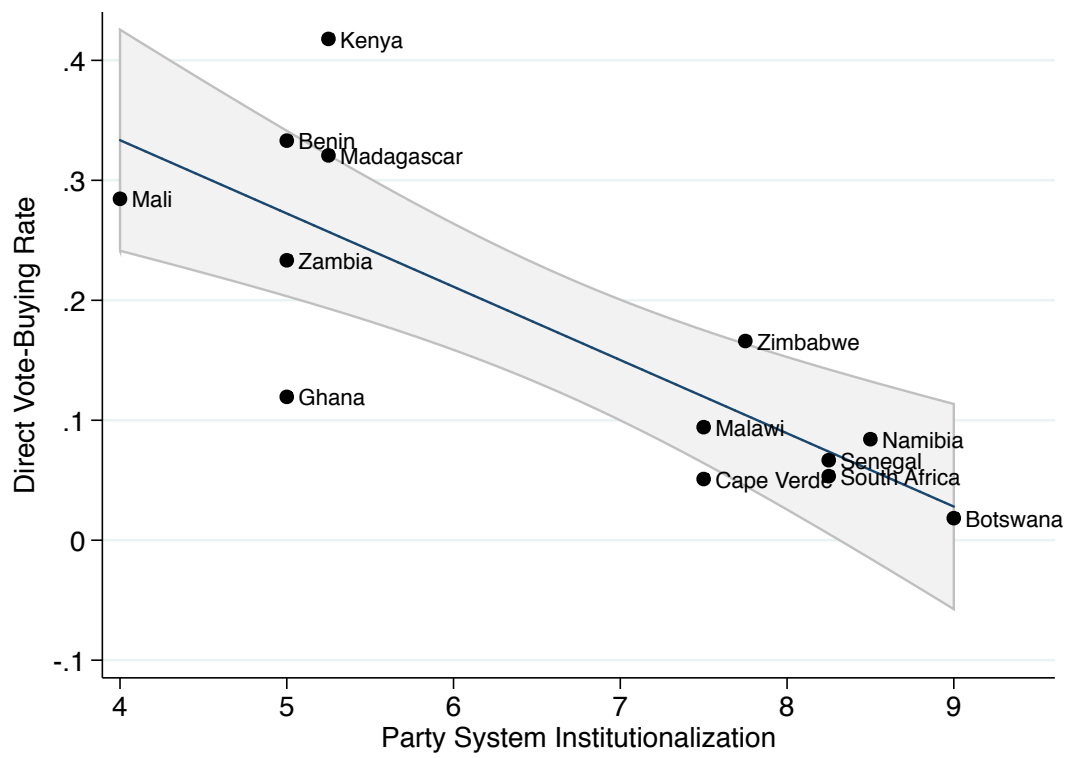
I argue in this project can be bolstered by vote buying. If the informational theory is correct, I would expect that vote buying should be most prevalent where party systems are not institutionalized

I use a measure of the degree of party system institutionalization in each country developed by Kuenzi and Lambright (2001). Following Mainwaring and Scully (1995) in their study of party system institutionalization in Latin America, Kuenzi and Lambright (2001) take party system institutionalization to mean that there is regular competition between parties, those parties have relatively stable roots in society, citizens and elites accept that elections are the proper means for determining who governs, and parties have some degree of internal organization. The Kuenzi and Lambright (2001) data include information on 13 of the 17 countries in the Afrobarometer sample. The scale runs from 0 (least institutionalized) to 9 (most institutionalized). The party system in Botswana is most institutionalized, with a score of 9, while the party system in Mali is the least institutionalized in the sample, with a score of 4.

Figure 3.1 displays the bivariate relation between party system institutionalization and the direct vote-buying rate in each country for which both Afrobarometer and party system data are available. The pattern is consistent with the idea that countries with more institutionalized party systems experience less vote buying. The plot shows that, generally speaking, there are two groups of countries in the sample. Those with low levels of party institutionalization and relatively high rates of vote buying, such as Kenya, and those with higher levels of party institutionalization and relatively low levels of vote buying, such as Senegal and Botswana.

Capturing politician credibility at the country level poses a challenge because it is not directly observable (Keefer, 2007). Keefer (2007) uses the age of democracy as an indicator of politician credibility in his cross-national study on the relation between credibility and policy decisions. The problem with using such a measure for

Figure 3.1: Party System Institutionalization and Vote Buying in Africa



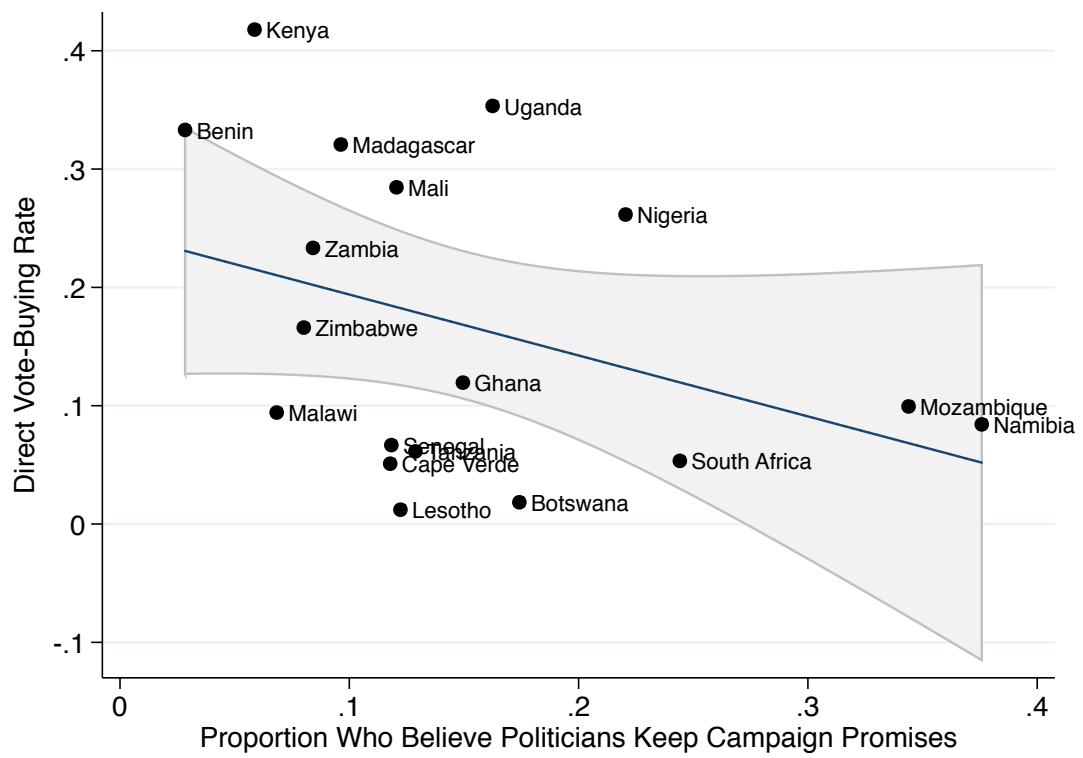
my purposes is that the sample African countries in the Afrobarometer sample transitioned to multiparty politics at about the same time—in the early 1990s. I therefore generate a measure of perceived politician credibility from the Afrobarometer survey itself. The question asks: “In your opinion, how often do politicians do each of the following? Keep their campaign promises after elections?” I code all respondents who respond “often” or “always” as believing that politicians are somewhat credible in their promises, and I code those who respond “rarely” or “never” as having little belief in the credibility of politicians. As vote buying helps politicians establish personal credibility with respect to future performance, I expect handouts to be more prevalent where respondents generally do not believe that candidates are likely to fulfill their campaign promises.

The data reveal that potential voters in these African countries have very little faith in the likelihood that their political representatives will follow through on their campaign promises. The average of the country rates is about 15 percent. There is, however, substantial cross-country variation. At the low end, only 2.8 percent of respondents in Benin believe that politicians often or always fulfill their campaign promises. At the high end, about 37 percent of Namibians believe that politicians will come through on their campaign promises.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the bivariate relationship between these perceptions and respondents’ reported experience being offered bribes or gifts during campaigns. Consistent with the theoretical expectation, the amount of vote buying in a country decreases as the share of the population that believes politician promises are believable rises. In other words, where politicians are perceived to be most credible, vote buying is less prevalent.

In multivariate regressions, I control for a number of variables that might relate to both vote buying, the credibility of politicians, and the institutionalization of the party

Figure 3.2: Perceptions of Politician Credibility and Vote Buying in Africa.



system. Given the small sample size, the models are necessarily sparse. I control for each country's GDP per capita (logged) and its degree of ethnic fractionalization using Posner's (2004) measure of Politically Relevant Ethnic Groups (PREG). I control for level of democracy with the Polity score of each country at the time of the election most proximate to the Afrobarometer survey. To capture urbanization, I control for the share of Afrobarometer respondents that reside in a rural area. Finally, I generate a poverty index for each individual.<sup>3</sup>

Table 3.2 presents regression results with respect to politician credibility. I estimate the models using ordinary least squares. In the first three columns, the dependent variable is the direct vote-buying rate based upon respondent's reported experience personally receiving handouts. The coefficient on the politician promises variable is negative even after introducing control variables, as expected. However, given the small sample size, the results are not statistically significant.

In columns 4 through 6 of Table 3.2 the dependent variable is the perceived vote-buying measure based upon respondent perceptions of how often politicians hand out gifts to win votes. Given sensitivity bias with respect to questions about respondents' own experience with vote buying, this alternative measure may give a better sense for general levels of vote buying in each country. Column 4 shows that the bivariate association between perceptions of politician credibility and the perceived vote-buying rate is substantial and statistically significant. The standard deviation of the "politicians keep promises" variable is about 0.10 (the mean is 0.14). A one standard deviation increase in the share of the population that believes politician often or always keep their

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<sup>3</sup>I construct the poverty index with the Afrobarometer question that asks: "Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or your family gone without": 1) enough food to eat; 2) enough clean water for home use; 3) medicines or medical treatment; 4) enough fuel to cook your food; 5) a cash income; 6) school expenses for your children. Respondents selected one of five options: "never," "just once or twice," "several times," "many times," and "always." I assign these responses values from 0 to 4, where 0 corresponds to "never" and 4 corresponds to "always." I average each individual's responses to these items to generate a poverty index where higher values therefore capture a higher level of poverty. I then average the poverty index by country to generate a country-level poverty measure.

**Table 3.2: Perceptions of Politician Credibility and Vote Buying in Africa.** Dependent variable in columns 1 through 3 is the share of respondents in each country who report being offered a bribe or gift from a politician in their country's most recent election. Dependent variable in columns 4 through 6 is the country average of respondent perceptions of how often politicians distribute gifts in order to win elections. Politician credibility is measured as the share of respondents in each country who believe that politicians often or always keep their promises.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Direct Vote-Buying Rate			Perceived Vote-Buying Rate		
Politicians Keep Promises	-0.52 (0.32)	-0.33 (0.32)	-0.33 (0.43)	-2.20** (0.99)	-1.85* (1.04)	-1.45 (1.17)
GDP per capita (log)		-0.06* (0.03)	-0.04 (0.04)		-0.11 (0.10)	-0.05 (0.11)
POLITY Democracy Score			0.00 (0.00)			0.01 (0.00)
Poverty Index			0.07 (0.14)			0.61 (0.39)
PREG			0.12 (0.16)			0.54 (0.43)
Share Residing in Rural Area			-0.14 (0.17)			-0.42 (0.45)
Constant	0.25*** (0.06)	0.64** (0.22)	0.51 (0.38)	2.32*** (0.17)	3.09*** (0.73)	2.02* (1.05)
Observations	18	18	17	18	18	17
R-squared	0.14	0.30	0.40	0.24	0.29	0.59

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

promises is therefore associated with a reduction in the perceived vote-buying rate of 0.22, just over one half of a standard deviation on that variable. When I introduce a control for GDP per capita, the coefficient reduces in magnitude slightly but remains significant at the 0.10 level even in this very small sample. When I include the full battery of controls, the coefficient is not significant. The statistical power of the full model, with 6 covariates and only 17 observations, is extremely limited. However, the magnitude and direction are as expected.

Table 3.3 presents regression results with respect to party system institutionalization. In the bivariate model and in the model with the control for GDP per capita, party system institutionalization has a negative and statistically significant association with the direct vote-buying rate of the countries in the sample. A one unit increase in institutionalization is associated with about a 5 or 6 percentage point decrease in the direct vote-buying rate. When I introduce the full set of controls, the coefficient is no longer statistically significant. However, the magnitude of the association remains exactly the same and the standard error is relatively small given the extremely small sample size. The final three columns of Table 3.3 show findings with respect to the perceived vote-buying rate. Again, the bivariate relationship is statistically significant and in the expected direction. The magnitude goes down, however, when I introduce controls.

Though these results are only suggestive given the small sample size, which limits statistical efficiency and my ability to control for a range of potential omitted variables, the findings are consistent with the notion that vote buying serves an informational role. First, where politicians lack credibility with respect to their campaign promises, be they programmatic or clientelist, I expect that vote buying should be more prevalent. In such settings, vote buying can help individual politicians establish credibility. Consistent with this prediction, I find that vote buying is more prevalent in African countries where survey respondents exhibit high degrees of mistrust in politicians' cam-



Table 3.3: **Party System Institutionalization and Vote Buying in Africa.** Dependent variable in columns 1 through 3 is the share of respondents in each country who report being offered a bribe or gift from a politician in their country's most recent election. Dependent variable in columns 4 through 6 is the country average of respondent perceptions of how often politicians distribute gifts in order to win elections.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Direct Vote-Buying Rate			Perceived Vote-Buying Rate		
Party System Institutionalization	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.05** (0.02)	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.14** (0.06)	-0.08 (0.08)	-0.03 (0.12)
GDP per capita (log)		-0.02 (0.04)	0.00 (0.08)		-0.14 (0.14)	-0.16 (0.22)
POLITY Democracy Score			-0.00 (0.02)			-0.04 (0.05)
Poverty Index			0.10 (0.23)			0.34 (0.63)
PREG			-0.02 (0.17)			0.08 (0.48)
Share Residing in Rural Area			-0.05 (0.14)			-0.41 (0.38)
Constant	0.58*** (0.09)	0.65*** (0.19)	0.48 (0.67)	2.95*** (0.39)	3.60*** (0.78)	3.57 (1.82)
Observations	13	13	12	13	13	12
R-squared	0.65	0.66	0.72	0.34	0.40	0.79

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

paign promises. Second, where political parties are not well institutionalized—that is, they change from election to election, they lack stable roots in society, and they are poorly organized—party labels convey very little information to voters about the extent to which an individual politician will serve their interests or pursue their favored policy agenda. Where pork and patronage allocations are focal in politics, as they are in these African cases, politicians can use handouts to establish personal reputations with respect to delivering patronage goods.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined my informational theory of vote buying and highlighted how its predictions differ from those of existing vote-buying theories. I provide evidence of the plausibility of the theory by analyzing cross-national variation in vote buying's prevalence within Africa. The findings provide at least suggestive evidence consistent with several implications of the informational theory.

The remainder of this dissertation presents more rigorous tests of the predictions outlined in Table 3.1. In some areas the different models generate similar predictions. However, none of the theories make the same predictions in all domains. In the remainder of this project, I provide different sources of data that speak to each of these sets of predictions. As I will show, on balance the data are more consistent with the informational theory.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Assessing Transactional Theories**

In the previous chapter, I outline a number of ways in which the informational theory differs from existing models of vote buying. What links all three of these dominant alternative theoretical approaches is their transactional logic. In these frameworks, cash handouts are the centerpiece of a market transaction between candidate and voter (Schaffer and Schedler, 2007). The term vote buying itself highlights an emphasis on direct exchange (Schaffer, 2007; Stokes, 2005). The models differ with respect to what the transaction is about: vote choice in the case of the machine and norms of reciprocity models, or voter turnout in the case of the turnout-buying model.

In this chapter, I provide evidence that patterns in Kenya are inconsistent with a number of predictions of these transactional theories. I focus in this chapter on the implications outlined in the first panel of Table 3.1: those that focus on the monitoring of voters, perceptions of ballot secrecy, the degree of targeting and location of vote-buying transfers, and on the personal relationships between vote buyer and recipient. In each case, the evidence is most consistent with the informational theory. These results set the stage for the next chapters, which provide more direct tests of the theory's implications.

## 4.1 Monitoring Voters

In trading money for votes, parties and candidates generally try to ensure that their investments are effective (Hicken, 2011). One way they do so is through the use of political machines (Scott, 1969; Stokes, 2005). Machines are bottom-heavy organizations with deep ties in the communities where they distribute material resources. These connections permit them to enforce vote-buying contracts by allowing them to make inferences about how people vote and to credibly threaten to punish those who fail to support the machine after receiving a handout during the campaign (Brusco et al., 2004).

Political party machines have received substantial attention in the literature on clientelism, so much so that many scholars equate use the terms machine politics and clientelist politics interchangeably (e.g. Gans-Morse et al., 2010; Stokes et al., 2012). To some extent, this focus on party machines makes sense. State and municipal-level machines played a central role in exchanging jobs and resources for votes in the 19th and early 20th centuries in the United States, for example. Much contemporary research on vote buying and clientelism focuses on Latin America, where in a few cases clientelist politics seems to fit the machine model. For instance, Magaloni (2006) studies how the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) used material inducements to maintain support for its single-party regime. Many studies examine the case of Argentina, where the Argentine Justicialista Party, or the Peronist party, has established itself as a full-blown political machine (Levitsky, 2003). Brusco et al. (2004) and Stokes (2005), for example, theorize and use survey data to show that vote buying is an effective strategy when parties can monitor voters and their voting decisions, and can punish voters who accept handouts but do not support the party. Nichter (2008), on the other hand, argues that the Peronists use handouts to mobilize their passive supporters; those who would not

vote unless they were paid to do so but who are otherwise inclined to support the party. Weitz-Shapiro (2012) examines the conditions in which politicians will choose not to use a clientelist strategy in Argentina, highlighting the role of political competition and a sizeable middle class in reducing incentives for clientelism. Camp (2010), Stokes (2005), and Szwarcberg (2012) all focus on the role of party brokers, the middlemen between candidate and voter that form the core of the Peronist machine.

While the machine model might fit United States history and some contemporary Latin American cases, there is reason to question its explanatory power in at least some other settings (e.g. van de Walle, 2007). In the first place, in many emerging democracies, including Kenya and others in Africa, political parties are not structured as machines. Very few African political parties have the organizational structure or capacity to systematically monitor the votes of those to whom they distribute goods, and often they do not try to do so (van de Walle, 2007). Though dominant parties in some African countries, such as the United Democratic Movement in Uganda or Chama Cha Mapinduzi in Tanzania, have some features that resemble the machine parties of Latin America, parties in Kenya and other African settings are generally less well embedded and structured.

In Kenya, for example, parties are weakly organized and lacking in the grassroots infrastructure that tends to define political machines. After the introduction of multi-party politics in 1992, the long-time ruling party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), fragmented. Numerous members of the old regime departed KANU to form their own parties that generally serve as the personal vessels of one or a few prominent elites and which lack strong societal roots. These new parties have not invested in the kind of organizational development that would be required of a political machine. For example, parties generally do not have provincial or branch offices (LeBas, 2011), nor do they have a large and stable cadre of grassroots organizers and agents that work on

their behalf in between elections. Rather, many political mobilizers renegotiate their “contracts” with parties and politicians before each election. As one mobilizer in the Rift Valley Province of Kenya told me: “just as [politicians] can change parties, so do we.” Reflecting this party weakness, 42 percent of Kenyans surveyed during the Afrobarometer Round 5 survey report that they do not feel close to any political party.

Rather than invest in the construction of a political machine, politicians might buy the services of pre-established patrons and use the patrons’ connections and power to monitor voters. In the Kenyan case, the pre-established patrons would generally be chiefs, who still enjoy some discretionary power over dispute resolution and some local matters. There are several reasons why much of the vote buying that occurs in Kenya is likely not enforced by the monitoring of traditional patrons. First, if a patron enjoys such power over his clients’ voting behavior, it is not clear that we should observe a great deal of direct vote buying of voters. Rather, the vote buying would be more indirect, with resources moving from the politician to the patron. The patron, preferring to consume most of these resources, would then use his traditional, persuasive, or coercive powers to deliver the votes (Baland and Robinson, 2008). Put another way, if the traditional patron can control his clients, there is no need to distribute cash to voters. In Chapter 9 I directly test this claim and show that vote buying is most prevalent in African countries and sub-national locations where traditional patrons are weakest. Vote buying in Africa appears to be a strategy associated with the lack of strong local intermediaries, rather than one that is facilitated by such local brokers.

In Kenya, where most ethnic groups never had strong and centralized traditional institutions (Tignor, 1971), it is perhaps not surprising that in most instances politicians and their agents bypass the traditional patrons and buy votes directly from voters. An overwhelming majority of my Rift Valley - Nairobi survey respondents who received money or a gift from a political party reported that they received the handout from a

complete stranger, which highlights that chiefs and other local patrons are not centrally involved in vote buying. Indeed most of the political brokers hired by politicians to buy votes tend not to be associated with traditional authorities and are not traditional rulers themselves. These independent political entrepreneurs, who are paid to buy votes, could in principle also be paid to monitor voters. Some of these political entrepreneurs do try to monitor voters, often in quite creative ways, but many of them do not.<sup>1</sup> Though they may be able to monitor voters should they choose, in many instances they do not invest in doing so.

## **4.2 Perceptions of Ballot Secrecy**

I have thus far emphasized two points: first, that political parties in Kenya are not organized enough to function as political machines; and second, that the way that vote buying works in Kenya is not indicative of a model whereby traditional patrons are hired as intermediaries to enforce vote-buying contracts with voters. Chapter 9 reinforces the latter point by showing that vote buying is most prevalent in Kenya where traditional patrons are weakest. The remainder of this section focuses on an additional implication of the machine model: that voters should at least perceive that the secrecy of the ballot is violated. Moreover, these perceptions should be especially widespread among those who receive cash handouts. Perceptions are important because vote-buying exchanges could still be sustained by systematic perceptions of a lack of ballot secrecy (Chandra, 2007).

In Kenya, there appear to be relatively widespread perceptions of ballot secrecy. For example, in the most recent Afrobarometer survey conducted in the Kenya (round 5),

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<sup>1</sup>Anecdotes abound about the creative ways in which agents try to violate ballot secrecy in Kenya and in other countries. I do not want to discount the importance of these activities. However, they do not appear sufficiently widespread to enforce vote buying contracts with the large proportion of the population that receive money during elections.

respondents were asked whether, despite the secret ballot, powerful individuals could discover how they voted. Over 80 percent responded “not at all likely” or “not very likely.” About 6 percent report that powerful people are “somewhat likely” to discover how they voted and only about 4 percent report that powerful people are “very likely” to discover how they voted. Compare these survey responses to those of respondents in Latin American countries. In Stokes (2005) survey in Argentina, respondents were asked: “Even though the vote is secret, do you believe that party operatives can find out how a person in your neighborhood has voted?” Of her 2000 respondents, 37 percent said yes, 51 percent said no, and 12 percent did not know. In the survey of Finan and Schechter (2012) in Paraguay, over 50 percent of respondents did not believe that the secrecy of the ballot is protected.

Not only are perceptions of ballot secrecy relatively widespread, experience being offered or receiving cash handouts has no relation to perceptions of ballot secrecy. Table 4.1 provides evidence in this respect, reporting results of a series of logistic regressions in which the outcome variable is the respondent’s belief that someone powerful is somewhat likely or very likely to discover how they voted. The first column shows that experience with vote buying has very little relation to this perception. The lack of correlation holds even after controlling for poverty, gender, residence in a rural area, and age. Interestingly, those living in poverty are more likely to believe that the secrecy of the ballot can be violated, which is consistent with the idea that more vulnerable people are less autonomous with respect to voting.

Even more problematic for the machine model, columns 2 through 4 of Table 4.1 show that people who feel close to a political party (about 58 percent of the sample) are less likely to believe that the secrecy of the ballot can be violated. This result contrasts with what one would expect given the mechanics of machine politics. Where political machines enforce vote-buying contracts, they develop long term relationships



Table 4.1: **Perceptions of Ballot Secrecy in Kenya’s 2007 Elections.** Dependent variable: 1 if respondent believes someone powerful is “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to discover how they voted, 0 if they believe someone powerful is “not very likely” or “not at all likely” to discover how they voted. Data from Afrobarometer Round 5 survey. All models are logisitic regressions.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Offered Bribe or Gift in 2007	0.053 (0.114)		0.094 (0.114)	0.013 (0.116)
Feels Close to a Political Party		-0.389*** (0.108)	-0.398*** (0.108)	-0.400*** (0.110)
Poverty Index				0.278*** (0.064)
Male				-0.105 (0.110)
Rural				0.072 (0.114)
Age				-0.000 (0.001)
Constant	-1.568*** (0.066)	-1.338*** (0.077)	-1.364*** (0.085)	-1.692*** (0.146)
Observations	2,399	2,399	2,399	2,381

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

with voters, relationships that allow them to make inferences about how people vote. The expectation then is that people who are close to the machine party should expect that the machine can make a judgement about how they voted. In Kenya, however, the opposite is the case: people who feel close to parties are more likely to believe in the secrecy of the ballot.

Kenyans who believe that ballot secrecy is not protected are also less likely to turn out to vote. Table 4.2 presents these results, which illustrate that on average those who believe the ballot is secret are 10 percentage points more likely to vote than those who do not. Further, those who were offered a handout and believe that the ballot is not secret are not more likely to vote. If anything, handouts reduce the likelihood that someone who does not believe the ballot is secret will vote, though this reduction is not statistically significant (see the interaction term in column 4). These findings contrast with expectations of the machine model. When machines monitor vote choices they are also monitoring turnout. If cash handouts were effective in winning votes because of pressure from the machine, we would expect those who receive handouts and believe ballot secrecy is violated to be the most likely to vote. In Kenya, however, these respondents are less likely to vote.

Figure 4.2 presents further evidence that is inconsistent with the machine model. The data in this figure were collected as part of the Nairobi Rift Valley survey. In both panels, the grey areas represent the proportion of survey respondents in Nairobi and the Rift Valley that report receiving money during the 2007 elections. About 50 percent of my respondents in the Rift Valley report having received money, while almost 40 percent in Nairobi did. The black areas in each panel represent answers to follow-up questions. First, I asked respondents whether the person who gave them the money could “guess or figure out how they voted.” As the left panel illustrates, a very small proportion of respondents believe that the person who gave them the money could guess

Table 4.2: **Perceptions of Ballot Secrecy and Voter Turnout in Kenya's 2007 Elections.** Dependent variable: voter turnout in 2007 elections. Data from Afrobarometer Round 5 survey. All models are logisitic regressions.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Ballot not Secret	-0.504*** (0.114)	-0.510*** (0.114)	-0.536*** (0.118)	-0.463*** (0.140)
Offered Bribe or Gift in 2007		0.333*** (0.101)	0.243** (0.103)	0.292** (0.116)
Bribe or Gift * Ballot not Secret				-0.235 (0.253)
Feels Close to a Political Party			0.215** (0.096)	0.218** (0.096)
Poverty Index			0.156*** (0.057)	0.157*** (0.057)
Rural			0.387*** (0.095)	0.390*** (0.095)
Male			0.203** (0.095)	0.204** (0.095)
Constant	1.061*** (0.051)	0.958*** (0.059)	0.360*** (0.113)	0.340*** (0.114)
Observations	2,399	2,399	2,381	2,381

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

how they voted. In a second follow-up question, I asked whether politicians' agents follow-up to make sure that people who receive a cash handout actually vote for their candidate. Again, the proportion of respondents who report that this happens is very small, especially relative to the share of people who receive cash handouts.

Figure 4.2 does show, however, that relative to the rural areas more people in Nairobi believe that party agents will follow up to make sure that people who receive handouts actually vote for the party that gave them the handout. This is consistent with the notion that political parties in Africa are most organized in urban areas (Bratton, 2008; van de Walle, 2007).

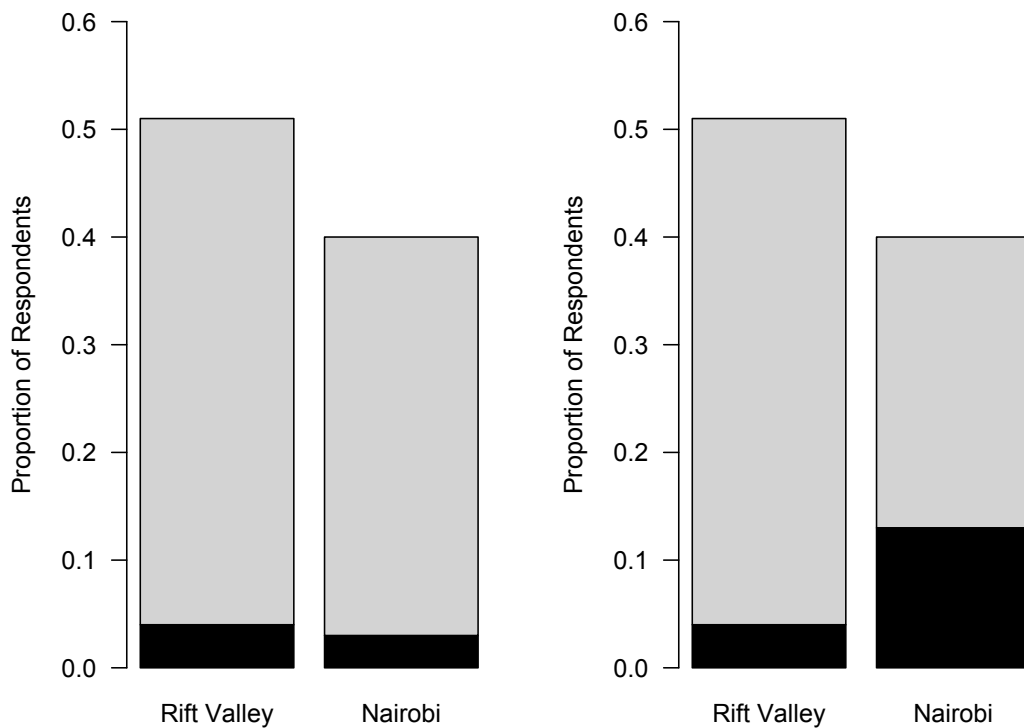
All of this evidence seems to confirm the view of one political mobilizer in a rural village in Kenya's Eldoret North constituency when he summed up the perceptions of ballot secrecy in his area: "each of them [other villagers] knows that they can vote how they want in the box and nobody will know."

#### **4.2.1 Implicit Threats**

Even in the absence of a political party machine, cash handouts might also be effective because they constitute an implicit threat on the part of politicians (Schaffer and Schedler, 2007). In other words, voters may fulfill their end of the vote-buying agreement because the gift itself implies threat of retaliation or punishment, even if politicians have no capacity for direct monitoring. To assess this explanation, I turn to an Afrobarometer Round 5 question that asked Kenyans how free they feel to vote for whom they choose without pressure. 90 percent of all respondents said "completely free" (79 percent) or "somewhat free" (11 percent).

Table 4.3 shows that Kenyans who are offered handouts actually feel more free to vote without pressure than those who are not offered handouts. The dependent variable

Figure 4.1: **Vote Buying and Perceptions of Ballot Secrecy.** Nairobi and Rift Valley survey. The grey areas represent the share of survey respondents who received a cash handout. The black area in the left panel represents the share of respondents who believe that the person who gave them the case “could guess how they voted.” The black area in the right panel represents the share of respondents who believe that “politicians’ agents follow-up to make sure that people who receive a cash handout actually vote for their candidate.”



in the table runs from 0 (“not at all free”) to 3 (“completely free”). Positive coefficients therefore mean that the people feel freer. This finding contrasts with expectations from an implicit threat model and from the machine model,

Column 3 interacts the vote-buying variable with the variable capturing perceptions of ballot secrecy. In that model, I find that those who are offered cash handouts and who do not believe the ballot is secret are those who feel the least free with respect to their ability to vote without pressure. This finding seems to be more consistent with the machine model. The crucial distinction is how people respond to this feeling of pressure. If cash handouts are threatening, either in of themselves, or because a party machine is applying pressure, we would expect these individuals to vote, despite their lack of feeling of freedom. In Kenya, however, these people respond with exit: they are less likely to vote (see results and discussion of Table 4.2).

### **4.3 Targeting and Location of Cash Handouts**

Both the machine and turnout-buying approaches make predictions about how parties and candidates should strategically target material distribution. For example, Stokes’s (2005) model predicts that parties will target weak opposition supporters. On the other hand, Nichter (2008) predicts that parties will target their own strong supporters who might otherwise fail to show up to vote. In either case, the expectation is not that candidates should allocate benefits in a diffuse manner, but rather that they will target specific types of voters.

Cash distribution in Kenya is, however, far more diffuse and less targeted than transactional theories would expect. For example, of those I surveyed in the Rift Valley and Nairobi who received a cash handout during the 2007 elections (290 of 655 respon-

Table 4.3: **Cash Handouts and Freedom to Vote Without Pressure.** Dependent variable: four point scale of respondent perception of ability to vote for whoever they choose without pressure running from 0 (“not at all free”) to 3 (“completely free”). Data from Afrobarometer Round 5 survey. All models are OLS. Results are robust to the use of ordered logistic regression.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Offered Bribe or Gift in 2007	0.041 (0.029)	0.053* (0.029)	0.116*** (0.029)
Ballot not Secret		-0.157*** (0.044)	-0.029 (0.050)
Bribe or Gift * Ballot not Secret			-0.383*** (0.094)
Feels Close to a Political Party		-0.012 (0.029)	-0.005 (0.029)
Rural		-0.018 (0.029)	-0.014 (0.029)
Poverty Index		-0.046*** (0.016)	-0.045*** (0.016)
Male		0.070** (0.028)	0.073*** (0.028)
Constant	3.689*** (0.017)	3.747*** (0.035)	3.718*** (0.035)
Observations	2,345	2,329	2,329
R-squared	0.001	0.015	0.025

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

dents), over 50 percent claim to have received one from more than one party.<sup>2</sup> If parties are distributing to many of the same voters, this suggests that their strategies are not especially targeted.

In addition, most recipients receive cash in a setting where the degree of targeting is relatively low. In Kenya, campaign rallies are common venues where candidates distribute to voters and at such events money is generally distributed to most, or depending on the size even all, of those who attend. This suggests a non-discriminatory and non-targeted form of distribution in over half of the instances reported by survey respondents, which is more consistent with the informational model. For example, 65 percent of those in the Afrobarometer round 5 sample that were offered a bribe or a gift during the 2007 campaign also attended a campaign rally during the elections. Of those I surveyed in the Rift Valley and Nairobi who received money from a politician or party before the same elections elections, fully 57 percent received the money at a campaign rally. Only about 14 percent received money in a situation where the degree of targeting is likely to be very high: 8 percent at their own home and 6 percent on the side of the road (presumably after being approached).<sup>3</sup>

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The chapter has addressed existing theoretical explanations for vote buying's effectiveness. Cash handouts are effective in winning votes in Kenya, despite the fact that political parties are not structured as machines, perceptions of ballot secrecy are widespread, and most Kenyans feel free to vote for whomever they choose without pressure. In

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<sup>2</sup>These responses could be biased, however, and so this evidence can only be suggestive. Respondents may believe that accepting a bribe is less morally objectionable if one accepts from multiple parties. Doing so indicates that the person has no problem taking money from a politician but does not actually intend to sell his or her vote.

<sup>3</sup>Other locations include school and the local bar.



fact, those who receive cash handouts are more likely to feel free in their voting and to perceive the ballot to be secret, patterns that contrast with expectations from a literature on clientelism that has emphasized direct or indirect violations of ballot secrecy as being central to facilitating clientelist and vote-buying exchanges. Moreover, most Kenyans receive cash handouts in public, in settings where the degree of targeting is low, and from perfect strangers, patterns that again contrast with the expectations of transactional theories. These patterns, I argue, are more consistent with the informational model put forth in this dissertation. The next chapter turns to a more direct test of the informational theory.

## CHAPTER 5

### **An Experimental Test of the Informational Argument**

Chapter 3 outlined the informational model of vote buying. The theory generates a number of implications that distinguish it from other theories. In particular, if vote buying is effective because it conveys information to voters, it should impact voters' support for a candidate, regardless of whether they actually receive money (Hypothesis 1). This hypothesis differs substantially from the prediction of transactional theories, as it is the actual receipt of a handout is central to the market transaction.

Additionally, voters should expect vote-buying politicians to be more likely to deliver resources to constituents in the future (Hypothesis Two) and, because distributing cash helps politicians “look like a winner,” voters should expect vote-buying politicians to be more electorally viable (Hypothesis Three). As I argued in the previous section, this viability can attract strategic support seeking to align themselves with candidates who will best be able to deliver patronage after an election.

The latter two expectations contrast with those of transactional theories. In those models cash handouts are orthogonal to prospective evaluations of candidates (in the machine and turnout-buying models). Or, in other words, in these models receiving or observing cash handouts does not impact performance evaluations or expectations of politicians. The latter expectations also contrast with the norms of reciprocity model. In that framework, voters are retrospective, feeling morally obligated to vote for those who have benefited them in the past (Greene and Lawson, 2012). In the informational

framework, on the other hand, cash handouts impact prospective evaluations. The remainder of this chapter provides empirical evidence consistent with these expectations.

## **5.1 Empirical Challenges**

The argument suggests that vote buying is effective through an informational channel. An empirical test must therefore be designed to distinguish the impact of vote-buying information from all of the other factors that impact how people evaluate politicians. In addition, an empirical test must account for vote buying's sensitivity. Vote buying is formally illegal and violates widely accepted democratic norms. Many voters in Africa and elsewhere associate cash handouts with electoral corruption. As such, responses to direct survey or interview questions are likely to be misleading because of response bias ("social desirability bias"), whereby respondents are not truthful about their true experiences and behaviors. Survey list experiments conducted in Lebanon (Corstange, 2010) and Nicaragua (Gonzalez-Ocantos et al., 2012) have found that survey respondents substantially under-report experiences with vote buying during election campaigns. The empirical analysis in Chapter 2 confirms these concerns in the Kenyan setting, illustrating that there is large bias in survey items asking whether the receipt of cash handouts influences the vote. Unless the propensity to under-report is distributed randomly across the population, which is unlikely, such under-reporting is likely to bias inferences about key questions related to vote buying (Gonzalez-Ocantos et al., 2012).

Another empirical difficulty arises from an observational equivalence problem. Different theories of vote buying predict outcomes that are hard to distinguish empirically, at least with cross-sectional data. In particular, if a respondent expresses support for the party that bought his or her vote, it is difficult to distinguish whether they support the

party because of the gift, as predicted by Stokes (2005), or whether they received the gift because they support the party, as predicted by Nichter (2008). In the next section, I introduce my method for overcoming these central challenges in the study of vote buying.

## 5.2 Survey Experiment

To address these challenges, I designed a survey experiment, which I carried out in Kenya. I implemented the experiment as follows: The study team randomly sampled participants and randomly assigned each to a vote-buying condition or a control condition.<sup>1</sup> After being assigned to their experimental group, each respondent listened to a recorded radio discussion about a campaign event held by a candidate running to be a member of parliament in their constituency. Nairobi residents recorded the radio reports in Swahili and we developed them to simulate the type of discussion that might occur on a popular radio station. After listening to the recording, which lasts about 80 seconds, respondents answered a series of questions about what they heard.

Recordings for vote-buying and control groups were exactly identical in almost all respects.<sup>2</sup> They each discussed the promises that the candidate made about bringing public goods such as electricity and roads to the constituency, fighting corruption, and growing the economy, and referenced the candidate's qualifications and past experience as a local government councillor. The only difference between the vote-buying and control condition recordings was that the vote-buying recording included a very short discussion, about 7 seconds, about the fact that agents of the candidate had given out 500 Kenya shillings (about 4 US dollars) to many of the people who attended the

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<sup>1</sup>I implemented the random assignment at the individual level, with each participant having an equal probability of being in the vote-buying group or control group.

<sup>2</sup>I used computer software to make the recordings and ensure that they were identical in almost all respects.

campaign event being discussed. Appendix B presents an outline of the discussion in the audio recording.

The nature of the campaign event described in the audio recording is strikingly similar to the real events that unfolded when Ferdinand Waititu was caught on camera distributing money to voters at a campaign event during the 2013 election campaign. In that video, which I discuss in Chapter 1, Waititu is pictured promising to bring jobs and development to constituents. After making these promises, the video shows him distributing cash to people at the rally. The audio recordings therefore capture the type of event that many Kenyans are likely to have encountered. The only difference is that in some of the recordings the hypothetical candidate distributes cash handouts while in some of the recordings the candidate does not. The design can thus help us better understand why politicians like Waititu hand out cash at their rallies.

After respondents listened to the recording, they answered questions designed to assess their opinions and expectations of the hypothetical candidate. As the recordings are exactly the same except for the vote-buying reference in the treatment recording, any differences to answers to post-recording questions can be attributed to the vote-buying information. The nature of the experiment thus permits a direct test of the hypotheses without the need to ask a single direct question about vote buying itself.

The experiment was by design very simple and the experimental manipulation was similarly designed to be subtle. The subtlety was necessary in order not to signal to respondents the purpose of the study and thus potentially bias their responses to post-recording questions. The subtlety also means that the treatment is “weak” in the sense that the vote-buying information is short relative to the entire recording. This should bias the study toward a null finding.

The experimental approach is related to a number of recent experiments that use vignettes to identify the factors that determine respondent evaluations of politicians

(Carlson, 2010; Conroy-Krutz, 2008). In these experiments, respondents are generally read short descriptions of competing candidates and are asked to choose the one that they prefer or for whom they would vote. My design is different in that respondents listen to a radio recording about one candidate and answer questions designed to elicit evaluations and expectations about that candidate. I chose this approach for several reasons. First, the radio recording ensures that each respondent is exposed to the exact same treatment. Audio software allows me to ensure that the only difference between the control and treatment conditions is the reference to vote buying. In all other respects aside from the small difference in length, the recordings for each of the conditions are exactly the same. The potential for enumerator effects, perhaps due to differences in the manner in which vignettes are read, is therefore reduced.

An additional advantage of the audio-recording approach is that it permits a subtlety that is more difficult to achieve with vignette-based experiments. As there are strong norms against appearing to support corrupt politicians, and politicians that buy votes are considered corrupt, it is critical that the experimental design does not cue respondents to the underlying goals of the study. The radio recording provides a good instrument for making the treatment “stick” while at the same time keeping it subtle in a way that reading vignettes does not.

A final advantage is with respect to participant privacy. Though enumerators were instructed to conduct the surveys in private, the nature of life in dense urban areas and in tightly knit rural communities is such that survey enumerators often attract attention and curiosity from onlookers. The audio recordings afford participants privacy even if onlookers are close by, reducing the likelihood that post-recording survey questions will be influenced by social dynamics. Indeed the post-survey questions, which I discuss further below, are meaningless to those who did not hear the recording.

I have taken a number of steps to ensure the construct or internal validity of the experimental treatment (Morton and Williams, 2010). I conducted focus-group discussions and field tests of the audio recordings. Surveys and focus groups indicate that many recipients of money from politicians receive the funds at campaign events or meetings. Thus the reference to the distribution of money at a campaign event in the treatment recording is realistic. The same exercises also indicate that most recipients of money receive between 50 and 1,000 Kenya Shillings (the highest was 2,000) with most receiving around 400 or 500 Kenya Shillings (800 Kenya Shillings is about 10 US dollars). Thus the 500 Kenya Shilling amount referenced in the recording will therefore not be unusual to respondents.

There a number of advantages to the experimental design. First, it was designed explicitly to test the informational argument. Because the only difference between treatment and control recordings was the small amount of vote-buying information, we can attribute any difference in respondent responses to that information. I can therefore directly test the argument's expectations. Second, as I emphasized in the paragraphs above, the design of the experimental manipulations was subtle and did not cue respondents to the research objective. Response bias was therefore minimized. And third, the nature of the experiment ensured that the direction of causality runs from treatment in the vote-buying condition to opinions about politicians, and not the other way around, which solved the observational equivalence problem presented by cross-sectional survey data about vote buying.

Despite these advantages, this experimental method also has limitations. First, while the experiment provides a direct test of my argument's implications, the nature of the experiment cannot directly rule out transactional theories because no money is actually involved. These are mechanisms that would require different types of empirical tests. Second, the hypothetical nature of the experiment could call into question its

external validity, or the extent to which the findings can explain behavior in real-world settings. To help alleviate these concerns, I conducted the experiment in Kenya with potential voters sampled from the general population. Yet the experiment does not randomly allocate money to voters and then observe their voting behavior afterwards, an approach that is ethically problematic. One could reasonably argue that the effect of actually receiving money from a politician may be different from hearing about it in a recording. However, because the argument is about the information that distributing material goods to voters conveys, and because politicians in many African settings often distribute material goods publicly, the experiment does provide a relatively realistic test of the argument.

In addition, I should note that there are actually two differences between vote-buying and control recordings: the vote-buying information and the slight difference in length. A concern is that it is that additional information, rather than the nature of the information, that drives the results. There are at least two reasons why this should not be a problem for the interpretation of the results. First, the treatment is extremely short and does not constitute very much information. Second, it is unclear in which direction the extra information should bias the results. I will show evidence that the vote-buying information increases political support for the hypothetical candidate, but that the vote-buying candidate is also considered more corrupt and less likely to provide economic growth and good policies than is the control-condition candidate. These findings, which I discuss in further detail in the results section, provide greater confidence that the results are driven by the nature of the information rather than the inclusion of any additional information.



### 5.2.1 Measurement

After listening to their assigned recording, respondents answered a series of questions designed to assess their opinions and expectations of the hypothetical candidate. I framed each post-recording question in terms of the participant's belief in the likelihood of a future event. The survey enumerators read a statement and then participants indicated their belief on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is equivalent to "no chance at all," 10 is equivalent to "definitely," and 5 is equivalent to "50-50." To help participants answer the questions, I used the visual aid presented in Figure 5.1. After hearing the questions, respondents pointed to the number on the visual aid that corresponded to their belief. Though imperfect, this method improves upon methods that ask participants to select terms such as "likely" or "very likely" because such terms mean different things to different people. Most respondents were very comfortable thinking in terms of probabilities and the visual aid helped facilitate the translation of their beliefs into a number on the scale.

With respect to the impact of vote buying on support for the hypothetical candidate, the main question of interest is response to the question: how likely would you be to vote for the candidate? Post-recording questions also gauged respondents' expectations about the politician's performance in a number of areas, including fighting corruption, helping economic growth, providing public goods, and providing targeted and particularistic benefits to his constituents.

In addition to estimating vote buying's main effect in the full sample, I also conduct sub-group analyses designed to determine whether the vote-buying information is more effective with poor voters. To address vote buying's impact on the poor, I separate respondents into three household asset classes (low, medium, and high). The household asset class provides a rough measure of household wealth and of the socio-economic

Figure 5.1: **Audio Experiment Visual Aid.** Experiment participants use the visual aid to help place their beliefs on the 0 to 10 scale.



status of the respondent. To generate the measure, respondents were asked whether their households have a number of common items ranging from a cell phone and a radio to a car and computer. Respondents were then placed into asset categories depending on the number of items they own.<sup>3</sup> In a second round of experiments, the post-recording survey also included a question about the respondent's income, which is positively correlated with the asset measure ( $r=0.76$ ). Figure 5.2 illustrates the average income in each of the household asset groups, demonstrating the strong correlation household assets and reported household income.

### **5.2.2 The Sample**

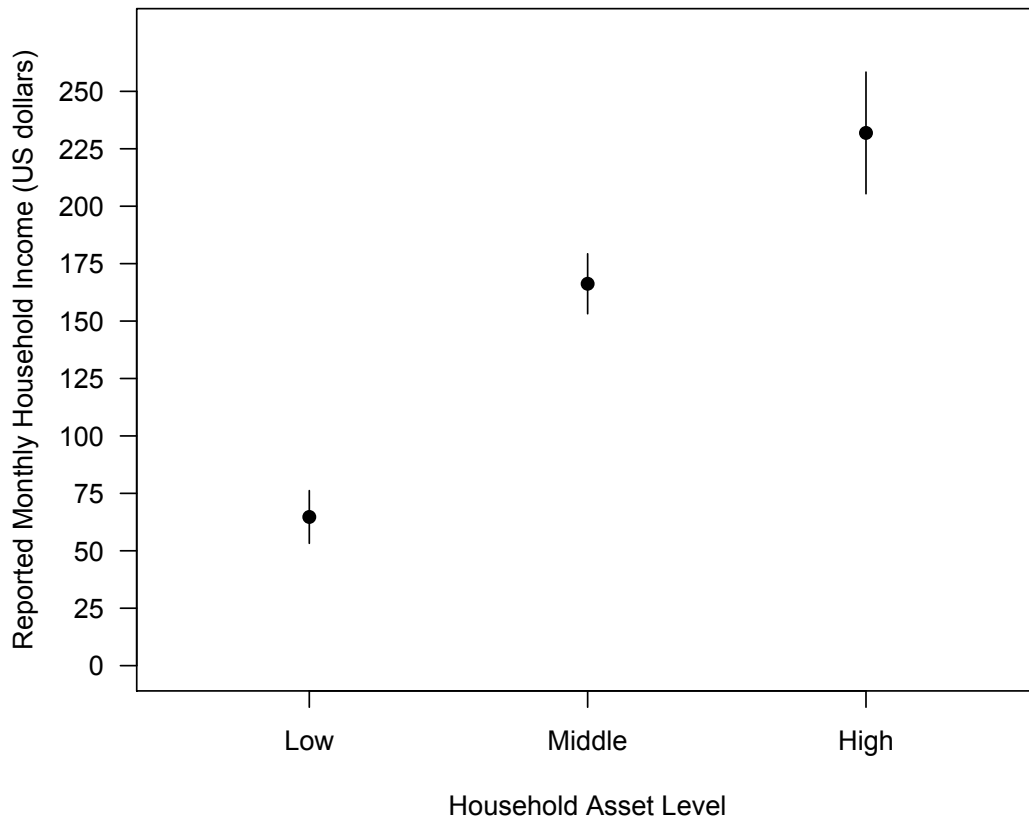
I conducted the experiment described in this chapter over a three-week period at the end of July and the beginning of August 2010 with 355 randomly sampled participants in the urban and more rural areas around Nairobi, Kenya's capital. To check robustness, I conducted a second round of experiments with 655 participants in Nairobi and in a set of rural and urban constituencies near Eldoret Town in Kenya's Rift Valley Province. I conducted this experiment during a three-week period at the end of October and the beginning of November 2010. This second experiment also sought to understand the relation of vote buying to ethnic mobilization. I analyze those results in the next chapter.

Study participants reported having experienced vote buying at about the same rate as the rest of the Kenyan population (as estimated by the Afrobarometer). Of the 1000 participants across both of the experiments, about 40 percent claimed to have received money before the 2007 elections. Eighty percent reported that parties or politicians hand out money to voters in the area where they live. Of those who received money, almost all reported receiving cash in amounts that varied from about 1 US dollar to

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<sup>3</sup>These include a refrigerator, a sofa set, a radio, a television, a car, a motorcycle, a bicycle, a cell phone, and a computer. The low asset class individuals have 0-3 items, the medium asset class has 4-6 items, and the high asset class has 7-9 items.

Figure 5.2: **Average Reported Monthly Income in Each Household Asset Class.** Data from second round experiment only (income question not asked in the first round). Bars show 95 percent confidence intervals around the mean. Respondents were asked to estimate their household's monthly income.



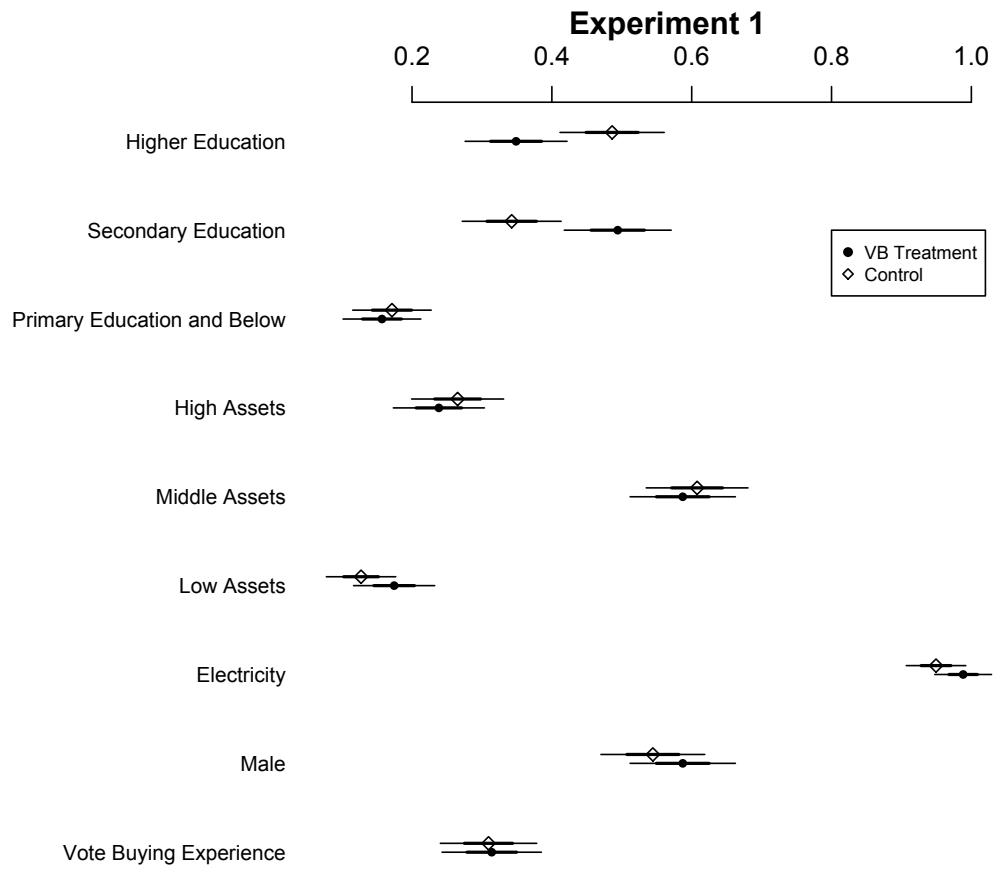
almost 15 US dollars, with the modal transfer being about 4 US dollars. In the more rural areas, transfers were much smaller, often amounting to around 50 cents to 1 US dollar. These are fairly substantial transfers in a country with a GDP per capita of around 900 US dollars and where many people, especially in the rural areas, live on a cash income of around 1 US dollar per day.

Figures 5.3 confirms the effectiveness of the randomization procedure: none of the pre-treatment covariates are significant predictors of placement into the vote-buying treatment condition. The only slight imbalance is with respect to secondary education: the treatment group has slightly more people with only secondary schooling and the control group has slightly more people who have achieved tertiary or university level education. I therefore augment the main analyses with regression models that include control variables for level of education and other relevant individual covariates.

### **5.2.3 Manipulation Check**

Before presenting the main findings, I first briefly present results from a manipulation check. Vote buying is associated with corruption in the minds of most Kenyans. If the subtle cash handout information had the effect intended by the manipulation it should therefore manifest in participants perceptions of how corrupt the candidate in the recording is. One post-recording question therefore asked: “How strongly do you agree with the following statement? The candidate will fight corruption.” Respondents conveyed their answers on the 0 to 10 scale. Figure 5.4 presents the mean responses, with 95 percent confidence intervals, in treatment and control groups across the three household asset categories. The figure shows that respondents of all wealth levels believe the candidate in the vote-buying recording is less likely to fight corruption than the otherwise identical candidate who did not engage in vote buying in the recording. This result confirms that Kenyans do associate vote buying with corruption. It also helps

Figure 5.3: **Balance Between Treatment and Control Groups.** Points are population proportions in the treatment and control groups. Bars are 95 percent confidence intervals.



to provide confidence that the nature of the vote-buying information in the treatment recordings was meaningful to participants.

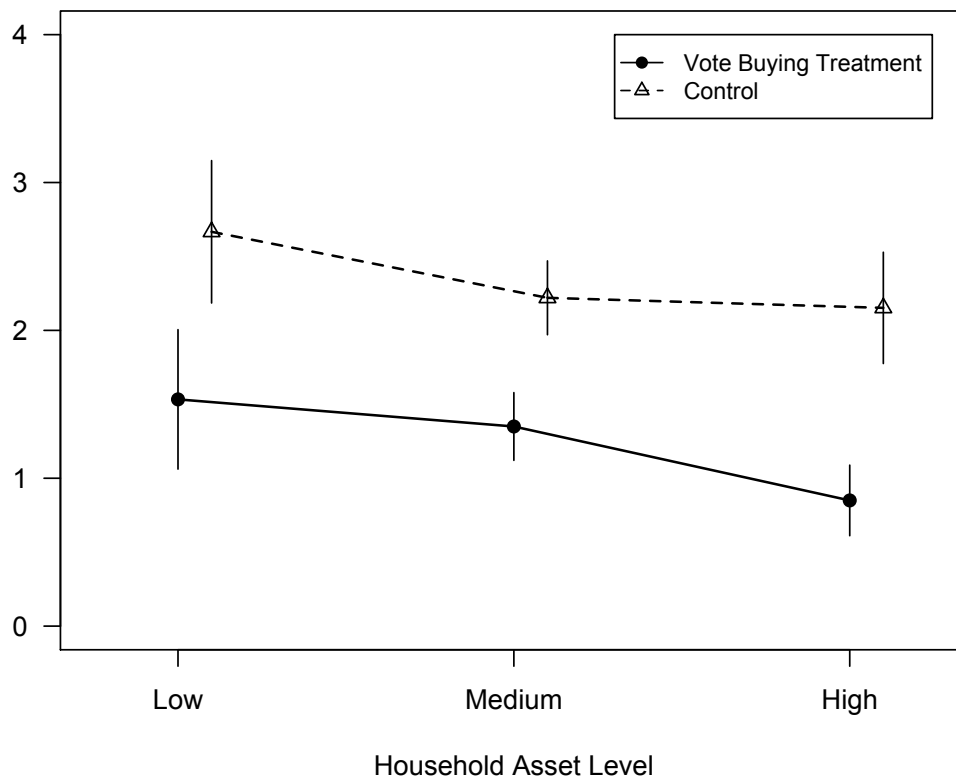
### **5.3 Audio Experiment Results**

I now turn to the main experimental results. First, I test hypothesis one, which predicts that information about vote buying should increase support for a political candidate. In addition, I examine whether vote buying is especially effective among poor voters, as is commonly assumed. Then I test hypothesis two, which predicts that participants will perceive vote-buying politicians to be more credible with respect to the provision of patronage and targeted goods and benefits. Finally, I test hypothesis three, which predicts that participants will perceive vote-buying politicians to be more electorally viable candidates. Finally, I discuss and provide evidence about alternative explanations.

#### **5.3.1 Vote-Buying Information and Support for Political Candidates**

Do participants prefer a politician who distributes cash handouts during a campaign to an otherwise identical candidate who does not? To address this question, I asked participants how likely they would be to vote for the politician in the hypothetical recording. Table 5.1 presents the main results. In the full sample of participants, the difference in means between responses of the vote-buying treatment participants and the control participants was 0.7, a difference equivalent to about 8 percent of the entire scale. The difference in means is statistically significant with a 95 percent confidence interval running from 0.012 to 1.39 ( $p = 0.04$  in the t-test of difference of means with unequal variances). Because the construction of the 95 percent confidence interval (and the p-value) relies on parametric assumptions, I also conduct non-parametric Mann-Whitney tests comparing the distribution of responses in treatment and control groups. The Mann-

Figure 5.4: **Vote Buying and Perceptions of Corruption.** Dependent variable is response to the question “How strongly do you agree with the following statement? The candidate will fight corruption.” The scale runs from 0 (not at all) to 10 (completely).





Whitney tests are also less sensitive to high influence cases. The results are robust to the use of this non-parametric test: the distribution of responses in the vote-buying treatment group is greater than the distribution of responses in the control group, and the difference is statistically significant ( $p = 0.026$ ).

### **5.3.2 Vote Buying and Poor Voters**

The poor are often most likely to be targeted by vote buyers (Brusco et al., 2004; Stokes, 2005). In addition, many models of distributive politics and vote buying assume that the poor are more influenced by particularistic transfers and material handouts than are the middle class and wealthy (Dixit and Londregan, 1996; Stokes, 2005). This section tests this assumption.

Figure 5.5 presents a summary of the raw data. The Figure presents the mean responses (and 95 percent confidence intervals) in vote-buying and control condition groups across each of the three household asset classes. Respondent support for the control condition candidate is roughly comparable for people of all household asset levels. Support for the vote-buying candidate, however, varies greatly across the classes. For the poorest individuals, the vote-buying candidate is substantially more attractive than is the control candidate: the difference is about two points on the scale and is statistically significant ( $p = 0.012$ ). The same is true for individuals in the middle asset category, though the magnitude of the vote-buying treatment effect is smaller: the difference is about one point on the scale ( $p = 0.01$ ). Support for the vote-buying candidate among high asset individuals, on the other hand, is lower than it is for the control candidate: the mean level of support for the control candidate is about one point higher ( $p = 0.02$ ). I also conduct non-parametric Mann-Whitney tests. In the low asset class, the distribution of responses in the vote-buying group is significantly greater than is the distribution of responses in the control condition group ( $p = 0.004$ ). The same is true

Table 5.1: **Main Audio Experiment Results.** Dependent variable is response to question: How likely are you to vote for the candidate? The scale runs from 0 (not at all) to 10 (definitely). Column 1 presents the main treatment effects. Columns 2 and 3 present treatment effects within each household asset group. In these columns, the low asset category is the omitted reference category. Model in column 3 includes controls for respondent gender, age, level of education, and past experience with vote buying as recorded in the post-experiment survey.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Vote-Buying Treatment	0.70** (0.35)	2.00** (0.89)	1.82** (0.88)
Vote-Buying Treatment *Middle Assets		-0.86 (0.99)	-0.72 (0.98)
Vote-Buying Treatment *High Assets		-3.49*** (1.12)	-3.36*** (1.11)
Middle Assets		-0.66 (0.75)	-0.65 (0.74)
High Assets		-0.29 (0.82)	0.02 (0.84)
Constant	3.85*** (0.24)	4.33*** (0.68)	4.77*** (1.03)
Observations	346	346	346
Controls	No	No	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

in the middle asset level group ( $p = 0.009$ ). In the high asset group, the distribution of responses after hearing the vote-buying recording is significantly lower than it is for those who heard the control recording ( $p = 0.018$ ).

There are also significant differences (both statistical and substantive) between the treatment effects in each group. Table 5.1 presents linear regression analyses that estimate the vote-buying treatment effects in each of the three household asset categories. In the models in columns 2 and 3, the low asset group is the omitted reference category, which means that the vote-buying treatment coefficient can be interpreted as the effect of the vote-buying information among the poorest participants. The interaction coefficients represent the difference between the vote-buying treatment effect in the other asset groups and the low asset group. The model in column 2 presents results without control variables, which should provide unbiased estimates given the randomization of the treatments. Column 3 includes controls for respondent gender, age, level of education, and past experience with vote buying as recorded in the post-experiment survey. In both models the estimates are comparable: the vote-buying treatment effect is positive among the poorest individuals, smaller but not statistically different among those in the middle asset category, and substantially and significantly smaller in the high asset category.

To facilitate substantive interpretation of these findings, I recode the dependent variable from its original 0 to 10 scale into a dichotomous measure. I define a “likely voter” for the candidate as one who reports that they would have over a 50 percent chance of voting for the candidate in the recording (those whose answer is greater than 5). I code these likely voters as a 1 and all others as 0. Among all participants, I find that the vote-buying treatment increases the share of likely voters from 28 percent in the control group to 41 percent in the treatment group, a 42 percent increase. The difference in the share of likely voters is statistically significant in a two-tailed t-test ( $p = 0.013$ ).

Figure 5.5: **Respondent Likelihood of Voting for Candidate, by Household Asset Level.** Dependent variable is response to question: How likely are you to vote for the candidate? The scale runs from 0 (not at all) to 10 (definitely). The bars represent 95 percent confidence intervals around the mean response in each group.

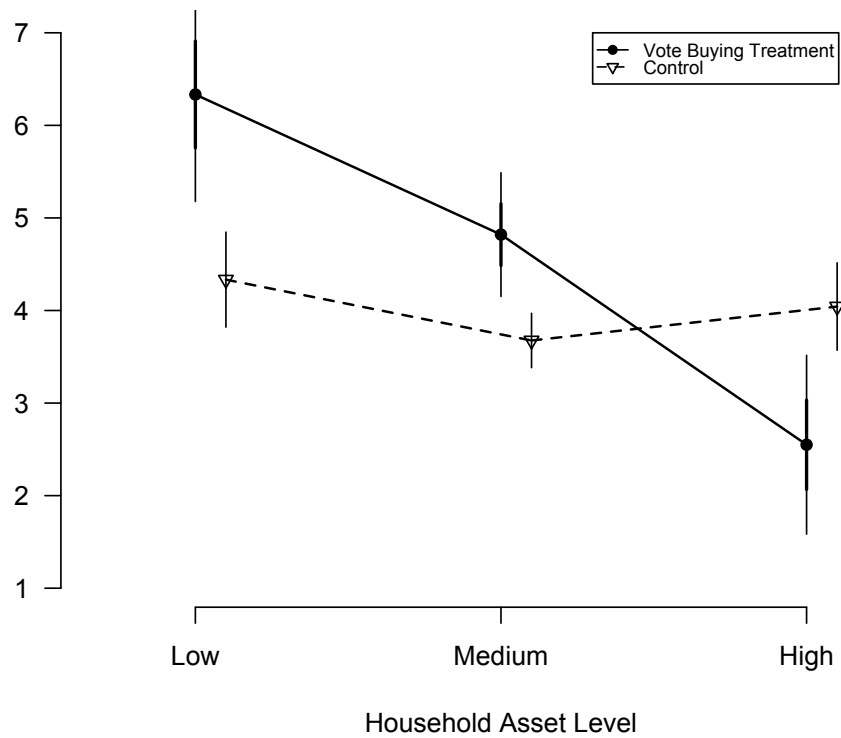


Figure 5.6 presents the share of likely voters in treatment and control groups in each of the three household asset categories. Among the poorest participants, the vote-buying treatment increases the share of likely voters by 42 percentage points. In the middle asset group, treatment increases the share of likely voters by 18 percentage points. Among the wealthier participants, on the other hand, the vote-buying information reduces the share of likely voters by 20 percentage points. Each of these differences are substantively large and statistically significant.

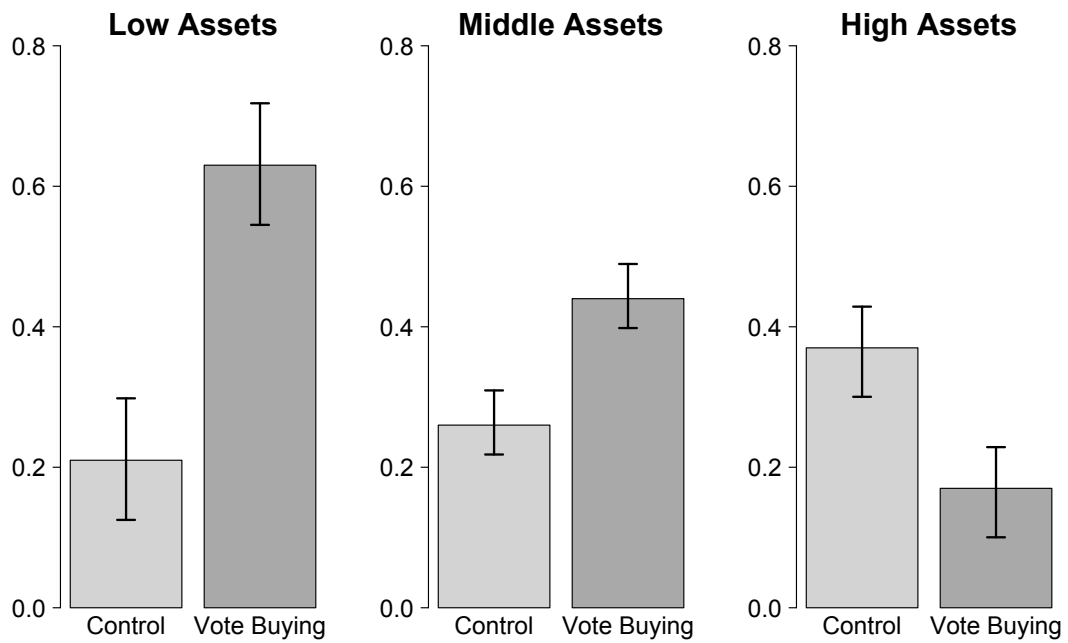
On average, individuals in the low asset class report having an income between 30 and 60 US dollars a month. Individuals in the middle asset group have an average income between 240 and 270 dollars a month, and individuals in the high asset category have an average income between 330 and 360 dollars a month. The incomes in the latter categories may seem small, but Kenya's GDP per capita is around 900 US dollars and so these represent relatively large incomes. The average Kenyan lives on around 2 to 3 dollars a day. Thus vote buying is most effective with the average Kenyan, who lives with between one and two dollars a day—or right around the poverty line.

### **5.3.2.1 Robustness**

The assignment of participants to household asset groups is admittedly somewhat arbitrary. In this section, I present results illustrating that the main inference—that information is about vote buying is effective with the poor and not effective with the wealthy—is robust to different ways of measuring respondent wealth.

In a first set of robustness checks, I use the participants' raw number of household assets (0 – 9) as a continuous measure of wealth. Use of the continuous measure avoids the need to identify arbitrary cut points in the creation of household asset groups. Column 1 of Table 5.2 present results in which the raw household assets measure is interacted with the vote buying treatment. The results are the comparable to the original

Figure 5.6: **Share of Likely Voters, by Household Asset Level.** The plot shows the share of “likely voters” for the hypothetical candidate in treatment and control in each of the household asset categories.



coding: the vote buying treatment effect is decreasing in the respondents number of household assets.

In a second robustness check, I use a different method for coding participants into household asset groups. In this coding, I use the 33rd and the 66th percentiles of the raw number of household assets variable to identify the cut points. Column 2 of Table 5.2 presents results with this set of recoded household asset measures. Again, the results are similar to those when the original coding is used.

### **5.3.3 Patronage Expectations**

The previous section provides evidence consistent with hypothesis one and provides empirical support for the notion that vote buying is most effective with poorer voters, who are the majority of the electorate in much of Africa. In this section, I test hypothesis two, which predicts that participants will perceive vote-buying candidates to be more credible with respect to the future provision of patronage and benefits targeted to constituents. To test this hypothesis, post-recording questions probed participant expectations of the politicians in a number of areas related to patronage and the distribution of targeted goods. One question asks whether the candidate will provide jobs for “people like you.” A second question asks whether the candidate would help people to pay school fees or cover health expenses. A third question asks whether the candidate would help people in case of an emergency.

The results are broadly consistent with the argument’s expectations, although they are not as strong statistically as the previous results on vote buying’s effectiveness. Figure 5.7 presents average treatment effects in each household asset level on answers to three question about the future provision of patronage. In the high asset group, expectations of the vote-buying candidate are lower than they are of the control candidate for each of these items. In the low and middle asset groups, the treatment effects are

Table 5.2: **Vote Buying Treatment Effects with Different Measures of Participant Wealth.** OLS regression models. Dependent variable is response to question: How likely are you to vote for the candidate? The scale runs from 0 (not at all) to 10 (definitely).

	(1)	(2)
Vote-Buying Treatment	3.05 ** (1.09)	2.233** (0.68)
Number of Assets	-0.08 (0.14)	
Vote-Buying Treatment*Number of Assets	-0.45 * (0.19)	
Vote-Buying Treatment * Middle Assets (recoded)		-2.10* (0.93)
Vote-Buying Treatment * High Assets (recoded)		-2.20 * (0.85)
Observations	346	346

Standard errors in parentheses

† significant at  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$



all positive (except that the middle group does not expect jobs). Though the treatment effects in the low asset group are not statistically significant at conventional levels, a large proportion of the 95 percent confidence intervals cover positive areas. Moreover, the pattern of responses across individuals in each of the asset groups are consistent with the argument's expectations.

However, as the results presented in Table 5.3.3 demonstrate, these treatment effects are not statistically significant and so this evidence should be considered tentative. Columns 1, 3, and 5 of Table 2 present the main vote-buying treatment effects with respect to the patronage measures. The main effect of the vote-buying information in the full sample of respondents is small and statistically indistinguishable from zero for each of the three measures. Columns 2, 4, and 6 present the heterogeneous effects. As in Table 1, the omitted reference category in these columns is the low asset group. The treatment effects in the low and middle asset groups are positive, but not statistically different from zero. The treatment effects in the highest asset group, on the other hand, are negative and substantially (and statistically) different than the treatment effects in the other asset groups. In Chapter 6 I present further and stronger evidence on this hypothesis.

#### **5.3.4 Perceptions of Electoral Viability**

Hypothesis three suggests that vote buying should also send a signal to voters about a candidate's likelihood of electoral success. I assess perceptions of a candidate's likelihood of winning an election by asking respondents whether they believed people would vote for the candidate and whether they believed the candidate would win the election. Table 5.3.4 presents these results. Column 1 shows that respondents believe that other voters are more likely to vote for the vote-buying candidate. Column 3 shows that respondents also believe that the vote-buying candidate is far more likely to be successful

Figure 5.7: **Vote Buying and Expectations of Patronage and Targeted Goods Provision.** The figure displays average vote buying treatment effects, and 95 percent confidence intervals, in each of the household-asset groups. Dependent variable in the top left panel is degree of agreement with the statement: “the candidate will provide jobs for people like me.” Dependent variable in the top right panel is degree of agreement with the statement: “the candidate will help people like me who need help with health or education expenses.” Dependent variable in the bottom left panel is degree of agreement with the statement: “the candidate will help people like me if they have an emergency.”

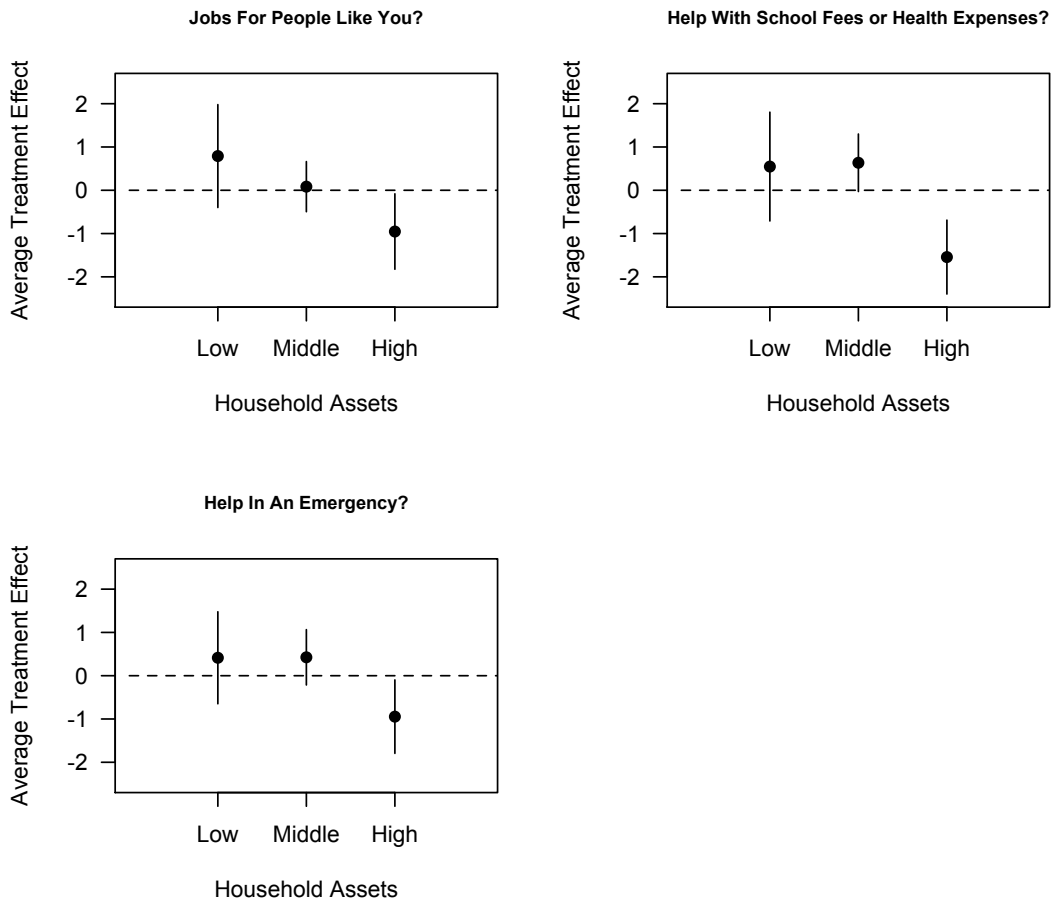


Table 5.3: **Expectations about Patronage and Future Benefits.** Dependent variable in columns 1 and 2 is degree of agreement with the statement: “the candidate will provide jobs for people like me.” Dependent variable in columns 3 and 4 is degree of agreement with the statement: “the candidate will help people like me who need help with health or education expenses.” Dependent variable in columns 5 and 6 is degree of agreement with the statement: “the candidate will help people like me if they have an emergency.”

	<b>Jobs</b>		<b>Expenses</b>		<b>Emergency</b>	
Vote-Buying Treatment	-0.08 (0.23)	0.79 (0.60)	0.08 (0.25)	0.55 (0.65)	0.08 (0.24)	0.41 (0.63)
Vote-Buying Treatment *Middle Assets		-0.71 (0.67)		0.09 (0.73)		0.01 (0.70)
Vote-Buying Treatment *High Assets		-1.74** (0.75)		-2.09** (0.82)		-1.36* (0.79)
Middle Assets		0.65 (0.50)		0.22 (0.55)		0.28 (0.52)
High Assets		0.84 (0.55)		0.76 (0.60)		0.41 (0.58)
Constant	1.77*** (0.16)	1.14** (0.46)	1.62*** (0.18)	1.29** (0.50)	1.57*** (0.17)	1.29*** (0.48)
Observations	345	345	346	346	345	345

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

electorally than the otherwise identical candidate who does not buy votes. The magnitude of the effect in column 3 is substantial, just over one point on the eleven point scale. These results are consistent with hypothesis three: politicians who distribute material goods are perceived to be politically stronger and more electorally viable than those who do not. In other words, cash handouts help candidates “look like a winner.”

To maintain consistency in the presentation of the experimental results, columns 2 and 4 test the notion that these perceptions will vary across the household asset groups. The vote buying treatment effect is smaller among the wealthier participants, though in neither case are the treatment effects in the three asset groups statistically different from one another. In other words, even better off Kenyans believe that politicians who buy votes are more likely to win elections.

## **5.4 Alternative Explanations**

In summary, the results above show that information about vote buying affects candidate preferences by increasing poorer voters’ perception that the candidate would be likely to help them as well and all voters’ perception that the candidate has a good chance to win the election. In this section, I consider alternative explanations of how information about vote buying might also explain the findings in Table 5.1.

### **5.4.0.1 Policy Competence**

One alternative explanation could focus on the role of vote buying in signaling competence in the policy arena. This mechanism is suggested as a possibility, but not necessarily endorsed, in both Schaffer and Schedler (2007) and Vicente and Wantchekon (2009). The evidence is not, however, consistent with such an explanation. For example, in one post-recording question I asked how likely the candidate in the recording

Table 5.4: **Expectations of Electoral Viability.** Dependent variable in columns 1 and 2 is degree of agreement with the statement: “the people at the rally will vote for the candidate.” Dependent variable in columns 3 and 4 is degree of agreement with the statement: “the candidate will win the election.”

	<b>Others Will Vote</b>		<b>Will Win Election</b>	
Vote-Buying Treatment	0.48*	0.58	1.13*	0.68
	(0.28)	(0.73)	(0.61)	(1.64)
Vote-Buying Treatment *Middle Assets		0.02		1.00
		(0.82)		(1.82)
Vote-Buying Treatment *High Assets		-0.64		-0.70
		(0.92)		(2.05)
Middle Assets		-0.78		-0.50
		(0.62)		(1.36)
High Assets		-0.65		-0.42
		(0.68)		(1.50)
Constant	4.63***	5.29***	4.87***	5.29***
	(0.19)	(0.56)	(0.43)	(1.25)
Observations	348	348	345	345
R-squared	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.02

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

would be to help the economy grow. As Figure 5.8 illustrates, Kenyans of all levels of wealth perceive vote-buying candidates as being less likely help the economy grow. An additional post-recording question asked how likely to candidate would to help all Kenyans. Again, as Figure 5.9, respondents believe the vote-buying candidate is less likely to perform in this domain. These findings illustrate that distributing cash hand-outs does not signal policy competence.

#### **5.4.0.2 Norms of Reciprocity**

A second alternative explanation relates social norms. For example, the vote-buying information in the recording could induce a moral obligation on the part of participants to support the voter buyer. If norms of reciprocity matter when an individual actually receives a handout, such norms are ruled out as an explanation for the results in Table 5.1 by the nature of the experimental design—not a single participant received money during the experiment.

Yet if more reciprocating individuals are more influenced by the vote-buying information in the treatment recording, we might observe that the vote-buying treatment effects would be highest among those who are more reciprocating. To test this expectation, I conducted a second round of experiments in Nairobi and in the Rift Valley Provinces of Kenya. I introduce these experiments and the sample in further detail in the next chapter. In this chapter, I only discuss results that relate to norms of reciprocity.

In the post-experiment survey, I included versions of standard survey items used in the economic literature to measure reciprocity (e.g. Dohmen et al., 2009). I measure positive reciprocity, which captures the degree to which someone is willing to incur costs to pay back those who have helped them, and negative reciprocity, which captures the degree to which someone is willing to incur costs to seek revenge against someone who has wronged them. To capture positive reciprocity, I measure degree of

Figure 5.8: **Vote Buying and Expectations about Helping the Economy Grow.** Dependent variable is degree of agreement with the statement: “the candidate will help the economy grow.”

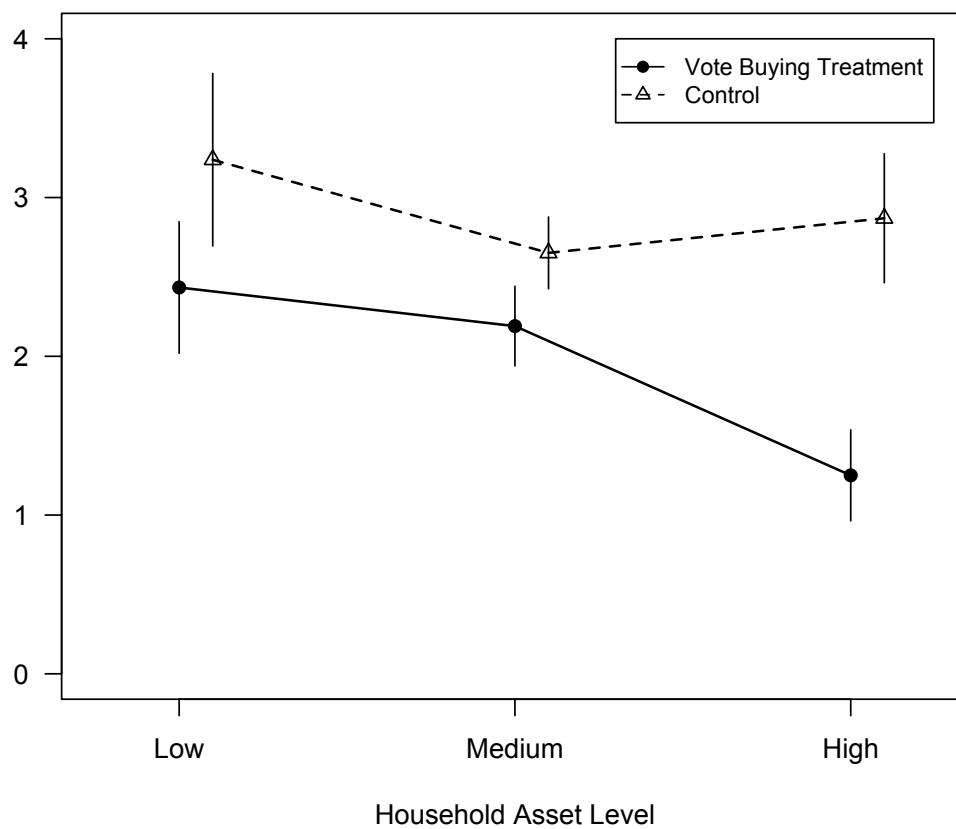
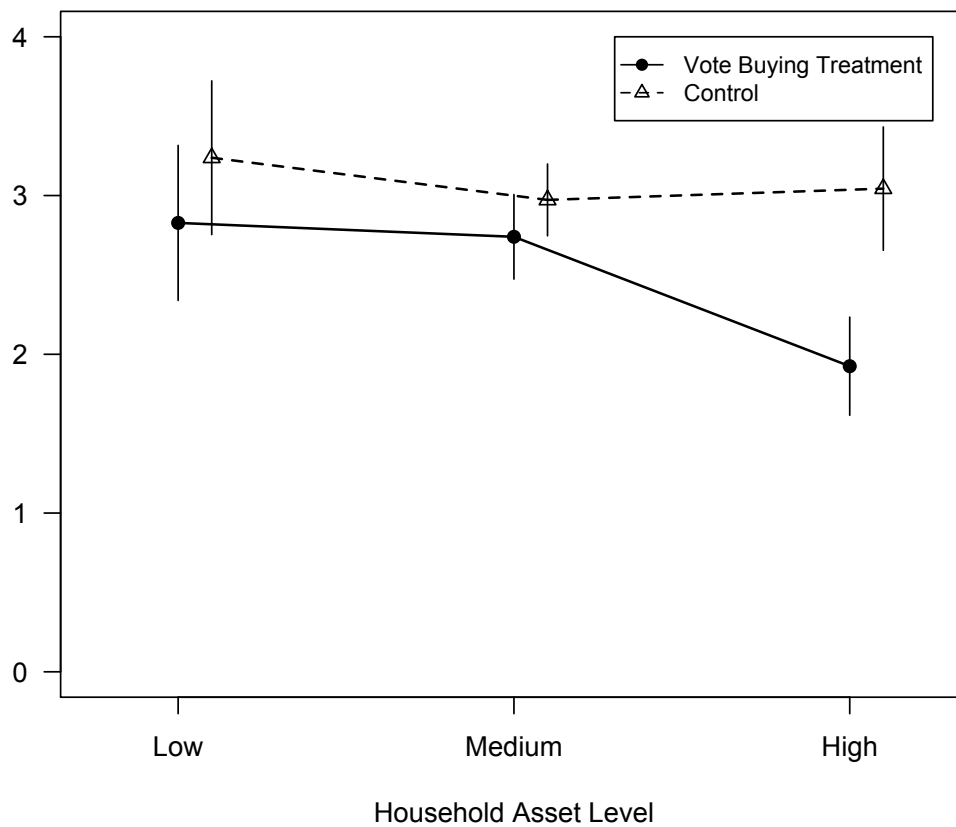


Figure 5.9: **Vote Buying and Expectations about Helping All Kenyans.** Dependent variable in the top left panel is degree of agreement with the statement: “the candidate will help all Kenyan.”





agreement (on a 5-point scale) with the statements: 1) “If someone does me a favor, I am prepared to return it,” and 2) “I will go out of my way to help somebody who has been kind to me before.” To measure negative reciprocity, I assess participants’ degree of agreement with the following statements: 1) “If somebody insults me, I will insult him or her back,” and 2) “If somebody puts me in a difficult position I will do the same to him or her.” I average the two responses in each category to get measures of positive and negative reciprocity, and average those two scores to produce a measure of average reciprocity. I present results using all three measures—average, positive, and negative—in part because positive and negative reciprocity are weakly correlated ( $r = -0.1$ ) and because they may capture different traits (Dohmen et al., 2009). These measures are admittedly less precise than behavioral measures, such as those used in Finan and Schechter (2012). This is in part because they are prone to response bias and in part because the questions are open to interpretation and therefore provide a less uniform decision making environment. However, they are widely used survey-based measures of positive and negative reciprocity.

Table 5.5 presents the main results of these analyses. I use the same dependent variable as in Table 5.1. Columns 1, 3, and 5 present the interaction between the vote-treatment and each of the individual reciprocity measures in models without control variables. In columns 2, 4, and 6, I introduce controls for gender, age, level of education, and whether or not the person lives in a rural area. Across each of the models the results are the same: reported individual reciprocity does not moderate the impact of the vote-buying treatment. In other analyses, I replicate these results separating the sample into poorer and wealthier respondents. As reciprocity with respect to vote buying likely depends on how generous the transfer is perceived to be, it is important to separate those who would view the 500 shillings in the recording as generous from those who might consider it a small sum and even insulting. I do this by separating out the poorer

respondents from the wealthier ones, and testing to see if average, positive, or negative reciprocity impacts the vote buying treatment effect within the sub-groups. The results do not change when I separate the sample in this way. In both cases, individual reciprocity does not moderate the impact of the vote-buying information.

### **5.4.0.3 The Machine Model**

Finally, the experiment included a test of the plausibility of the machine model. One post-recording question asked if the politician or his agents would be able to figure out whether people who attended the rally in the recording voted for him. Another asked if the politician or his agents would punish people at the rally if they did not vote for him. The average responses to these questions in both the treatment and controls groups are extremely low, on average about one on the 0 to 10 scale. There are also no significant vote-buying treatment effects with respect to responses to these questions (results not shown). These results imply that participants do not believe that politicians or party agents are likely to discover how people who attend their rallies voted, regardless of whether the candidate engages in vote buying. If ordinary people do not believe that politicians can find out who they voted for or punish them if they accept a payment and then fail to vote for the candidate who paid them, then the machine politics account of why vote buying influences the vote cannot be correct.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter tests a set of the informational model's empirical implications. The results are strongly consistent with two of the study's main hypotheses, and weakly consistent with the third. Consistent with hypothesis one, participants prefer the vote-buying candidate to an otherwise identical candidate who does not buy votes, even though they do

Table 5.5: **Individual Reciprocity and Vote Buying’s Effectiveness.** Dependent variable is response to question: How likely are you to vote for the candidate? The scale runs from 0 (not at all) to 10 (definitely).

	Average		Positive		Negative	
Vote-Buying Treatment	0.09 (0.39)	-0.01 (0.38)	-0.15 (0.29)	-0.14 (0.29)	0.63 (0.67)	0.40 (0.66)
Vote-Buying Treatment * Low Reciprocity (average)	-0.74 (0.76)	-0.41 (0.76)				
Vote-Buying Treatment * Middle Reciprocity (average)	-0.45 (0.60)	-0.25 (0.60)				
Vote-Buying Treatment * Low Positive Reciprocity			-0.95 (1.54)	-0.38 (1.60)		
Vote-Buying Treatment * Middle Positive Reciprocity			0.08 (0.81)	-0.06 (0.81)		
Vote-Buying Treatment * Low Negative Reciprocity					-1.07 (0.74)	-0.75 (0.74)
Vote-Buying Treatment * Middle Negative Reciprocity					-0.27 (0.92)	-0.12 (0.91)
Constant	3.67*** (0.29)	4.12*** (0.49)	3.90*** (0.21)	4.30*** (0.46)	2.49*** (0.50)	2.86*** (0.63)
Observations	632	619	632	619	632	619
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

not receive a transfer and only learn about the vote buying. This effect is largest among the poorest participants in the study. Consistent with hypothesis three, vote-buying politicians are perceived to be more electorally viable, which is important for credibility as a future provider of benefits. Finally, with respect to hypothesis two, vote-buying politicians are perceived to be more likely to provide benefits and goods to the poor, but the treatment effects are not statistically significant.

A contribution of this chapter is the use of a survey experiment to test a mechanism explaining vote buying's impact on voting behavior. Experimental and observational studies that use data about voting behavior have the advantage of greater external validity and so are preferable methods with which to determine whether vote buying is an effective campaign strategy. However, they are less well suited to testing claims about mechanisms, including the one introduced in this study. The experimental results therefore complement and build upon others in the literature by helping to explain why vote buying works. For example, my argument and findings can help to explain Vicente's (2012) result that vote buying helps challengers more than incumbents: as challengers are less well known than incumbents and generally have had less time to establish a reputation, they can use vote buying to establish credibility. They are also consistent with Wantchekon (2003), who uses a field experiment in Benin to demonstrate the conditions in which clientelist appeals are effective in winning votes.

However, the findings also contrast with results from some other recent studies. For example, Conroy-Krutz and Logan (2011) argue that the widespread distribution of material goods during Uganda's elections in 2011 had no effect on voting. Similarly, Lindberg and Morrison (2008) argue that clientelism does not impact voting in Ghana. However, these inferences rely on observational survey data that do not account for people's unwillingness to admit to selling their votes and are less well suited to causal inference than are experiments such as those presented in this chapter.

In this chapter, the concept of ethnicity has been notably absent from the discussion. Given the salience of ethnic identity in Kenya's history and contemporary politics (e.g. Berman, 1998; Bratton and Kimenyi, 2008; Mueller, 2011; Posner, 2005), the next logical question to ask is how vote buying, and the informational model of vote buying in particular, relate to ethnic mobilization and ethnic voting. The next chapter addresses that question.

## CHAPTER 6

### Vote Buying and Ethnic Voting

Ethnic, religious, and other cultural identities are politically important in a number of contemporary democracies (Chandra, 2007; Horowitz, 1985; Posner, 2005). In some settings, including many in Africa, ethnicity has been so strongly predictive of vote choice that scholars have described democratic elections as “ethnic censuses” (Horowitz, 1985). In many respects, Kenya is the classic example of an African country where ethnicity is important in politics. Ethnicity has been highly salient since the colonial era (e.g. Berman, 1998; Throup and Hornsby, 1998). Politicians often mobilize voters through ethnic appeals (e.g. Branch and Cheeseman, 2009; Mueller, 2011) and individuals and communities tend to vote for coethnic candidates or parties associated with their own ethnic group (e.g. Bratton and Kimenyi, 2008; Posner, 2005). Dissenting voices notwithstanding (Ferree et al., 2013; Gibson and Long, 2013), the conventional wisdom suggests that ethnic voting is widespread.

In this chapter, I examine the implications of the informational theory of vote buying for ethnic voting. I argue that vote buying reinforces and helps to drive patterns of ethnic voting. The claim is built upon the proposition that contemporary and politically relevant ethnic connections in countries such as Kenya are fundamentally patronage linkages; linkages that emerged as a product of the competition for resources in the colonial and post-independence eras. This claim is in keeping with much of the historical literature on ethnicity in Africa (e.g. Bates, 1983; Berman, 1998; Southall, 1970),

as well as constructivist and instrumentalist scholarship on identity in Africa and elsewhere (e.g. Chandra, 2007; Eifert et al., 2010; Posner, 2005; Wimmer, 1997).

This conceptualization of ethnicity yields two implications for how to understand the role of vote buying and its connection to ethnic politics. First, Kenyans tend to understand patronage relationships through an ethnic lens. When politicians hand out cash to signal to voters that they are capable patrons, as the informational theory posits, many Kenyans will interpret this signal through the lens of ethnicity: that is, they expect “good” patrons to favor their ethnic kin.

Second, as patronage linkages, ethnic connections between political elites and everyday citizens are by definition contingent on and sustained by material exchange. When ideological, programmatic, or even cultural or psychological ties link voter to party or candidate, these linkages can remain strong as long as voters retain their ideological commitments and parties continue to represent those ideas. In contrast, when patronage ties link voter to party (or candidate), loyalty depends on material flows. In signaling to voters that a candidate is a good patron, cash handouts therefore re-affirm the ethnicity-patronage link; that is, they help politicians win votes from coethnic voters by reinforcing expectations of ethnically targeted patronage allocations.

Empirically, this chapter proceeds in two steps. First, I present results from a set of experiments that build upon the design presented in Chapter 5. I use the same methodology but integrate subtle cues about candidate ethnicity into the audio recordings in order to study how vote-buying information and candidate ethnicity interact. In contrast to expectations from much of the literature on ethnic voting, and especially interpretations that emphasize expressive or psychological motivations, I show that respondents only prefer members of their own ethnic group when they are also engaged in vote buying. When candidates do not distribute cash handouts, the coethnic effect is small and cannot be distinguished statistically from zero. When candidates do hand out cash, on

the other hand, the coethnic effect is substantial. In other words, candidates only enjoy a coethnic advantage when they show voters they are willing to distribute resources.

The second empirical section examines the external validity of the survey experimental findings. To do so, I return to the data from the nationally representative survey and survey list experiment presented in Chapter 2. The list experiment data help me to more accurately measure the influence of cash handouts given the sensitivity of direct questions on the topic (e.g. Blair and Imai, 2012; Corstange, 2009; Gonzalez-Ocantos et al., 2012; Kuklinski et al., 1997). I combine the list experiment data with information about respondent and constituency-level ethnicity and ethnic demographics from the most recent Kenyan census conducted in 2009. With these data, I show that vote buying has the most impact on vote choice when candidates target members of their own ethnic group. These results complement the findings from the audio experiments.

## **6.1 Politicized Ethnicity and Vote Buying**

I follow Chandra (2006) in defining ethnic identities as “a subset of identity categories in which eligibility for membership is determined by attributes associated with, or believed to be associated with, descent . . .” (pp. 388). Countries in Africa are among the world’s most ethnically diverse (Easterly and Levine, 1997), in part because of structural factors that limited early state development (Herbst, 2000), the arbitrary nature of colonial boundaries (e.g. Englebert, 2002; Herbst, 2000), and the influence of the slave trade and colonial policies, both which accentuated group differences (Berman, 1998; Nunn, 2008). Scholars link ethnic diversity to a number of poor development outcomes, including slower economic growth (e.g. Easterly and Levine, 1997; Montalvo and Reynal-Querol, 2005) and less public goods provision (e.g. Habyarimana et al., 2009; Miguel and Gugerty, 2005).



Ethnicity has been at the center of scholarship on African voting behavior. From countries such as Ethiopia (Arriola, 2008), Malawi (Ferree and Horowitz, 2010), South Africa (Ferree, 2006), Uganda (Carlson, 2010; Conroy-Krutz, 2008), and Zambia (Posner, 2005), scholars have analyzed the extent and drivers of ethnic voting; or, in other words, the propensity for voters to vote for members of their own ethnic group.

Why vote along ethnic lines? One line of thought emphasizes psychological or intrinsic factors. Individuals may vote along ethnic lines for expressive purposes (Horowitz, 1985) or because they gain psychic benefits from supporting coethnic politicians or seeing them in power (Chandra, 2007).

Others highlight preference or taste based drivers of ethnic voting. For example, many ethnic groups in Africa tend to live in geographically distinct locations. To the extent that people in different locations have different interests and policy preferences, ethnic voting may be driven by the correlation between ethnicity and geographic location, rather than something special about ethnicity per se (Bates, 1983). The problem with this argument is that ethnicity seems also to be important in urban areas, where individuals from different groups live in close proximity (Fearon, 1999b). A different preference-based argument suggests that group membership correlates with policy preferences for social or cultural reasons (Lieberman and McClendon, 2012).

Dunning and Harrison (2010) suggest that ethnic voting may be driven by the greater ability of citizens to sanction and hold accountable coethnic politicians. This argument mirrors Fearon and Laitin's (1996) explanation for inter-ethnic cooperation that focuses on in-group policing.

Historical analyses of ethnicity's evolution in Africa suggest that contemporary and politically salient ethnic identities are to some extent both "constructed" and "instrumental." In Kenya and elsewhere in Africa, colonial policy tended to solidify once fluid ethnic distinctions. The policy of indirect rule integrated traditional leaders—chiefs,

village elders, and so on—into the administrative bureaucracy of the colonial state. In communities where chiefs did not exist, a situation that confused British colonial administrators with strong conceptions of Africans' inherent tribal nature, chieftaincies were simply created and the positions filled with loyalists to the colonial regime (Tignor, 1971). This transition from traditional to administrative authority gave traditional leaders discretion over local matters and coercive capacities that in the past they had lacked (Berman, 1998; Posner, 2005). Chiefs and other patrons in turn used this new discretion over key resources and manipulated them to build an ethnic base of support.

For their part, everyday people seeking access to state resources could use the cultural symbols of ethnicity to signal and establish their place as clients, and in turn the legitimacy of their claims to resources distributed from patrons (Berman, 1998; Lynch, 2011). Posner (2005), for example, finds that the population of ethnic groups whose chiefs were given discretionary power over certain resources grew rapidly, while the population of other groups diminished. In other words, Zambians were selecting their ethnic identity to gain resources from chiefs with discretion over resources. In other African settings, it was also common for clients to take on the tribal identity of their patron (Lemarchand, 1972).

The implications of this history are that contemporary politically relevant ethnic boundaries were to some extent constructed by both patrons and clients in response to the nature of resource distribution under colonial rule (e.g. Berman, 1998; Posner, 2005). In other words, clientelism helped to shape and solidify the nature of ethnic boundaries and their salience as a political cleavage (Mamdani, 1996; Berman, 1998).

The demands of political competition in the lead up to political independence also influenced ethnic coalitions. The histories of several of Kenya's major ethnic groups are cases in point. The Luhya ethnic group of Western Kenya, for example, are one of the country's largest ethnic groups, making up about 16 percent of the population.

Given their size, the Luhya are a politically important group. Yet as Southall (1970) documents, the concept of a unified Luhya ethnic group did not exist until the late 1930s and early 1940s. Prior to colonial rule, the peoples that make up the Luhya ethnic group were organized into much smaller and looser groupings that inhabited what became Kavirondo District near the Ugandan border. The construct of the Luhya emerged as a byproduct of colonial administration and deliberate political organizing designed to enhance the area's chances of gaining access to state resources. Southall (1970) notes that "among politically minded natives who were for a number of years pleading for a political unification of all Bantu Kavirondo tribes under a paramount chief . . . the word *avaluhia*, meaning 'those of the same tribe', is propagated as a common designation" (Southall, 1970, pp. 33). In other words, the idea of the Luhya was forged from direct political action, and the name itself reflects a deliberate attempt to unify disparate groups.

Further, this unification was not based solely on cultural similarities. For example, Southall (1970) argues that the Samia group were just as culturally similar to other Luhya groups as many of the other sub-tribes that are now considered Luhya. However, because this group resided in both Kenya and Uganda, and in multiple districts in Kenya, they were never considered Luhya (Southall, 1970). What links Luhya groups together is therefore not cultural similarity. Rather, it is a political coalition designed to maximize access to resources.

A similar story can be told with respect to the Kalenjin, a group that accounts for about 11 percent of the Kenyan population and resides predominantly in the Rift Valley Province. Kenya's former president Daniel arap Moi, who ruled the country from 1978 until 2002 identified as a Kalenjin and today the Kalenjin are a politically relevant group whose votes are highly sought after in national elections. Yet the idea of a Kalenjin identity did not exist until the 1940s (Lynch, 2011). Lynch (2011) documents

how leaders from the Rift Valley's various linguistically similar Nilotic groups actively sought to forge a unified Kalenjin identity in advance of Kenya's independence, going so far as to standardize the language through the publication of a Kalenjin Bible. To some extent, this process was driven by fear of exclusion or marginalization in post-independence Kenya; that is, Kalenjin ethnic entrepreneurs were offering protection as their patronage resource. Yet support for emerging ethnic spokespeople was also driven by a desire to have "access to patrons in the future" (Lynch, 2011, pp. 9). In other words, support for elites advocating Kalenjin unity was driven by concerns about gaining access to state resources, resources that would be difficult to ascertain without a larger coalition.

Thus the integration of traditional rulers into the formal administrative bureaucracy of the colonial state created a situation in which patronage connections tended to be defined along ethnic lines. Moreover, contemporary ethnic groups such as the Kalenjin and Luhya emerged as coalitions to access resources in advance of independence. Indeed these ethnicities were constructed in large part to gain access to the resources of the state.

Given this history, many Kenyans tend to understand patronage relationships through an ethnic lens. When politicians hand out cash to voters to convey information about their willingness and ability to favor constituents with patronage resources, as I argue in this project, many Kenyans interpret this signal through the lens of ethnicity: that is, they expect "good" patrons to favor their ethnic kin. Additionally, as patronage linkages, ethnic coalitions are by definition contingent on and sustained by material exchange. Indeed when patronage ties link voter to party (or candidate), loyalty depends on material flows. In signaling to voters that a candidate is a good patron, cash handouts affirm the ethnicity-patronage link. Put another way, they help politicians win

votes from coethnic voters by reinforcing expectations of ethnically targeted patronage allocations.

I am not the first to highlight the instrumental nature of ethnic voting. For example, Fearon (1999b) and Chandra (2007) argue that ethnicity emerges as a salient political cleavage when politics centers on “pork” or patronage. Others argue that ethnicity is politically relevant because it can provide a clear signal to voters, who may have limited access to information, about which politicians are likely to favor them with benefits once in office (Carlson, 2010; Chandra, 2007; Ichino and Nathan, 2012; Posner, 2005). What distinguishes my argument and empirical tests is the extent to which I link politicians’ “coethnic advantage” directly to their clientelist behavior during campaigns.

## **6.2 Experimental Test**

This section describes a direct experimental test of several of the argument’s implications. The experimental design builds upon the experiment presented in Chapter 5 and helps to solve two problems that challenge empirical studies of African voting behavior. The first problem, which I have discussed in earlier chapters, is the problem of response bias with respect to vote-buying survey questions. The same problem hinders studies of ethnicity, as respondents are often keen to establish that they have not behaved “tribally” (Carlson, 2010; Posner, 2005). Second, as retrospective or prospective evaluations of candidates may be endogenous to ethnicity or experience with vote buying, disentangling and identifying the effects of each of these factors is difficult, as is identifying how they interact.

In the experiment, I randomly assigned participants to one of two vote-buying conditions—1) vote-buying treatment and 2) control—and to one of three ethnicity conditions—1) coethnic candidate and respondent, 2) non-coethnic, and 3) no cue to

Table 6.1: **Ethnicity - Vote Buying Experimental Design**

	Coethnic	No Ethnic Cue	Non-Coethnic
Vote-Buying Treatment	a	b	c
No Vote Buying	d	e	f

the ethnicity of the candidate (a 3x2 design). Each participant listened to a radio recording in which two Kenyan women discussed, in Swahili, a campaign rally held by a hypothetical candidate for parliament in the participant’s constituency.<sup>1</sup> The discussion focused on the promises made by the candidate during the event—bringing roads, building and improving schools, and fighting corruption—and runs about 80 seconds. As in Chapter 5, the only difference between recordings in each experimental group were short discussions of vote buying during the event. In this second round of experiments, I also add randomly assigned subtle references to the candidate’s ethnicity.<sup>2</sup> The vote-buying reference was about eight seconds long, and involved a reference to the fact that many people at the rally received 500 Kenya shillings (about 4 US dollars) at the event, a common occurrence during campaign events in Kenya. The ethnicity references referred to the candidate’s home area, each of which was selected because of the location’s association with a particular ethnic group.<sup>3</sup> I use participant’s reported ethnicities—one of the last questions of the post-recording survey—to match them to the ethnicities of the hypothetical candidates. Table 6.1 presents the experimental design. Each participant is assigned to one of the six treatment cells.

After listening to the recording, the enumerators asked participants a series of questions gauging their overall assessments of the candidate as well as their expectations of the candidate’s performance on a number of dimensions. Each question took the

<sup>1</sup>We emphasized the hypothetical nature of the recordings to help reduce threats to validity stemming from peoples’ already formulated views of politicians in their areas.

<sup>2</sup>I use audio software to ensure that the recordings are literally identical in all respects, except for the different experimental manipulations.

<sup>3</sup>I follow Carlson (2010) in using hometown to signal ethnicity.

following form: “Do you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement?” The enumerator then read the statement. I code responses on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is equivalent to strongly disagree and 5 is equivalent to strongly agree. As the only differences between the recordings is the vote-buying information and the ethnicity cue, differences in respondents responses can be attributed to these treatments and/or their interaction. The nature of the design allows me to test this chapter’s central claim without the need to ask a single direct question about vote buying or ethnicity. This, coupled with the brevity of the experimental manipulations relative to the length of the entire recording, helps to reduce response bias as a threat to validity.

I conducted the experiment with 655 participants sampled from two Kenyan provinces: the urban areas in and around the capital, Nairobi, and the rural areas around Eldoret Town in the Rift Valley Province.<sup>4</sup> Figure 6.1 presents descriptive information about the sample and illustrates the balance between vote-buying treatment and control groups on observable covariates.

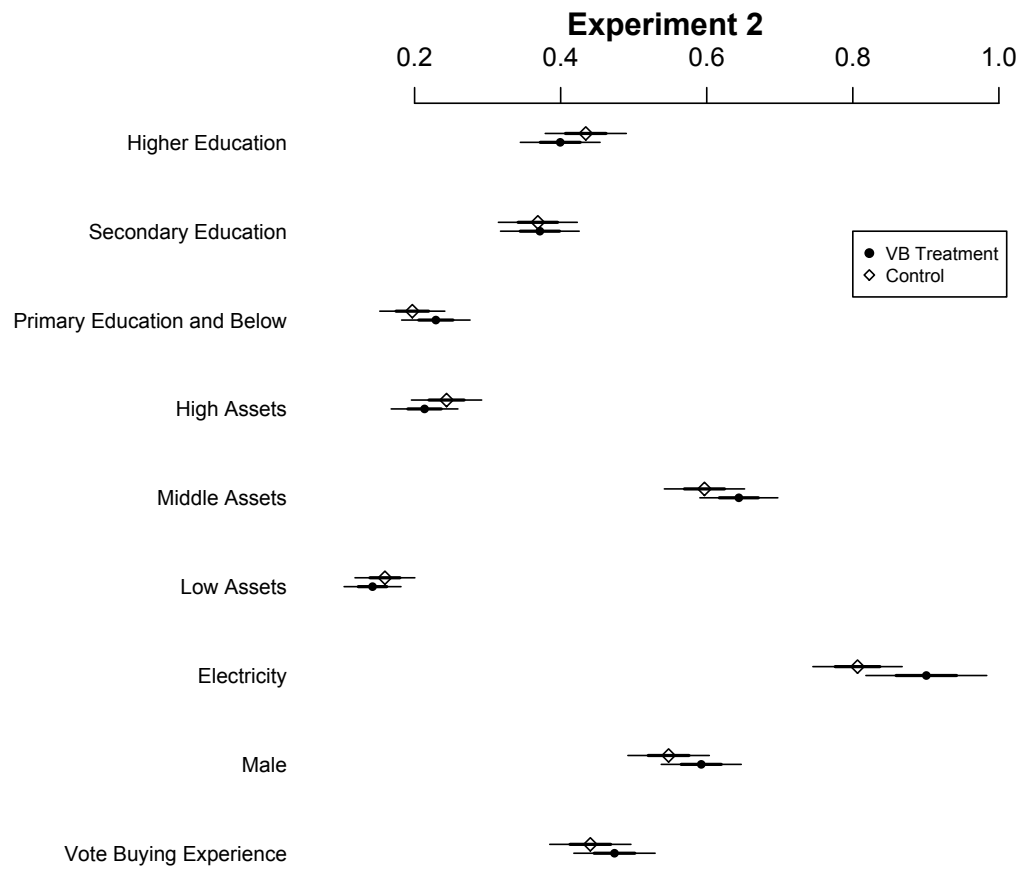
### **6.2.1 Manipulation Checks**

As a manipulation check, a post-recording question asked respondents how strongly they agree with the statement: “the candidate is corrupt.” If the subtle vote-buying references in the treatment recordings impacted how participants viewed the experimental candidate, we would expect to see an effect of the references on a question about corruption. Figure 6.2 illustrates that, regardless of their ethnic relationship to the candidate,

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<sup>4</sup>I randomly sampled participants from each survey location using the following process. First, sampling locations were selected using as a guide the geographic locations of Demographic and Health Survey sampling points. Within each sampling location, participants were chosen using the random walk technique employed by the Afrobarometer and other survey firms working in Africa where a full enumeration of the sample space using addresses or some other form of identification is not possible. At each location, the survey team selected a central location and branched off in each direction, sampling participants from every fifth structure on the left hand side.

Figure 6.1: **Balance Between Treatment and Control Groups in the Ethnicity Audio Experiment.**



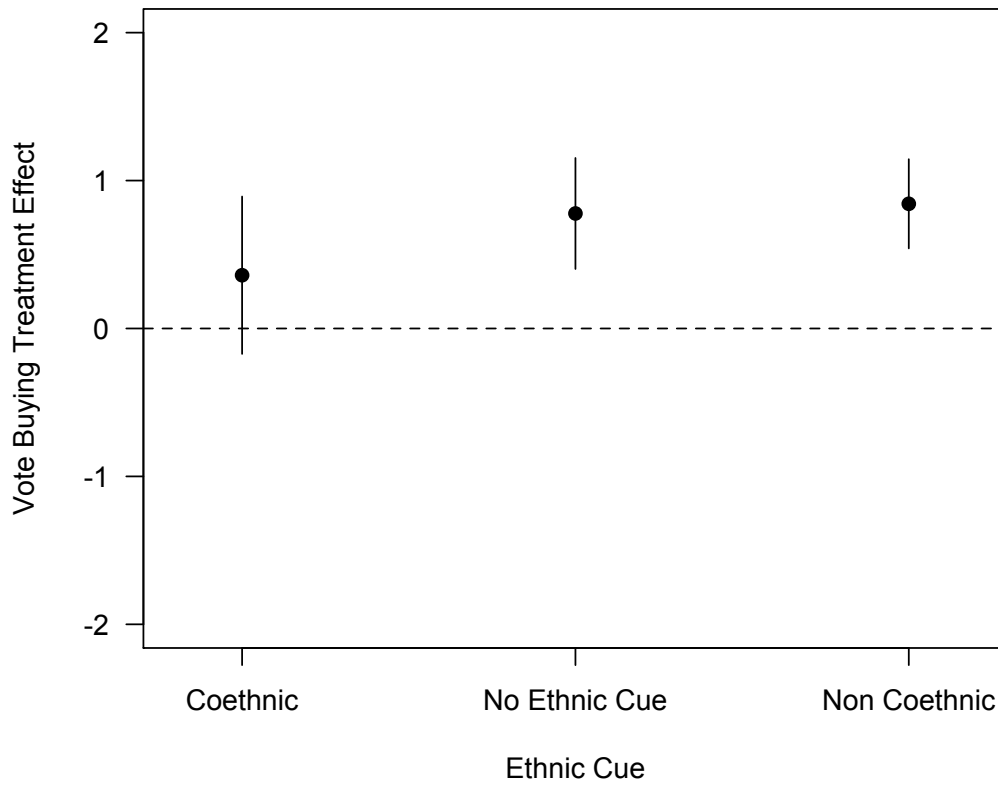


participants perceive vote-buying candidates to be more corrupt than otherwise identical candidates whose vote-buying behavior has not been highlighted. In the group that heard about a coethnic candidate, respondents believe the vote-buying candidate to be more corrupt, but the effect is not statistically significant, which suggests that coethnicity may reduce the extent to which vote buying is associated with corruption. These results shed light on vote buying's association with corruption, but also provide evidence that the subtle vote-buying references were effective manipulations.

### 6.3 Audio Experiment Results

The central argument of this chapter is that cash handouts reinforce and strengthen patterns of ethnic voting. If the argument is true, the coethnic treatment effect in the audio experiment should vary by respondent exposure to vote-buying information. More specifically, the effect of shared ethnicity should be greater when the candidate distributes cash. Table 6.2 presents results from a test of this hypothesis. The dependent variable is participant degree of agreement with the statement: "I would vote for the candidate." In the first two columns, I use the continuous outcome. In the final two columns I transform the continuous variable into a dichotomous one that takes on a value of 1 if the respondent either agrees or strongly agrees with the statement. This dichotomous measure mirrors the "likely voter" measure I analyze in Chapter 5. I estimate each model using ordinary least squares for ease of interpretation. The results in columns 3 and 4 are robust to the use of logistic regression. In each model, the non-coethnic cue is the omitted reference category. The *coethnic cue* coefficient can therefore be interpreted as the difference in support for a coethnic relative to a non-coethnic; or, the "coethnic advantage."

Figure 6.2: **Vote Buying and Corruption Perceptions, by Ethnic Connection To Candidate.** Dependent variable is response to question: “How strongly do you agree with the following statement? The candidate is corrupt.” Responses range from 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The plot shows the impact of the vote-buying information in each of the randomly assigned ethnic-cue conditions.



**Table 6.2: Effects of Ethnicity and Vote Buying on Support for the Hypothetical Candidate.** The dependent variable in columns 1 and 2 is participant degree of agreement with the statement: “I would vote for the candidate.” The dependent variable in columns 3 and 4 is a dichotomous measure that takes a value of 1 if the participant agreed or strongly agreed with that statement.

	(1) Continuous	(2) Continuous	(3) Dichotomous	(4) Dichotomous
Coethnic Cue	0.134 (0.164)	-0.185 (0.248)	0.071 (0.056)	-0.047 (0.084)
No Ethnicity Cue	-0.017 (0.126)	-0.197 (0.176)	-0.012 (0.044)	-0.116* (0.061)
Vote-Buying Treatment	-0.377*** (0.114)	-0.588*** (0.158)	-0.076* (0.039)	-0.182*** (0.055)
Coethnic Cue x Vote-Buying Treatment		0.576* (0.331)		0.221** (0.112)
No Ethnicity Cue x Vote-Buying Treatment		0.366 (0.252)		0.213** (0.087)
Constant	3.053*** (0.098)	3.159*** (0.112)	0.472*** (0.033)	0.524*** (0.038)
Observations	598	598	643	643
R-squared	0.019	0.026	0.009	0.020

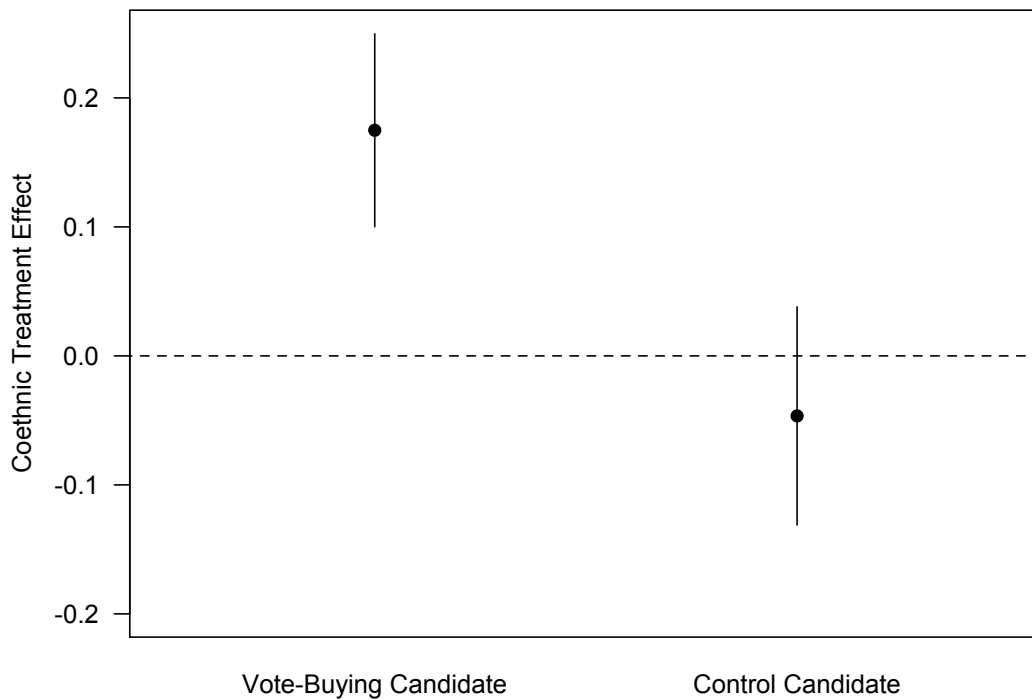
Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Columns 1 and 3 present the main effects with respect to each coding of the dependent variable. Perhaps surprisingly given the literature on ethnic voting, I find no main effect of coethnicity relative to a non-coethnic or a candidate with an ambiguous ethnicity. The coethnic coefficient is positive, but relatively small and not statistically different from zero. In contrast to the results in Chapter 5, the main vote-buying treatment effect is negative. In the next section I unpack this result further and show that the results I identified in Chapter 5 hold in this new experiment in the subset of the sample that hears about a coethnic candidate or no ethnicity cue.

As predicted by the argument, coethnicity is most important when the candidate reveals himself to be a clientelist type by distributing cash handouts. Further, among my respondents, coethnicity only matters when the candidate distributes cash. Columns 2 and 4 present these results. The coethnic cue is slightly negative among those who hear about the non-vote buying control candidate. The *coethnic cue x vote-buying treatment* interaction is positive and statistically significant, which means that the coethnic effect increases in the presence of vote buying. To facilitate interpretation, Figure 6.3 illustrates the coethnic treatment effect for those who heard a vote-buying candidate and for those who heard the control candidate. The dependent variable is the dichotomous measure of voting analyzed in columns 3 and 4. Among those who heard about a vote-buying candidate, the coethnicity treatment increases the probability of supporting the candidate by about 18 percentage points. For those who heard about the control candidate, on the other hand, the coethnic effect is slightly negative and statistically indistinguishable from 0.

Table 6.3 shows that these results are robust to alternative ways of measuring support for the candidate. In the first column, the dependent variable is degree of agreement with the statement: “all candidates should be like the one in the recording.” In the second column, the dependent variable is degree of agreement with the statement: “I

Figure 6.3: **Coethnic Treatment Effect by Vote-Buying Treatment.** The dependent variable is dichotomous measure of agreement with the statement: “I would vote for the candidate.” The points capture the difference in respondent support for coethnics versus non-coethnics in the vote-buying and control groups.



would like the candidate to run in the next election.” In column 3, I average all three of the support variables—the one in Table 6.2 and the two in Table 6.3—to generate a measure of mean level of support. In each model, the inference is the same. Participants prefer their coethnics to non-coethnics, but only when their coethnic hands out cash. Figure 6.4 represents these results visually with respect to the mean support dependent variable. As in the main results, the coethnic effect increases substantially and is statistically different from 0, but only when the candidate vote buys.

Tables 6.2 and 6.3 also show that information about vote buying has a negative effect on political support for non-coethnic candidates. That is, vote buying information is ineffective with non-coethnics. This finding further supports the argument in this chapter with respect to the complementarity of cash handouts and ethnic identity. Cash handouts can affirm patronage linkages between members of the same group, while at the same time they reduce support from out-group members.

### **6.3.1 Revisiting the Interaction between Vote-Buying Information and Participant Wealth**

In Chapter 5, the experiment included no ethnicity treatments. In that experiment, I find that the vote-buying treatment has a strong and positive impact on the poorest participants in the sample and a negative impact on the wealthier ones. This section has two goals. First, I show that the heterogeneous treatment effects that I identified in the previous chapter can also be identified in this second experiment. These findings provide further confidence in the results in Chapter 5. Second, I show how the interaction between wealth and vote buying varies with ethnic relationships to candidates, variation that lends further support to the argument put forth in this chapter.

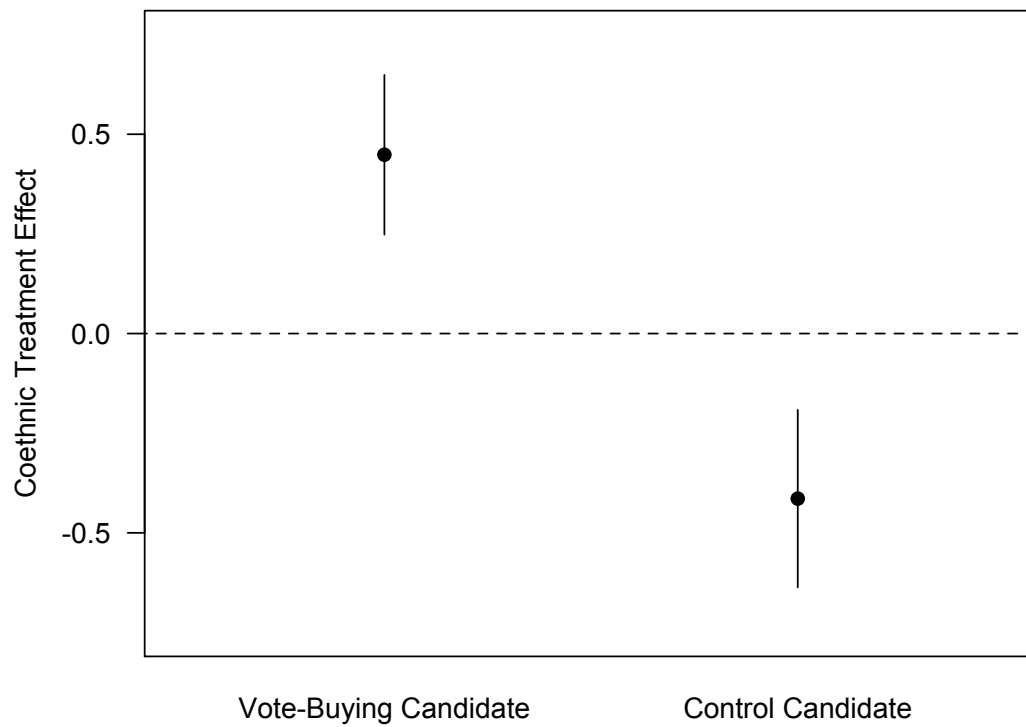
Tables 6.4 and 6.5 present the central results. In Table 6.4, the dependent variable is the question about voting. In Table 6.5, the dependent variable is the mean level of

Table 6.3: **Alternative Measures of Participant Support for the Candidate.** The dependent variable in column 1 is participant degree of agreement with the statement: “All candidates should be like the one in the recording.” The dependent variable in column 2 is participant degree of agreement with the statement: “I would like the candidate to run in the next election.” The dependent variable in column 3 is the mean of all three support measures.

	(1) Be Like	(2) Should Run	(3) Mean Support
Coethnic Cue	-0.505** (0.221)	-0.370 (0.233)	-0.414* (0.223)
No Ethnicity Cue	-0.193 (0.165)	-0.151 (0.172)	-0.200 (0.163)
Vote-Buying Treatment	-0.404*** (0.149)	-0.517*** (0.154)	-0.509*** (0.145)
Coethnic Cue x Vote-Buying Treatment	0.931*** (0.297)	0.931*** (0.314)	0.863*** (0.300)
No Ethnicity Cue x Vote-Buying Treatment	0.288 (0.235)	0.344 (0.245)	0.392* (0.232)
Constant	3.133*** (0.104)	2.974*** (0.108)	3.107*** (0.103)
Observations	593	608	551
R-squared	0.020	0.024	0.026

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Figure 6.4: **Coethnic Treatment Effect on Mean Support by Vote-Buying Treatment.** The dependent variable is the average of all three support measures.





support, which is the average of three questions gauging electoral support for the candidate. The income variable runs from 0 to 20, where lower values represent individuals with lower reported monthly incomes. I calibrated the scale so that each increment represented a household monthly income of about 1 US dollar per day or about 30 US dollars per month.<sup>5</sup> Measuring household income is generally very difficult in a setting like Kenya's, where most people are not formally employed. This is why I asked about household monthly income using a scale that respondents could interpret easily. As I showed in Chapter 5, the income measure is highly correlated with the household asset measure I used in that chapter.

In each column of Tables 6.4 and 6.5, the vote-buying treatment coefficient represents the effect of the vote-buying information among the poorest participants in the study—those who report living on about 1 US dollar per day. The interaction between the vote-buying treatment and income can be interpreted as the difference in the vote-buying treatment effect for each one-unit increase of income. If that coefficient is negative, vote-buying information becomes less effective as income increases.

The sample in column 2 of Tables 6.4 and 6.5 is restricted to those who received no ethnic cue. For these participants, the experiment is exactly the same as it was in the first experiment presented in Chapter 5. The results with respect to the heterogeneous effect of vote buying across the income scale should therefore be comparable. The results in column 2 of each table show that they are. The vote buying treatment effect is positive and statistically significant among the poorest individuals with respect to each outcome variable. The interaction is negative and statistically significant with respect to both outcomes as well, confirming that, among those who received no ethnic cue, the effect of vote buying is highest among the poorest participants and eventually becomes

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<sup>5</sup>At the time, 2,400 Kenya shillings was about 30 US dollars.

**Table 6.4: The Impact of Vote-Buying Information on Support for Candidate, by Participant Income and Ethnicity Treatment.** The dependent variable is participant degree of agreement with the statement: “I would vote for the candidate.”

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Vote-Buying Treatment	0.123 (0.181)	0.576* (0.295)	0.591 (0.481)	-0.339 (0.264)
Vote-Buying x Treatment Income	-0.064*** (0.020)	-0.122*** (0.035)	-0.096 (0.062)	-0.020 (0.028)
Income	-0.001 (0.014)	0.028 (0.026)	-0.021 (0.045)	-0.012 (0.019)
Constant	3.028*** (0.128)	2.778*** (0.210)	2.968*** (0.372)	3.206*** (0.181)
Ethnicity Treatment	Full	No Ethnic Cue	Coethnic	Non-coethnic
Observations	540	184	87	269
R-squared	0.049	0.095	0.086	0.041

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Table 6.5: The Impact of Vote-Buying Information on Mean Support for Candidate, by Participant Income and Ethnicity Treatment.** The dependent variable is the average of all three support measures.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Vote-Buying Treatment	0.123 (0.171)	0.462* (0.275)	1.047** (0.426)	-0.395 (0.253)
Vote-Buying Treatment x Income	-0.047** (0.019)	-0.089*** (0.032)	-0.112** (0.054)	-0.006 (0.026)
Income	-0.009 (0.013)	0.010 (0.024)	0.005 (0.038)	-0.023 (0.018)
Constant	3.007*** (0.122)	2.831*** (0.202)	2.554*** (0.323)	3.234*** (0.175)
Ethnicity Treatment	Full	No Ethnic Cue	Coethnic	Non-coethnic
Observations	497	167	82	248
R-squared	0.042	0.076	0.116	0.045

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

negative as participants become wealthier; the same result I found in Chapter 5 but with an entirely different sample and different sampling locations.

Column 3 in both tables presents results for those who heard about a coethnic candidate. On the voting dependent variable, the coefficients are in the expected direction but are not statistically significant. With respect to the mean support outcome, on the other hand, the findings are as expected. Vote-buying information has the most impact among the poor, an effect that decreases and eventually becomes negative with wealth. Thus the heterogeneous effect of vote buying across the income scale that I identified in Chapter 5 can be identified within the subset of participants in the second experiment that hear an ambiguous ethnic cue or about a coethnic candidate.

The results in the non-coethnic group are different, however. Column 4 in each table presents these results. In the non-coethnic group, the vote-buying effect among the poorest participants is negative, but not statistically significant. The interaction on income is negative, but substantively very small and not statistically significant. For those who hear about a non-coethnic, income does not condition responses to the vote-buying information: rather, participants of all wealth levels dislike non-coethnics who hand out cash.

The analyses in this section have served two purposes. First, they strengthen confidence in the results presented in Chapter 5. In that chapter, I found that vote-buying information had a strong and positive effect on political support for candidates among the poorest participants in the sample, an effect that decreases and eventually becomes negative as wealth increases. The findings in this section replicate those results using data from a different experiment conducted with an entirely different sample at a different point in time and in an additional region of Kenya. Second, the results further support the claim that vote buying and ethnic identity are complementary by showing that the interaction between vote-buying information and participant wealth can only be

identified among those who hear about a coethnic candidate or an ethnically ambiguous candidate. For those who hear about a non-coethnic, the vote-buying treatment effect is negative and of a comparable magnitude across the income scale.

### **6.3.2 Mechanisms**

By design, the machine model and norms of reciprocity arguments cannot explain these results. Participants listened to the recordings using headphones and answered the questions in private; in other words, they were not monitored and faced no sanctions for having a negative evaluation of the hypothetical candidate. In addition, participants did not actually receive any money during the experiment; they only heard information about other people receiving money to influence their votes. As a result, norms of reciprocity are unlikely to influence post-recording answers.

Rather, the increase in the coethnic effect in the vote-buying group is driven by prospective expectations; that is, the effect is driven by the information conveyed by vote buying. Table 6.6 presents the evidence. In column 1, I analyze a post-recording question that asked: “How strongly do you agree with the following statement? The candidate will help people like you who are living in poverty.” I find that participants perceive their coethnics as more likely to help people like them living in poverty, but only when the coethnic hands out cash. Coethnicity has no impact on these perceptions in the absence of vote buying. Figure 6.5 visually presents the main finding. I show results with respect to a dichotomous measure of poverty alleviation expectations that takes a 1 if participants agrees or strongly agrees with the statement: “The candidate will help people like you who are living in poverty.”<sup>6</sup> The inference is clear: coethnics are expected to help the poor, but only when they hand out cash.

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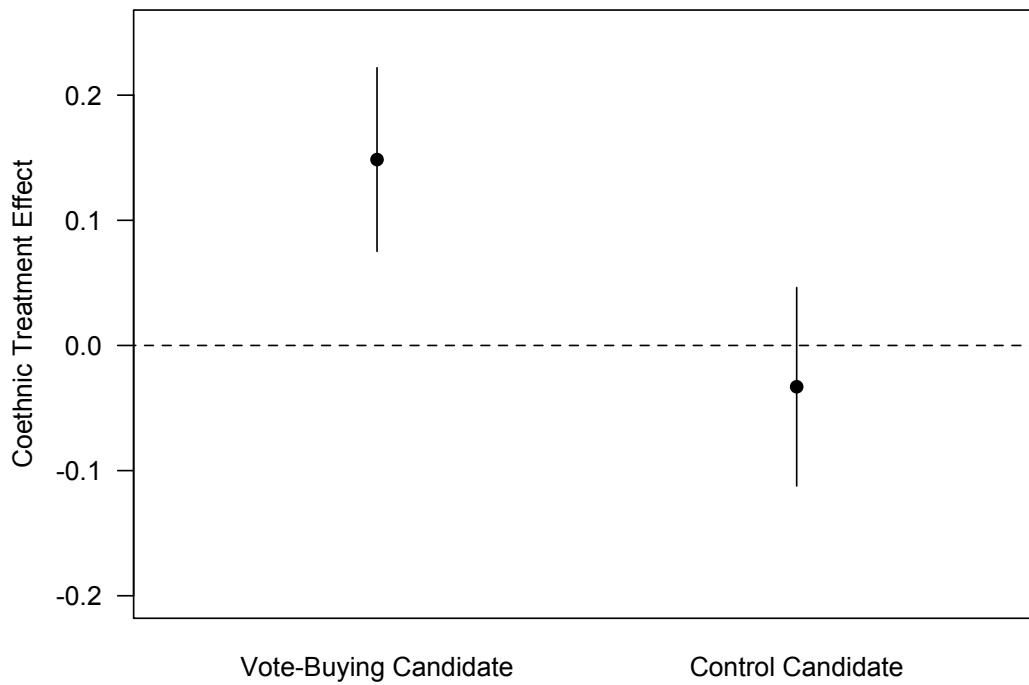
<sup>6</sup>The plot looks similar with the continuous measure. The coethnic effect is easier to interpret as a change in probability when I focus on the dichotomous measure, which is why I focus on that outcome here.

Table 6.6: **Effects of Ethnicity and Vote Buying on Prospective Evaluations.** Column 1 dependent variable is degree of agreement with the statement: “The candidate will help people like you who are living in poverty.” Column 2 dependent variable is degree of agreement with the statement: “If the candidate wins, he will help people in an emergency.” Column 3 dependent variable is degree of agreement with the statement: “If the candidate wins, I will receive resources such as cash or food.” Column 4 dependent variable is the mean response to each of these three responses.

	(1) Poverty	(2) Emergency	(3) Resources	(4) Mean
Coethnic Cue	-0.210 (0.211)	-0.242 (0.217)	-0.360 (0.223)	-0.277 (0.187)
No Ethnicity Cue	0.006 (0.155)	-0.015 (0.157)	-0.057 (0.164)	-0.019 (0.138)
Vote-Buying Treatment	-0.318** (0.139)	-0.289** (0.141)	0.059 (0.147)	-0.169 (0.123)
Coethnic Cue x Vote-Buying Treatment	0.685** (0.285)	0.565* (0.290)	0.589* (0.301)	0.576** (0.254)
No Ethnicity Cue x Vote-Buying Treatment	0.353 (0.221)	0.213 (0.225)	0.003 (0.234)	0.176 (0.196)
Constant	2.861*** (0.098)	2.861*** (0.099)	2.133*** (0.104)	2.627*** (0.087)
Observations	616	615	621	591
R-squared	0.017	0.010	0.011	0.010

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Figure 6.5: **Coethnic Effect on Poverty Alleviation Expectations by Vote-Buying Treatment** Dependent variable is dichotomous measure that takes a 1 if participant agrees or strongly agrees with the statement: “The candidate will help people like you who are living in poverty.”



In column 2 of Table 6.6 I analyze participant degree of agreement with the statement: “If the candidate wins, he will help people in an emergency”; in column 3, the dependent variable is degree of agreement with statement: “If the candidate wins, I will receive resources such as cash or food”; and in column 4, the dependent variable is the mean response to each of these three responses. In each model, the results are similar to the results in column 1: participants expect to benefit more from coethnic candidates, but only when they vote buy.

#### **6.4 External Validity: Vote Buying, Ethnicity, and Vote Choice in Kenya’s 2007 Elections**

Taken together, the results from the audio experiment are consistent with the notion that vote buying reinforces ethnic voting by generating greater expectations of ethnically based patronage and resource allocation. Yet how externally valid are these results? In this section, I address the external validity of the audio experiment findings.

One implication of the argument and audio experiment results is that cash handouts should be most effective when candidates target members of their own ethnic group. To establish whether this is indeed the case in a real election, the ideal test would randomly assign candidates to vote buy from members of different ethnic groups and then measure voting behavior afterward. This would be unethical (and expensive!). A second best approach would be to ask respondents directly about who attempted to buy their vote and whether it impacted their vote choice. However, given the problem of response bias, this is not a viable approach. Indeed the findings in Chapter 2 highlight the extent of response bias with respect to survey questions about vote buying’s influence on vote choice.



In this section, I therefore return to the survey list experiment data I introduce in Chapter 2. Using geographic information about the survey sampling points, I map respondents into their census sub-locations, the lowest level at which I was able to obtain census data from the most recent 2009 Kenyan census. Sub-locations are the level above the census enumeration area, and represent the equivalent of a large village or a sub-section of a dense urban neighborhood.

The indirect nature of the list experiment question format makes it difficult to discover from whom a respondent has received a cash handout. The methodology also only allows us to analyze the data in the aggregate: I cannot infer from numerical responses to the list experiment question which individual respondents had their vote choice influenced by vote buying. My strategy in this section is therefore to present a number of different patterns in the data. Each provides a piece of suggestive evidence. Taken together, they show that patterns in the real world are consistent with what we would expect given the argument and audio experiment results.

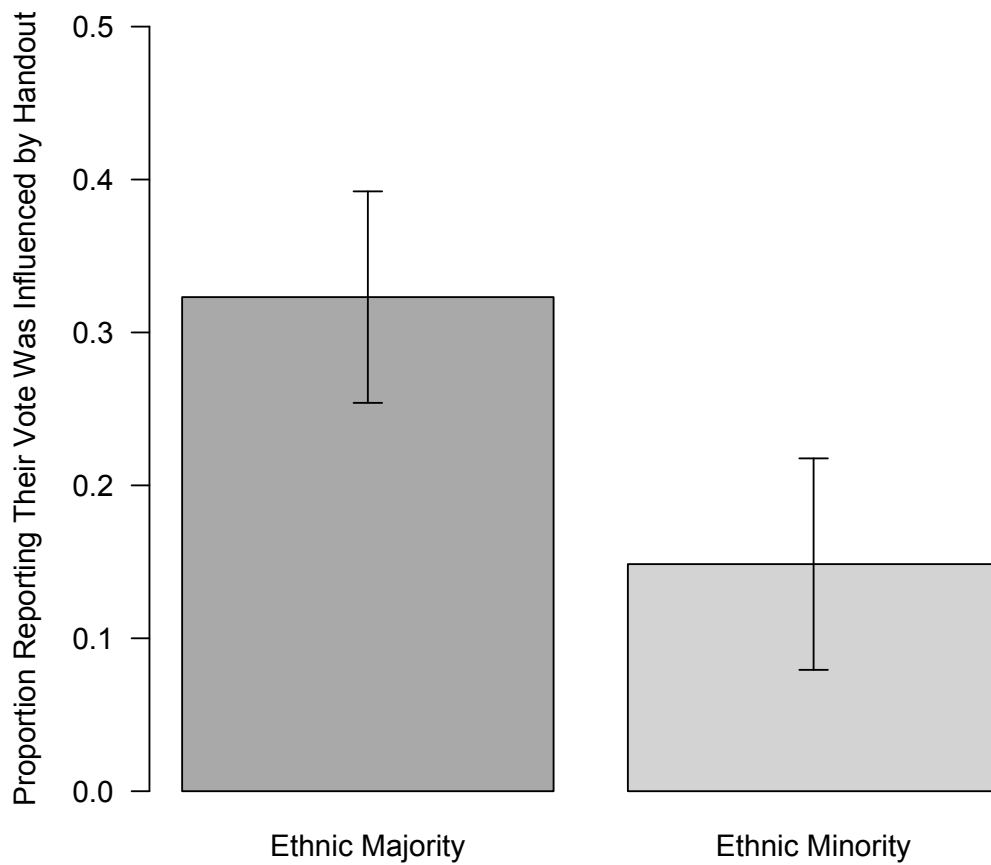
Figure 6.6 shows that vote buying is most effective with individuals who are members of the majority ethnic group in their district.<sup>7</sup> Using the list experiment data, I estimate that around 30 percent of majority group members had their vote influenced by vote buying, whereas just over 10 percent of minority group members did. To the extent that the candidates in legislative elections tend to be members of the majority group in an area (Posner, 2005), this first piece of evidence suggests that vote buying is most effective when candidates target their coethnics.

I now turn to how ethnic heterogeneity impacts the likelihood that vote buying will impact vote choice. I expect that vote buying will be more likely to have an impact on vote choice in homogenous areas for two reasons. First, the probability of being

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<sup>7</sup>Parliamentary elections are held at the constituency level, whereas census data is only available at the district level, which is an administrative rather than a political boundary. All constituencies are nested within districts, and most districts have 1 – 3 constituencies.

Figure 6.6: **Vote Buying's Effectiveness Among District Ethnic Majorities and Minorities.** Evidence from nationally representative survey list experiment.

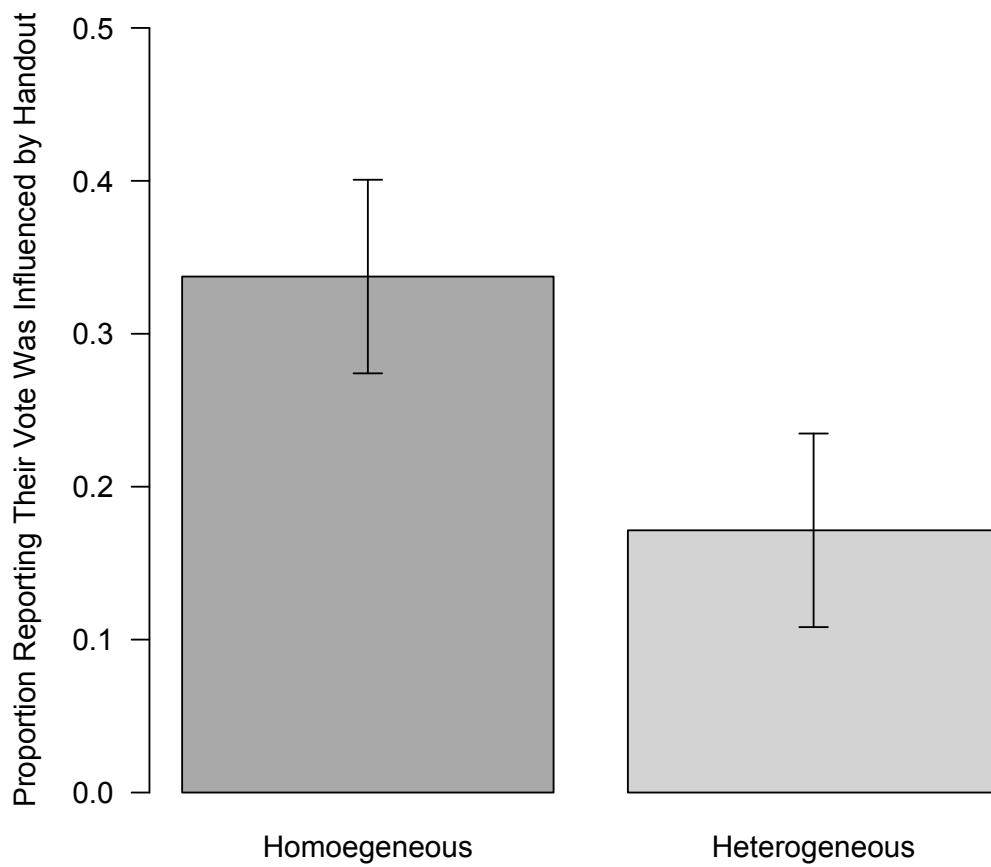


targeted by a coethnic candidate should increase with the homogeneity of the district. Second, I found that cash handouts have a negative effect when voters observe non-coethnic buying votes. This “audience cost,” which resembles the one identified by Weitz-Shapiro (2012) with respect to middle class voters and clientelism in Argentina, should be less of a problem in homogenous areas where candidates less likely to be observed handing out cash by non-coethnic voters.

Using census data on the ethnic breakdown of each district, I create a measure of ethno-linguistic fractionalization (ELF) for each district. This measure captures the probability that two randomly selected individuals in the district will be of different ethnicities. As such, low scores on the ELF represent homogeneity and high scores represent heterogeneity. Using a relatively high ELF score of 0.4 as a cutoff for homogeneous and heterogeneous, Figure 6.7 shows that vote buying is more effective in homogeneous districts. The divergence between the effectiveness of vote buying in homogeneous and heterogeneous districts increases as I move the cut point down (results not shown). In other words, when I classify as homogeneous only the least diverse districts, the impact of vote buying in the homogeneous districts increases. To the extent that the probability of being targeted by a coethnic vote buyer increases with homogeneity (and decreases with the ELF score), these results are again consistent with the idea that vote buying has the greatest impact on vote choice when individuals are targeted by coethnic politicians.

Finally, I examine the effectiveness of vote buying with ethnic majorities and minorities living in homogeneous and heterogeneous districts. Figure 6.8 illustrates that vote buying is most effective with ethnic majorities living in the most homogeneous districts and least effective with ethnic minorities living in homogeneous districts. In other words, vote buying is most effective with ethnic majorities in areas where they

Figure 6.7: **Vote Buying's Effectiveness in Ethnically Homogeneous versus Ethnically Heterogeneous Districts.** Evidence from nationally representative survey list experiment. In this figure, I use a cutoff of  $ELF=0.4$  to define homogeneous and heterogeneous.



are most likely to be targeted by a coethnic candidate and is least effective with ethnic minorities in areas where they are least likely to be targeted by a coethnic.

Up to this point, I have used the statistical tools that are commonly applied to list experiment data; that is, the separation of the sample into sub-groups and the examination of differences in results across the groups. To test the strength of these findings, I conduct multivariate analyses to determine whether the patterns identified above are robust to the inclusion of control variables that might be correlated with ethnicity and related to vote buying's impact on voting. To account for unobserved heterogeneity across Kenya's districts and provinces, I estimate multilevel models with district and province random effects.

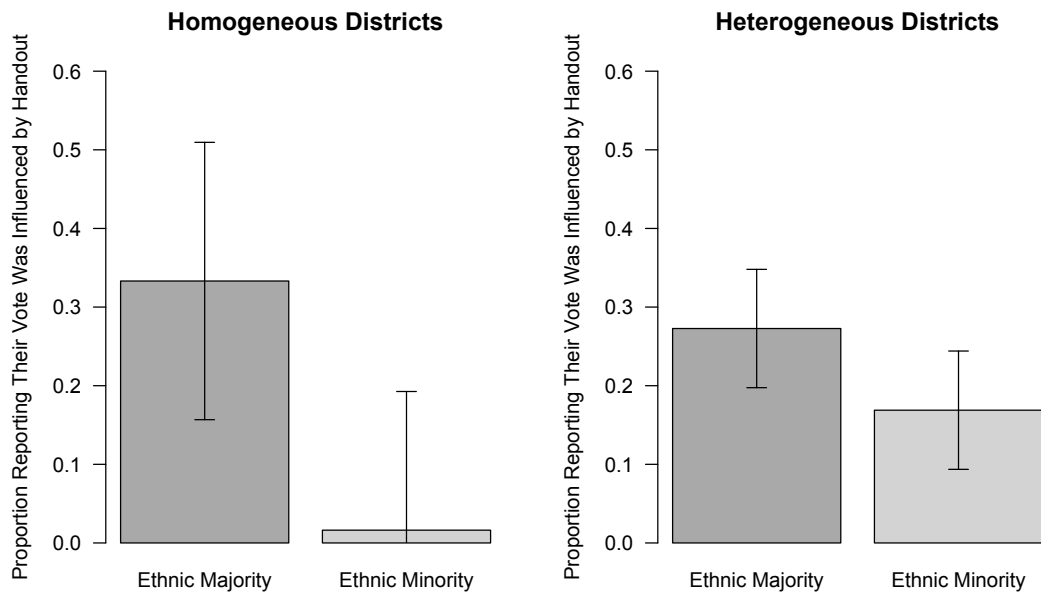
Table 6.7 presents the results from these analyses. The dependent variable in each model is the respondent's response to the list experiment question (0 – 5). I estimate each model using ordinary least squares. In a model including only the treatment list indicator variable, the coefficient estimate would yield the difference in means estimate. In these models, the interaction between the treatment list indicator and the district ethnic majority dummy captures the difference in vote buying's effectiveness between members of the majority group and members of minority groups. Column 1 presents results with district random effects.<sup>8</sup> In column 2, the model includes district random effects and controls for whether or not the respondent lives in a rural area, the district's ELF score, the respondent's age, gender, and the proportion of their sub-location that has electricity (using data from the Kenyan census), a proxy for the economic conditions where the respondent lives. In the third column, I add province-level random effects to the model in column 2.

Across each of these models, the inference is the same: vote buying has a greater impact on the vote choice of member's of a district's ethnic majority, who are most

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<sup>8</sup>Without the district random effects, the model would generate the same results as Figure 6.6.

**Figure 6.8: Vote Buying's Effectiveness Among Majorities and Minorities in the Least and Most Homogeneous Districts.**



likely to be targeted by a coethnic candidate, and less of an impact on the vote choice of members of ethnic minority groups. Importantly, these results show that whereas vote buying may mobilize turnout, it also impacts vote choice. This does not rule out the turnout-buying model completely, but it does suggest that it is insufficient to fully explain why politicians target their coethnics with vote-buying transfers during campaigns.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This chapter examines the implications of the informational model of vote buying for understandings of the drivers of ethnic voting. As ethnicity is fundamentally a patronage linkage between elites and voters, I argue that cash handouts should reinforce and perpetuate patterns of ethnic voting because they convey information to voters about the extent to which a candidate will protect and favor ethnic-group interests.

I provide complementary evidence from two different types of experiments, conducted with two different samples, that is consistent with the claim that vote buying in Kenya is most effective when candidates target members of their own ethnic group. One experiment directly tests the argument in a tightly controlled informational experiment. The other illustrates the external validity of the audio experiment results using a method that elicits less biased responses to survey questions about real behavior. Each takes seriously the problems of response bias that threaten the validity of our inferences about vote buying, and the results from each are consistent with the argument.

The findings in this chapter complement those of (Wantchekon, 2003), who finds in his experiment in Benin that clientelist appeals strengthen ethnic voting. They also relate to the results and argument of Keefer (2010), who suggests that politicians in Africa cannot make broad credible appeals to voters, including clientelist appeals to

Table 6.7: **Multivariate Analyses of List Experiment Data.** Models are linear models with district and provincial random effects. Dependent variable is number of items reported by respondents in the vote selling list experiment (0 – 5). The coefficient on the interaction between the treatment list indicator and ethnic majority dummy estimates the difference in vote buying’s effectiveness between ethnic majorities and ethnic minorities.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Treatment List	0.14*	0.13	0.13
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
District Ethnic Majority	-0.02	-0.00	0.01
	(0.09)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Treatment* District Ethnic Majority	0.20*	0.22*	0.22*
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Individual Controls	No	Yes	Yes
District Random Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province Random Effects	No	No	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses

\* significant at  $p < .05$



coethnics. He argues therefore that candidates use clientelist transfers at election time to build support and credibility among a more narrow group of coethnic supporters. My results explain why vote buying works to build a candidate's credibility among coethnic voters.

Though I focus on ethnicity in this chapter, I expect that the argument applies to other settings where ethnicity is either not politically salient or where patronage networks are defined in non-ethnic terms. For historical reasons discussed in this chapter, patronage relationships tend to be structured along ethnic lines in Kenya and other African cases. However, patron client relations need not be defined ethnically. In some instances, they may even cross-cut ethnic boundaries (Lemarchand, 1972). In these other instances, I expect that the mechanism is the same: politicians distribute cash and other material goods to their clientele in order to reinforce the patronage linkage between them. This explains why, despite some theoretical expectations that candidates should try to buy the votes of undecided voters (Stokes, 2005), we observe in a range of countries, including those in Latin America, that machine parties and clientelist politicians often target their "core" supporters with material goods during campaigns (Stokes et al., 2012).

Finally, the findings presented in this chapter and in Chapter 5 suggest an additional question: if voters interpret cash handouts as a signal about future performance with respect to the provision of patronage goods, are they correct? If voters are incorrect, the signal should have little credibility and cash handouts should not be effective. Answering this question is therefore central to evaluating the informational argument put forth in this project. The next chapter turns to that task.

## CHAPTER 7

### **Vote Buying and the Provision of Local Public Goods**

In this chapter I address a question that follows from the argument and results presented in previous chapters: Are voters correct when they interpret cash handouts as a signal about future performance or future access to patronage resources? If voters are incorrect in their expectations of vote-buying politicians—or if communities that receive substantial vote-buying transfers receive less local public goods—the credibility of the vote-buying signal should quickly erode over time, suggesting the limits of an informational model’s explanatory power.

In addressing this question, I test a potentially counter-intuitive implication of the signaling model of vote buying: that vote buying in a community could be associated with more, rather than less, local public goods provision. At the very least, it should not be associated with less local public goods provision. The prediction that vote buying may be associated with greater local public goods provision contrasts with conventional understandings of vote buying and its relation to government accountability and responsiveness. Normative concerns about vote buying are often motivated by the assumption that vote buying might undermine public goods provision or threaten government responsiveness to the poor or other vulnerable groups (e.g. Stokes, 2007a). The logic underlying these concerns makes a great deal of sense: if candidates can directly trade small cash transfers in exchange for the votes of poorer voters, they may have less incentive to target them with public services or policies once elected.

Yet the relation of vote buying to government accountability and responsiveness depends on the nature of vote-buying strategies and on the ways in which voters interpret material transfers (Schaffer and Schedler, 2007). For example, where cash handouts are used solely to mobilize turnout (Nichter, 2008), the implications of material transfers for public goods provision are unclear. If politicians in a given polity tend to favor their “core” supporters with local public goods once elected, cash handouts would be associated with greater public goods provision, but only because these happen to be the same voters who receive handouts in exchange for turning out to vote. If politicians tend to favor “swing” groups, cash handouts would be associated with less local public goods provision. In both cases, the association is not causal. Where material transfers are part of a direct and narrow exchange of goods for votes and where such contracts are enforced—or voters are held accountable for their vote through direct or indirect coercion (Stokes, 2005)—the expectation is that vote buying should undermine accountability and subsequently reduce local public goods provision. The implication of the informational theory of vote buying presented in Chapter 3, however, is different. Where cash handouts reflect attempts to establish credibility with respect to the future provision of patronage goods to particular constituents, and voters interpret them as such, vote buying may be associated with greater local public goods provision.

In this chapter, I test this implication. To do so, I combine data on vote buying during Kenya’s 2007 elections with data about the type, nature, and cost of projects developed as a part of Kenya’s Constituency Development Fund (CDF). CDF distributes a fixed amount of money to each constituency to spend on development projects related to education, health, agriculture, or any other needs of the constituency. As I discuss below, the member of parliament in each constituency enjoys substantial discretion over the distribution of CDF funds. As the MPs are also the actors most engaged in vote buying (as I describe in Chapter 2), I use the CDF data to analyze how patterns of

vote buying within a constituency relate to the subsequent distribution of CDF projects, locally targeted public goods, within the constituency.

The empirical analysis yields several key results. First, I show that the amount of vote buying in a location is associated with more, rather than fewer, CDF projects. In addition, vote buying is associated with more spending on CDF projects in the years following the election. Second, vote buying is not associated with increased expenditures on projects that would provide benefit only to local elites, such as construction or repairs to chief's offices and other administrative buildings. Rather, the differences are driven almost entirely by increased spending on projects in the education sector, an area that most voters value. Third, I find no evidence that vote buying in a constituency reduces the extent to which projects are targeted toward the poorest areas of a constituency. Coupled with results from the previous empirical chapters, these findings provide further support for the informational model of vote buying. In addition, the findings contrast with the expectations of other models of vote buying, especially those that assume that vote buying necessarily undermines politician responsiveness to those who receive cash handouts during campaigns.

## **7.1 Vote Buying and the Allocation of Local Public Goods**

In Chapter 3, I argue that distributing cash handouts to voters is an effective vote getting strategy in Kenya because of the information it conveys to voters, especially with respect to a candidate's willingness and ability to target them with targeted benefits—or, in other words, patronage goods—in the future. The experimental results presented in Chapters 5 and 6 provide empirical evidence that candidate vote-buying behavior does convey such signals to Kenyan voters, especially when voter and candidate are members of the same ethnic group. As I discuss later in Chapter 3, this argument is echoed in

ethnographic descriptions of elections elsewhere in Africa (e.g. Banegas, 2002; Nugent, 2007).

The implication of this argument is that vote buying could be associated with greater allocations of patronage goods. If vote buying is in reality associated with reductions in access to patronage resources, the finding that voters perceive vote-buying politicians as more likely to provide them would be puzzling. Moreover, the credibility of the signal would erode over time, as voters would learn that vote-buying politicians do not in fact deliver.

The theoretical prediction is with respect to the allocation of *patronage goods*, which in this chapter I use interchangeably with *local public goods*. Sometimes referred to as club goods (e.g. Scotchmer, 2002), local public goods and services can be enjoyed by all members of a group or geographic location. But as benefits tend to be restricted to those who live in proximity to the good, individuals from other geographic areas are excluded from benefits. When politicians have discretion over the distribution of such goods, they are sometimes referred to as patronage goods. It is the combination of discretion and the ability to target benefits to some communities while excluding others that differentiates patronage goods.

Though the term “patronage goods” tends to have negative connotations, they are important in Kenya for several reasons. First, they are strongly desired by voters and communities because of their implications for welfare. In Kenya, these types of local public goods include many of the goods and services most demanded by voters, such as schools, health facilities, roads, and agricultural services. In addition, their provision is also central to political competition. As I discuss in Chapter 3, politics in Kenya tends to focus on valence issues, such as development or corruption, and political parties do not offer competing ideological visions for voters to evaluate. Moreover, as programmatic

policy making is highly centralized, the provision of local public goods is an area that members of parliament and lower levels of government can actually impact.

The prediction of the informational argument contrasts with the implications of other models of vote buying. For example, Stokes (2007a) argues that vote buying is fundamentally anti-democratic because policies will be targeted toward voters that are unresponsive to vote buying, leaving the interests of those who are targeted with vote buying under-represented. Put another way, areas where voters are responsive to vote buying should receive less than areas that are not. Kitschelt (2000) echoes this logic, noting that “once constituencies have been bought off with selective incentives, politicians are free to pursue policy programs as they see fit” (pp. 852). In other words, when politicians can win votes with a material transfer, they are not incentivized to provide policies and public goods that benefit areas where vote buying is effective. As the allocation of local public goods is one of the central domains in which legislators and members of local government can impact policy in Kenya, the implication is that vote buying should be associated with lower local public goods allocations.

The existing empirical literature examining the relation of vote buying to future local public goods allocations is sparse. The research that is most closely related to the analysis in this chapter is Khemani’s (2012) study of vote buying and public goods provision in the Philippines. Khemani (2012) finds that vote buying in Philippine municipalities is associated with reductions in the provision of primary health services. The interpretation is that vote buying is associated with lower levels of public goods that benefit the poor.

## **7.2 Data and Methods**

The informational argument predicts a positive relationship between vote buying the allocation of patronage resources—or, local public goods provision. Testing the argument requires data about the allocation of public goods and services that fulfill two criteria: first, politicians must have some discretion in their allocation; and second, the good should be locally targetable. In other words, the benefits from the goods should be restricted to those who live in geographic proximity to the good. As I discuss in the next section, Kenya's Constituency Development Fund, which provides each member of parliament with a fixed amount of resources for development projects in their constituency, provides data that meet each of these criteria.

### **7.2.1 The Constituency Development Fund**

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was established in 2003. The CDF Act sets aside 2.5 percent of ordinary government revenue for disbursement to the CDF program. By law, 75 percent of CDF funds are distributed equally among constituencies and the remaining 25 percent are allocated according to need as measured by the constituency's poverty rate. Over the course of the fund's existence, total disbursements have increased from 1.2 billion Kenya Shillings (KES) in 2003-04 to 14.3 billion in 2010-11 (TISA, 2011).

In principle, the Kenyan parliament adopted CDF to achieve multiple developmental objectives. First, given Kenya's history of inequitable and politically driven public resource distribution (Burgess et al., 2010; Kramon and Posner, 2011), CDF was designed to promote more equitable distribution across Kenya's constituencies. Additionally, by devolving funds to the local level, CDF was designed to promote local participation in decision making and more accountability with respect to the provision

of public funds. Perhaps most importantly, at least from the perspective of MPs, CDF was designed to reduce the personal fundraising burden on individual MPs. As I discuss in the theoretical chapter, citizen demands for constituency service are extremely strong in Kenya (Barkan, 1995) and since independence MPs have faced strong pressure to deliver local public goods, especially through contributions to Harambee groups (Widner, 1992). As political competition became more intense following the re-introduction of multiparty politics in 1992 and Moi's resignation in 2002, demands for Harambee contributions intensified (TISA, 2011). By providing a predictable and stable source of funds, CDF helps reduce the personal financial burden on MPs to deliver constituency service.

Each member of parliament serves as the “patron” for his or her constituency's CDF funds. The MP must form a constituency level CDF committee, which by law must include a religious leader, a women's leader, an NGO leader, and a representative of the youth. The CDF committee develops proposals for projects and submits them to the CDF's national governing body for approval. In principle, the composition of the CDF committee and the process by which it determines projects and fund allocations are designed to promote citizen engagement, achieve equitable and efficient use of fund resources, and reduce political interference in the operation of the fund.

In practice, however, the MP has a great deal of discretion that allows him or her to shape the nature and location of fund projects. In the first place, the MP plays a central role in establishing the CDF committee. In some constituencies, MPs have appointed their spouses and members of their families (National Anti-Corruption Steering Committee, 2008). In other constituencies, committee members report that they are accountable only to the MP, rather than to the community or constituency, as the MP has discretion over the hiring and firing of committee members (TISA, 2011). In addition, the MP has the responsibility of submitting project proposals to the national CDF board



for approval (TISA, 2011). Reports suggest that corruption is widespread, especially with respect to the tendering of contracts, and also indicate weak citizen participation (TISA, 2011). According to The Institute for Social Accountability in Kenya, “the role of politicians in implementation directly undermines oversight and accountability and promotes political patronage over development goals . . . too much power over CDF wielded by MPs [is] the reason for the failure of the fund to achieve optimum results.” In response, a number of civil society groups in Kenya have called for the removal of the MP from the CDF program altogether (TISA, 2011; National Anti-Corruption Steering Committee, 2008).

From the perspective of equity and the quality of service delivery, the MP’s discretion over CDF projects and funds may be problematic. For the purposes of this study, however, the MP’s control over the CDF funds affords the opportunity to test the relationship between vote buying during a campaign and the provision of local public goods in a location. As I illustrated in Chapter 2, MPs are central actors in vote buying in Kenya. Cash handouts are the single biggest expenditure item in a candidate for parliament’s budget. Most candidates spend between three and seven million Kenyan Shillings on cash handouts alone, which amounts to about 40 percent of the average candidate’s budget. Studying the allocation of CDF projects and funds, which operates at the discretion of the MPs each who face similar allocation decisions given a fixed disbursement from the center, thus allows me to analyze the association between vote buying during a campaign and subsequent public goods allocation within a given political unit.

To study how vote buying during the 2007 campaign relates to the provision of public goods in the subsequent period, I use data about the type, cost, and geographic location of all CDF projects in each constituency from 2008 to 2010. The lowest level at which geographic information is provided for CDF projects is the “location” level.

Locations are an administrative unit in Kenya below the district level but above the village or, in the case of urban areas, neighborhood level. The number of locations per constituency varies from as few as five to seven in some constituencies, to as many as 20 to 30 in others. In urban areas, the average population in a location is about 25,000 while in rural areas it is about 8,000 people.

As the CDF data are at the location level, the analysis can focus on within constituency variation in the allocation of local public goods. In other words, I can study how legislators allocate local public goods within their constituencies and analyze whether allocations relate to vote buying during the campaign. In the main analyses, I focus on two location-level dependent variables. First, I simply count the number of CDF projects implemented in each location from 2008 to 2010. The median number of projects per location is five and the mean number of projects is about 20. Second, I calculate total spending on all CDF projects in each location during the same time period. As both of these variables are skewed, I use their log as the outcome variable in each regression model. To determine whether vote buying might be associated with more or less provision of certain types of public goods, I also run each model using sector specific measures of project counts and spending.

Figure 7.1 plots the average composition of CDF project types in a location during the period from 2008 to 2010. As the plot illustrates, CDF projects have overwhelmingly focused on education. On average, 53 percent of projects in a location are education related. These projects range from building classrooms, dormitories, and libraries, to purchasing educational materials. Health projects are the second most frequent, with on average 13 percent of projects in a location focusing on health. Most health projects involve the construction of dispensaries and other primary health facilities. About 8 percent of projects focus on water, mostly through the construction of boreholes and

other sources of clean water for communities, while under 5 percent of projects focus on roads, agriculture, and electricity.

### **7.2.2 Vote Buying**

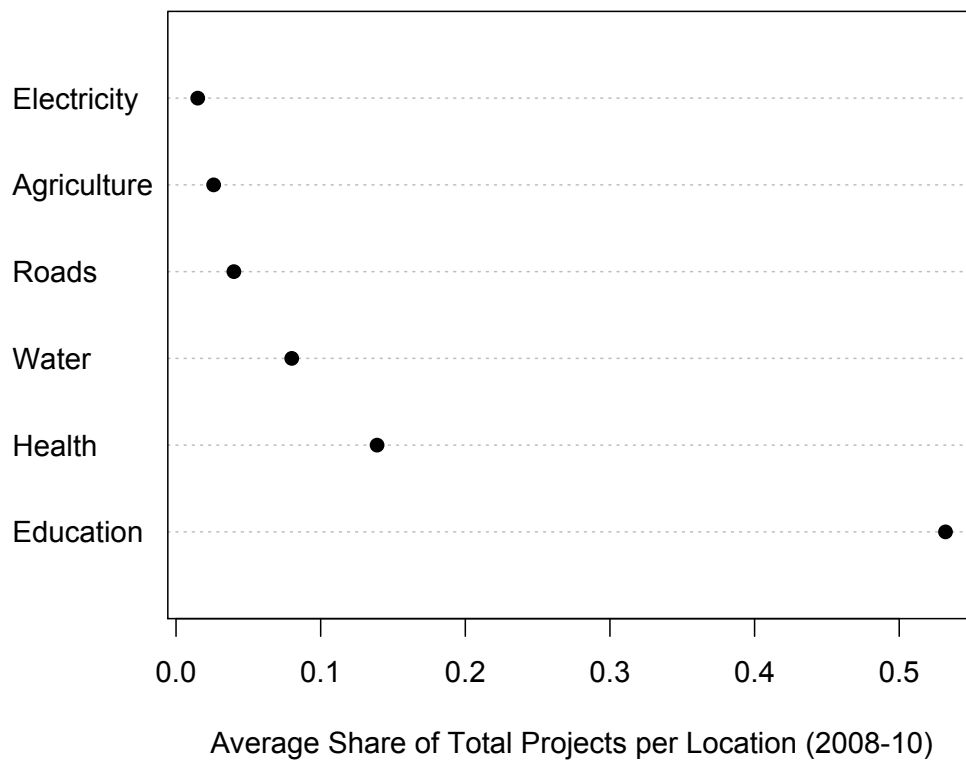
To measure the amount of vote buying in each location during the 2007 elections, I return to the survey data introduced in Chapter 2 and further analyzed in Chapter 6. As the list experiment results presented in Chapter 2 illustrate that direct questions about respondent's experience receiving money during political campaigns are not subject to social desirability bias, I use the following yes or no question: *Did you receive money from a party or politician during the 2007 election?*

The survey data include the responses of 2000 Kenyans, each sampled randomly using the procedure described in Appendix A. I aggregate the vote buying survey data up to the location level to generate location level estimates of vote buying. The result is data about vote buying in 233 locations nested within 141 of Kenya's 210 constituencies.

### **7.2.3 Empirical Strategy**

The informational model of vote buying predicts a positive association between vote buying at the location level and the provision of patronage goods—in this case, CDF projects. Alternative models of vote buying, especially those which emphasize mechanisms through which voters are held accountable for their vote, predict on the other hand that vote buying should be associated with reductions in the provision of local public goods. Ideally, I would test these predictions using an exogenous source of variation in vote buying at the location level. Such variation would allow me to causally

Figure 7.1: The Average Composition of CDF Allocations per Location, 2008-2010.



identify vote buying's impact and rule out omitted variables bias as a source of any correlation I identify between vote buying and the provision of CDF projects.

In the absence of a plausible exogenous source of variation in vote buying, my empirical strategy in this chapter proceeds in the following steps. First, I identify and measure as many confounding variables as possible. I discuss these confounds and how I measure them in the next sections. Second, I show that vote buying in a location is not strongly predicted by any of the confounds I discuss, including poverty and other measures of development need. This suggests that variation in vote buying at the local level is driven by factors that may be unrelated to the future provision of local public goods. Third, I use a standard regression framework to estimate the association between vote buying and local public goods allocations, controlling for a range of potentially confounding covariates. The remainder of this section discusses these variables in more detail.

### **7.2.3.1 Poverty and Low Levels of Development**

Vote buying tends to flourish where voters are poor (Lehoucq, 2007). Those living in poverty are generally targeted by potential vote buyers at higher rates than are wealthier voters (Brusco et al., 2004; Stokes, 2005) and, as I demonstrate empirically in Chapter 5, the poor often respond more favorably to vote-buying offers. At the same time, the Constituency Development Fund was designed in principle to help alleviate poverty and provide to public services to those in need. If CDF projects are allocated to locations with higher poverty rates and more development needs, locations that are targeted by vote buyers for the same reasons, we might expect to observe a positive correlation between vote-buying rates and the provision of CDF projects. However, the association would be driven by poverty, rather than the mechanism suggested by the signaling theory.

I control for poverty and low levels of development in multiple ways. First, I use a location-level *poverty rate*. I construct this measure by collecting information about the number of people living in poverty in each location as estimated by Kenya's 1999 census, and dividing that by the location population as of 1999. I also use data from the 2009 census to produce several other measures of location-level development. With data about employment in the location, I generate a measure of each location's *formal employment rate*. With data about household sources of drinking water, I create an additional variable capturing the share of households in each location with access to *piped water*. Alternative sources of water include ponds, streams, rivers, wells, and boreholes. Additionally, I use data about adult educational attainment in each location to calculate the share of adults in the locations without a *formal education*. Finally, as rural areas tend to be less developed than urban ones, I control for whether or not the location is in a rural area. Taken together, these outcomes capture multiple dimensions of development and poverty, each which may drive variation in vote buying and the location of CDF projects.

### **7.2.3.2 Population and Population Density**

While vote buying and the location of CDF projects may be driven by poverty and the level of development, they may also be driven by the expected rate of return to investment. For example, vote buyers might distribute cash in areas with higher population densities in order to reach more voters with less effort or less money. Similarly, decision makers might initiate CDF projects in areas where they expect the most people to benefit—in other words, areas where population is more dense. To control for this possibility, I account for the *population* of each location and the *population density*, which I calculate as the number of people per square kilometer.

### 7.2.3.3 Accessibility

Geographic accessibility may also impact the extent of vote buying and the number of CDF projects in a location. For example, some locations may be easy to access through the existing road network and may already be connected to the electrical grid, making the provision of CDF projects easier. Such locations may also be easier for politicians and their agents to access while on the campaign trail. Conversely, more remote and inaccessible areas are more difficult environments in which to initiate CDF projects and may be unappealing to political candidates and their agents who need to be efficient with their time and resources while campaigning.

I use multiple measures to capture the accessibility of each location. First, I measure the geographic distance, in miles, of each location to the capital of the county in which the location is located.<sup>1</sup> In almost all cases, the county capital is the most proximate urban center or town to any location. Distance to these county capitals therefore captures the accessibility of the location. As I was unable to locate up-to-date location GIS maps with which to locate the centroid of each location, I instead calculate the distance of each CDF project in a location to the county capital. I then average these distances to construct a measure that approximates the distance of each location from the nearest town or urban center.

I use several other proxies for accessibility. I use data from the 2009 census to calculate the share of households in each location that have *electricity*. Though some households may get their electricity from privately owned generators, most households access electricity (legally or illegally) by connecting to the formal electrical grid. Less accessible locations should therefore have fewer people with electricity. Additionally,

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<sup>1</sup>Kenya's constitution calls for the creation of 47 new county governments. These counties match the geographic boundaries of Kenya's districts as of 1992. Since 1992, districts have proliferated in Kenya, largely for political purposes.

the urban/rural measure and the population density measure also indirectly capture the extent to which a location is accessible.

#### **7.2.3.4 Politician Quality**

Variation in the amount of vote buying in an area and that area's access to CDF projects might also be driven by variation in the latent abilities of MPs. For example, some MPs may simply be more skilled, better organized, or more committed to their work, properties that would lead them to excel in vote buying and public goods provision. Other MPs may lack skills and organization or prefer leisure to work, characteristics that would undermine their ability to buy votes and to provide public goods. My research design accounts for this potential confound by taking advantage of the fact that locations are nested within constituencies. I am therefore able to analyze within constituency variation in both vote buying and the allocation of CDF projects.

#### **7.2.3.5 Projects Prior to the Election**

The main outcomes I examine are CDF projects and spending after the election in December 2007. However, the number of projects provided to a location after an election may be in part a function of the projects it received in the prior period. In addition, the amount of vote buying in a location could be related prior CDF activity if, for example, both projects and vote buying are disproportionately targeted to electorally important areas. In some specifications I therefore also control for the total number of CDF projects in the constituency from 2003 to 2007. The advantage of this measure is that it also helps to control for some of the potential confounding factors discussed above, including the location's level of need, its accessibility, and its political significance.



## 7.3 Results

### 7.3.1 Correlates of Vote Buying

Before proceeding to the main results, I first analyze the correlates of vote buying at the location level. The central finding is that vote buying is not strongly associated with most of the potential confounding variables I discussed in the previous section. This suggests that variation in vote buying at the location level may be driven by factors unrelated to the local public goods allocations.

Column 1 of Table 7.1 illustrates that the number of CDF projects that a location received from 2003 to 2007 has essentially no correlation with the amount of the vote buying in that location during the 2007 elections. The final two columns add additional covariates. Notably, neither a location's poverty rate nor various measures of infrastructure (electrification and piped water) and population density predict the amount of vote buying in a location. A location's distance to the county capital also does not predict vote buying.

The formal employment rate is the only significant predictor of vote buying in a location. But perhaps surprisingly, vote buying is more prevalent in areas where more rather than fewer people are formally employed. This correlation is consistent with the idea that vote buying is unnecessary with extremely vulnerable populations—there are more coercive means to win their votes—and that vote buying is most likely to be prevalent where voters are poor but enjoy some autonomy (e.g. Baland and Robinson, 2008).

With the exception of the formal employment rate, none of the potential confounding variables discussed in Section 7.2.3 are significant predictors of location level vote buying. Notably, the poverty rate and other measures of a location's level of need and accessibility have little association with vote buying. These results are similar to those

Table 7.1: **Predictors of Vote Buying at the Location Level.** Dependent variable is location vote-buying rate (mean).

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Number of Projects (2003-07)	0.0001 (0.0002)	0.0002 (0.0002)	0.0002 (0.0003)
Poverty Rate		0.1148 (0.1122)	0.1110 (0.1254)
Rural		0.0252 (0.0502)	-0.0367 (0.0686)
Population (log)		0.0183 (0.0341)	0.0068 (0.0359)
Population Density (log)		-0.0122 (0.0133)	-0.0039 (0.0169)
Share with Electricity			-0.1656 (0.1194)
Piped Water			0.0316 (0.0905)
Formal Employment Rate			0.3274** (0.1578)
Share with No Formal Education			-0.0422 (0.1696)
Distance to County Capital (miles)			0.0007 (0.0013)
Constant	0.2304*** (0.0225)	0.0465 (0.3038)	0.0128 (0.3343)
Observations	168	146	140
R-squared	0.0005	0.0230	0.0793

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

of Khemani (2012) in the Philippines. Noting that sources of variation in vote buying appear therefore to be idiosyncratic, or at least orthogonal to the future provision of public services, Khemani (2012) argues that these lack of correlations help to identify vote buying's impact on future policies. Put another way, that vote buying is not correlated with poverty or other measures of need helps to rule these factors out as drivers of a spurious correlation between vote buying and the allocation of local public goods.

### **7.3.2 Vote Buying and CDF Projects and Spending at the Location Level**

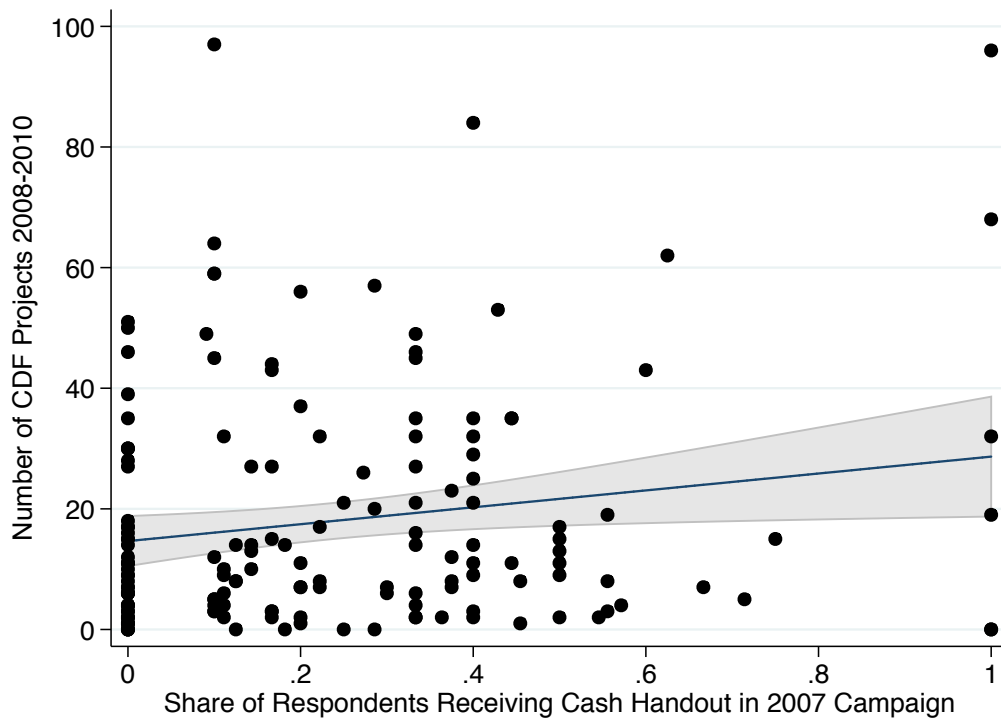
In this section, I examine the association between vote buying and the provision of local public goods. Figure 7.2 presents the bivariate relationship between vote buying and the number of CDF project in a location. Though the bivariate relationship is noisy, the correlation suggests that vote buying is associated with more, rather than fewer, CDF projects.

To control for potential confounds, I estimate a series of regression models in which the number of CDF projects or the amount of CDF spending,  $Y$ , in location  $i$  in constituency  $j$  is a function of the level of vote buying in that location and the location-specific controls I discuss in Section 7.2.3. To account for unobserved heterogeneity across Kenya's regions, I also include provincial fixed effects in some specifications. I cluster standard errors at the constituency level.

$$Y_{ij} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{VoteBuying}_{ij} + \beta_2 Z_{ij} + \varepsilon_j \quad (7.1)$$

The results in Table 7.2 provide evidence that vote buying is related to more CDF projects in a location. The dependent variable in each model is the log of the number of projects in the location. The first column presents the bivariate results, which suggest a positive but not statistically significant association between vote buying and CDF

Figure 7.2: **Vote Buying in 2007 Elections and CDF Projects 2008-2010.** Unit is the location.



projects. In column 2, I introduce controls for location poverty rate, location in a rural area, population (logged), and population density (logged). In this specification, the vote-buying coefficient increases to about 1.4 and is statistically significant. In column 3, I introduce controls for the share of households in the location with electricity and piped water and the proportion of adults with formal employment and no formal education. In column 4, I replicate the specification in column 3 but add provincial fixed effects. In the final column of Table 7.2, I introduce a control for the number of projects in the location since the introduction of the CDF in 2003 and prior to the election in December 2007.

Substantively and statistically, the results are comparable in each specification that includes covariates: the results predict that a 50 percentage point increase in the share of the location targeted by vote buying is associated with about a 70 percent increase in the number of CDF projects in a location. The magnitude of the effect is roughly the same as moving from an urban to a rural area, where CDF projects are more prevalent.

With respect to the other covariates, the share of the location's adult population without any formal education stands out as a strong predictor of CDF projects in a location. As the number of adults without any education increases, the predicted number of CDF projects in a location goes down dramatically. This suggests that MPs are more responsive to their educated constituents.

Table 7.3 replicates Table 7.2 using total spending on CDF projects as the dependent variable (logged). Column 1 presents the bivariate relationship, which suggests little correlation between vote buying and CDF spending. Once controls for the poverty rate, rural location, population, and population density are introduced, however, the vote-buying coefficient increases significantly. The point estimate suggests that a 50 percentage point increase in the share of a location targeted by vote buying is associated with a 150 percent increase in the amount of CDF spending in that location. In

**Table 7.2: Vote Buying's Association with CDF Projects.** Dependent variable is the number of CDF projects in the location from 2008 to 2010 (logged).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Vote Buying	0.441 (0.907)	1.420*** (0.530)	1.395** (0.597)	1.528*** (0.571)	1.252** (0.507)
Poverty Rate		1.029 (0.912)	1.243 (1.096)	1.774 (1.275)	1.538 (1.193)
Rural		0.591** (0.294)	0.603* (0.347)	0.718** (0.361)	0.564* (0.322)
Population (log)		0.139 (0.268)	0.332 (0.243)	0.205 (0.269)	0.184 (0.223)
Population Density (log)		0.147 (0.125)	-0.088 (0.139)	-0.008 (0.141)	-0.039 (0.120)
Share with Electricity			-0.143 (0.717)	1.427 (0.946)	0.958 (0.877)
Piped Water			-0.499 (0.779)	-0.549 (0.783)	-0.385 (0.703)
Formal Employment Rate			-1.749 (1.173)	-1.747 (1.226)	-1.625 (1.128)
Share with No Formal Education			-4.374*** (1.422)	-3.884*** (1.352)	-3.642*** (1.292)
Distance to County Capital (miles)			-0.001 (0.006)	0.000 (0.006)	0.002 (0.006)
Number of Projects (2003-07)					0.009** (0.003)
Constant	2.170*** (0.249)	-1.028 (2.401)	-0.018 (2.041)	1.602 (2.378)	0.381 (2.309)
Observations	168	146	140	140	140
R-squared	0.004	0.099	0.227	0.288	0.417
Provincial Fixed Effects	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

column 3, I introduce additional controls and in column 4 I add provincial fixed effects. The magnitude of the coefficient declines slightly in these specifications but remains statistically different from zero using standard significance levels.

Table 7.4 provides evidence that these changes in spending are driven almost entirely by vote buying's association with greater expenditure on education projects. Spending on projects related to health, water, roads, electricity, and agriculture does not systematically vary with vote-buying rates. Locations with more vote buying do however receive more expenditures on education projects. Perhaps this is not surprising given how highly demanded education and that education projects account for about half of all CDF projects. More importantly, vote buying is not associated with greater expenditure on administration, a type of expenditure that typically benefits local elites—many administrative projects build chief's offices, for example. Instead, the greater expenditures associated with vote buying are spent on projects in a domain that most people support and from which many in the community stand to benefit.

Even after controlling for measures of a location's poverty and development needs, proxies for a location's accessibility, and population and population density, vote buying has a positive and substantively strong association with the number of CDF projects and the amount of CDF spending in a location in the years following an election. In other words, vote buying is associated with greater, rather than less, provision of local public goods.

### **7.3.3 Corruption and Leakage in CDF Projects**

Allegations of corruption and leakage in the use of CDF funds are widespread. If vote buying is associated with more CDF projects and spending but also more corruption, waste, and leakage, the relation of vote buying to local public goods provision would not be meaningful, at least from a welfare perspective.

Table 7.3: **Vote Buying's Association with CDF Spending.** Dependent variable is spending on CDF projects in the location from 2008 to 2010 (logged).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Vote Buying	-0.154 (2.448)	3.033** (1.458)	2.809* (1.566)	2.799* (1.491)	2.669* (1.459)
Poverty Rate		4.745* (2.641)	3.934 (2.812)	3.067 (3.494)	2.955 (3.496)
Rural		-0.703 (0.693)	1.259* (0.740)	1.261 (0.879)	1.188 (0.873)
Population (log)		0.530 (0.537)	0.401 (0.462)	0.266 (0.471)	0.256 (0.470)
Population Density (log)		0.219 (0.284)	0.154 (0.249)	0.092 (0.246)	0.077 (0.242)
Share with Electricity			3.005* (1.698)	3.032 (2.525)	2.811 (2.498)
Piped Water			-0.894 (1.949)	-0.661 (1.933)	-0.584 (1.919)
Formal Employment Rate			-5.207* (3.077)	-5.022 (3.270)	-4.965 (3.258)
Share with No Formal Education			-6.896 (4.638)	-6.502 (4.685)	-6.388 (4.685)
Distance to County Capital (miles)			0.021 (0.019)	0.023 (0.018)	0.024 (0.019)
Number of Projects (2003-07)					0.004 (0.003)
Constant	14.172*** (0.688)	5.290 (5.085)	9.180** (3.779)	12.208** (4.792)	11.633** (4.844)
Observations	168	146	140	140	140
R-squared	0.000	0.099	0.198	0.218	0.223
Provincial Fixed Effects	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1



Table 7.4: **Vote Buying and Sector Specific CDF Spending.** Dependent variable is spending (log) in each sector in the location from 2008 to 2010.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	Administration	Agriculture	Education	Electricity	Health	Roads	Water
Vote Buying	-0.110 (1.014)	1.644 (1.973)	3.882** (1.934)	1.967 (1.639)	-0.276 (2.662)	0.140 (2.294)	1.228 (2.867)
Observations	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
R-squared	0.113	0.097	0.129	0.071	0.139	0.032	0.105

Each model includes controls for poverty, rural, population, population density, electrification, piped water, formal employment, formal education in the location, and distance to county capital.

Robust standard errors in parentheses

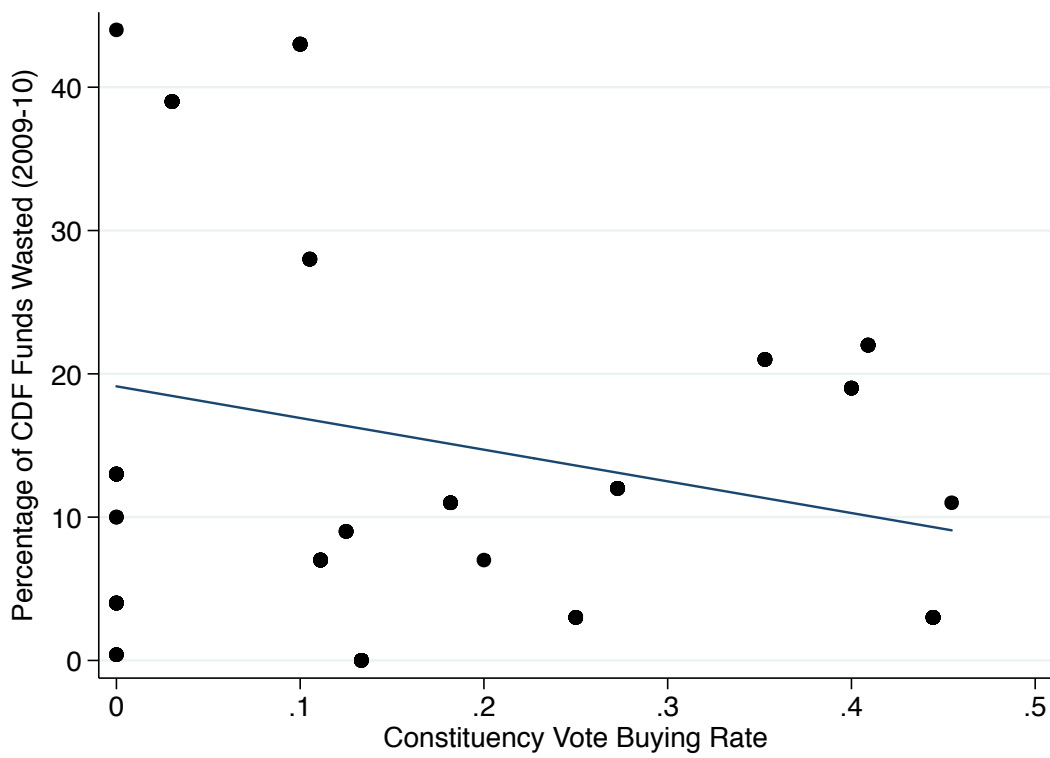
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

To examine this possibility, I gathered data from social audits of CDF funds conducted by the Kenya Taxpayer’s Association.<sup>2</sup> The Taxpayer’s Association sent auditors to visit and examine each CDF project in a sample of constituencies during the 2009-2010 fiscal year. By examining bank statements and the projects themselves, they estimate the proportion of CDF funds that have been wasted, badly used, or are unaccounted for in each constituency. I combine these data with constituency level estimates of vote buying to determine whether vote buying is correlated with wasted CDF funds in the 34 constituencies for which data are available.

Figure 7.3 presents the correlation between a constituency’s vote-buying rate (the proportion of people who report experience with vote buying) and the percentage of CDF funds that were poorly used or unaccounted for in 2009-10. Perhaps surprisingly, vote buying is associated with less misuse of funds. Though this pattern does not rule out that vote buying is associated with more leakage *within* each constituency, the association is at the very least suggestive that corruption in the use of CDF and vote buying are not strongly related.

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.nta.or.ke/reports/crc/Nairobi/NTA\\_Phase\\_IV\\_CDF\\_LATF\\_Ranking.pdf](http://www.nta.or.ke/reports/crc/Nairobi/NTA_Phase_IV_CDF_LATF_Ranking.pdf), last accessed February 13, 2013.

Figure 7.3: **Vote Buying and the Leakage of CDF Funds, 2009-2010.** Percentage of wasted funds are estimated through the Kenya Taxpayer's Association CDF audits.



## 7.4 Robustness

A potential problem with the results presented thus far is that the regression models do not account for uncertainty in my survey estimates of vote buying at the location level. Though the survey respondents were sampled randomly, the sample sizes in each location are relatively small. This generates uncertainty in my estimates of vote buying at the location level, which could bias the vote-buying coefficient estimates presented above (Croon and van Veldhoven, 2007). With between 7 and 30 individuals surveyed per location, this could pose a problem.

The situation is comparable to that which one faces when estimating a multilevel model. In this case, I am estimating a group-level outcome, CDF projects in a location, with individual survey data about vote buying. Generally, multilevel models involve exactly the opposite: individual outcomes, such as performance on a test, are modeled as a function of group-level covariates, such as the form of instruction in a classroom. Croon and van Veldhoven (2007) suggest that this problem be addressed through a latent variable multilevel model. In this model,  $\lambda_j$  is a latent variable representing the true underlying level of vote buying in location  $j$ . As before, the CDF outcome in a location,  $Y_j$ , is a function of vote buying in the location and other location specific covariates,  $Z_j$ :

$$Y_j = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \lambda_j + \beta_2 Z_j + \epsilon_k \quad (7.2)$$

Unlike the specification in Equation 1, we also model the individual's response to the survey question on vote buying,  $x_{ij}$ , as a function of  $\lambda_j$  and an error term,  $\gamma_{ij}$ :

$$x_{ij} = \lambda_j + \gamma_{ij} \quad (7.3)$$

Using this system of equations, Croon and van Veldhoven (2007) show that we can construct adjusted multilevel estimates of each location’s vote-buying mean,  $\tilde{x}_j$ , that account for the uncertainty in the group-level estimates of vote buying. In the case where there are no group-level predictors, the adjustment is as follows:

$$\tilde{x}_j = (1 - w_j)\mu_\lambda + w_j\bar{x}_j \quad (7.4)$$

Where  $\mu_\lambda$  is the grand or population mean,  $\bar{x}_j$  are the observed group means from each location, and  $w_j$  is:

$$w_j = \frac{\sigma_\lambda^2}{\sigma_\lambda^2 + \frac{\sigma_\gamma^2}{N_j}} \quad (7.5)$$

Where there are group level predictors, the adjustment changes slightly to use the information contained in the group-level covariates. The formal proof can be found in Croon and van Veldhoven (2007). In both cases, the intuition behind the adjustment remains the same: The adjusted estimate for the location mean in a particular sub-location,  $\tilde{x}_j$ , is a weighted average of the overall vote-buying rate in Kenya,  $\mu_\lambda$ , and the observed rate of vote buying in a particular location. The relative weight,  $w_j$ , given to the location estimate increases with the amount of information contained in the location specific estimate. For example, as the sample size in a location,  $N_j$ , increases,  $\frac{\sigma_\gamma^2}{N_j}$  gets smaller and  $w_j$  converges toward 1, in which case all of the weight is placed on the location specific estimate. Similarly, as the within group variance,  $\sigma_\gamma^2$ , decreases—and the certainty of the observed group level estimate increases— $w_j$  converges toward 1. This mirrors the “partial pooling” of multilevel model estimates, whereby group-specific estimates are pulled toward the full population estimate and

the amount of pooling depends on the amount of information contained in each group's estimate (Gelman and Hill, 2006).

Figure 7.4 illustrates the relationship between the observed location vote-buying estimates (or means), which I use in the main analyses, and the adjusted location vote-buying estimates,  $\tilde{x}_j$ .<sup>3</sup> The diagonal line represents the 45 degree line—the closer are the points to this line, the closer are the observed to the adjusted estimates. The horizontal line represents the population mean—the vote-buying rate in the full sample. The plot illustrates the partial pooling nature of the adjusted location vote-buying estimates. The estimates at the low end of the observed vote-buying range are pulled up toward the grand mean in the adjusted estimate. Conversely, the estimates at the high end of the observed vote-buying range are pulled down toward the grand mean.

Table 7.5 presents regression results using the adjusted estimates of each location's vote-buying rate. In these models, which replicate those from columns 2 and 3 in Table 7.2, the outcome is the log of total CDF projects in a location from 2008 to 2010. In both models, vote buying remains a significant predictor of the number of CDF projects in a location. Notably, the magnitude of the vote-buying coefficient increases in specifications using the adjusted vote-buying estimates. These results should increase our confidence that the results presented in Section 7.3 are not artifacts of the uncertainty contained in my estimates of vote buying at the location level.

## 7.5 Constituency Level Vote Buying and Pro-Poor Targeting

Even if vote buying in a location is associated with a greater provision of local public goods in that location, vote buying might distort the distribution of local public goods in other ways. Most importantly, high levels of vote buying in a constituency may reduce

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<sup>3</sup>I constructed the adjusted vote-buying rates by adapting the S-Plus code provided in the online supplement to Croon and van Veldhoven (2007).

Figure 7.4: **Comparing the Observed Location Vote-Buying Mean to the Adjusted Location Vote-Buying Mean.** The diagonal line represents the 45 degree line. The horizontal line is the grand population mean.

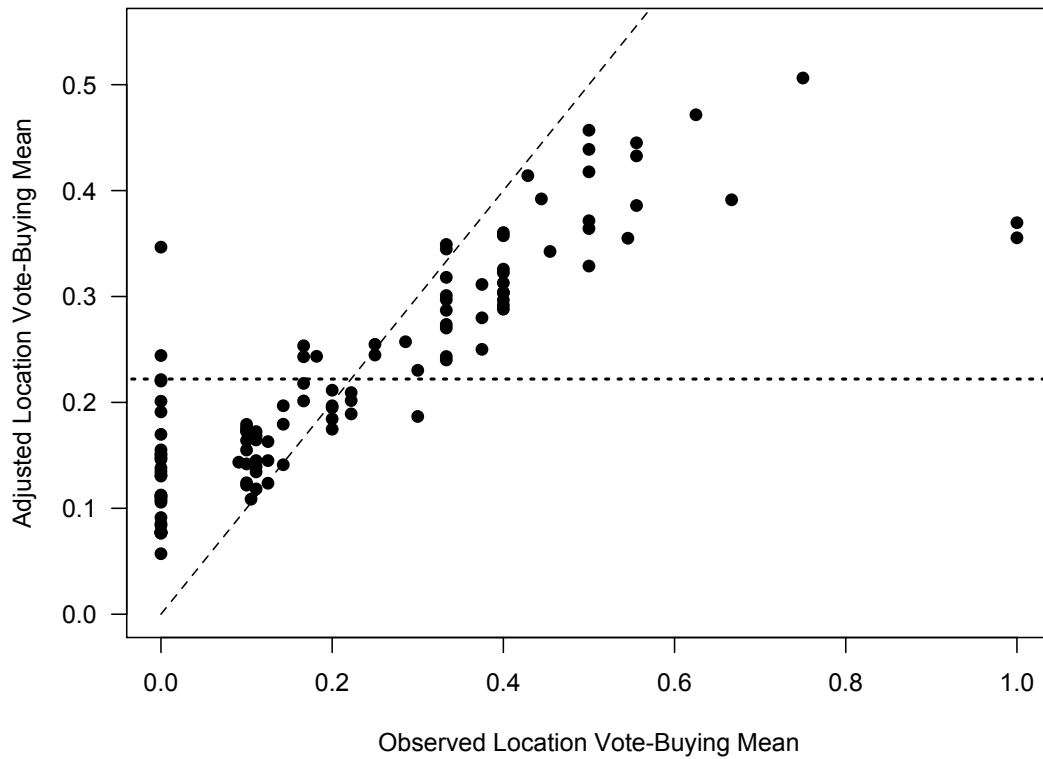


Table 7.5: **Vote Buying and CDF Projects using the Adjusted Vote-Buying Estimate.** Dependent variable is the number of CDF projects, 2008-10 (logged).

	(1)	(2)
Vote Buying (adjusted)	2.190* (1.304)	3.861** (1.919)
Poverty Rate	-0.073 (0.902)	-0.204 (1.090)
Rural	0.477 (0.309)	0.242 (0.366)
Population (log)	0.205 (0.250)	0.256 (0.259)
Population Density (log)	0.087 (0.116)	-0.131 (0.152)
Share with Electricity		-0.283 (0.736)
Piped Water		-0.693 (0.827)
Formal Employment Rate		-0.894 (1.288)
Share with No Formal Education		-3.402** (1.650)
Distance to County Capital (miles)		-0.001 (0.007)
Constant	-0.737 (2.329)	1.005 (2.286)
Observations	141	115
R-squared	0.046	0.139

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

the MPs incentive to be responsive to his or her poorest constituents, who presumably are most responsive to vote buying. Vote buying could therefore undermine the MP's accountability and responsiveness to the poor.

To test the hypothesis that greater amounts of vote buying in a constituency undermines pro-poor targeting of local public goods projects, I estimate the following model, in which I interact the rate of vote buying in a location's constituency,  $VoteBuying_j$ , with that location's poverty rate ( $PovertyRate_{ij}$ ):

$$Y_{ij} = \alpha_{ij} + \beta_1 PoveryRate_{ij} + \beta_2 VoteBuying_j + \beta_3 PoveryRate_{ij} \times VoteBuying_j + \beta_4 Z_{ij} + \epsilon_j \quad (7.6)$$

In this specification,  $\beta_1$  represents the association between location-level poverty and the allocation of CDF projects when there is no vote buying in a constituency. If there is pro-poor targeting of CDF projects in the absence of vote buying,  $\beta_1$  should be positive.  $\beta_3$  provides information about how vote-buying at the constituency level influences the targeting of CDF projects to places where the poverty rate is higher. If vote buying undermines pro-poor targeting,  $\beta_3$  should be negative. If vote buying is associated with greater pro-poor targeting,  $\beta_3$  should be positive.

Table 8.1 presents the regression results. There is no evidence that vote buying at the constituency level reduces the pro-poor targeting of CDF projects. If anything, the poorest locations receive more projects and more spending in a constituency when vote buying is prevalent. However, there is a great deal of uncertainty in the estimate of  $\beta_3$ , and so these findings are far from definitive. Nevertheless, they provide no evidence in favor of the hypothesis that vote buying undermines responsiveness to poorer locations, at least with respect to the allocation of local public goods.



Table 7.6: **Constituency Level Vote Buying and Pro-Poor Targeting of CDF.** Dependent variables are the number of CDF projects in the location from 2008 to 2010 (logged) and spending on CDF projects in the location from 2008 to 2010 (logged).

	(1) Projects	(2) Projects	(3) Spending	(4) Spending
Location Poverty Rate	-0.965 (0.974)	-0.171 (1.770)	-0.385 (1.864)	6.698 (5.082)
Constituency Vote Buying	0.674 (1.632)	-0.684 (3.517)	0.548 (3.528)	8.474 (9.586)
Location Poverty * Constituency Vote Buying	2.553 (3.227)	5.423 (5.535)	1.621 (6.092)	-7.627 (14.887)
Population (log)	0.335*** (0.107)	0.326 (0.241)	0.364* (0.204)	0.549 (0.470)
Population Density (log)	-0.009 (0.098)	-0.117 (0.135)	0.220 (0.178)	0.051 (0.230)
Rural		0.759** (0.377)		0.346 (1.053)
Share with Electricity		0.202 (0.807)		1.541 (2.148)
Piped Water		-0.509 (0.742)		-0.988 (1.942)
Formal Employment Rate		-1.875 (1.234)		-4.761 (3.398)
Share with No Formal Education		-4.884*** (1.329)		-6.071 (4.451)
Constant	-1.009 (0.856)	0.733 (1.973)	8.930*** (1.908)	7.402* (4.308)
Observations	1,407	141	1,407	141
R-squared	0.059	0.237	0.024	0.168

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

## 7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I test one implication of the informational model of vote buying: that vote buying should be associated with a greater provision of local public goods—or patronage goods. Using data about the allocation of projects from Kenya's Constituency Development Fund in the years following the 2007 elections, I show that vote buying in a location is associated with the future receipt of more CDF projects and higher levels of overall CDF spending. This association is robust even after accounting for a range of potential confounding covariates, including the level of poverty and development of a location, its infrastructure needs, its population and population density, its proximity to towns and urban centers, and the educational and employment status of its adult population. Strikingly, vote buying in Kenya's locations is not strongly predicted by any of these location characteristics, except for the formal employment rate. In that case, formal sector employment predicts more vote buying in a location. This suggests that variation in vote buying in a location may be driven by factors unrelated to those that also drive local public goods provision.

These results cast doubt on the oft-made assumption that material or particularist distribution during campaigns necessarily undermines public goods provision. This assumption is built upon a model of such distribution in which voters directly exchange their votes for money and in so doing lose their ability to hold politicians accountable. My findings demonstrate that the relation of vote buying to public goods provision depends on why vote buying is effective.

I conclude by emphasizing that the results presented in this chapter describe variation within Kenya and speak only to the relation of vote buying to local public goods provision. The findings cannot answer the counterfactual question of how public goods provision would differ in Kenya as a whole if vote buying were not so prevalent. The

results do not address the hypothesis that equilibrium levels of public goods provision in a county are lower when vote buying is high. Nor do the findings speak to the question of whether vote buying leads to programmatic policies that favor constituencies where vote buying is not prevalent. Rather, the results illustrate that vote buying does not necessarily undermine government responsiveness to those who are targeted during campaigns.

## CHAPTER 8

### Cash Handouts and Voter Turnout

This chapter investigates the implications of the informational theory of vote buying for voter turnout. I argue that, in conveying information about the ability and willingness of a candidate to provide patronage to recipients, cash handouts serve both to persuade and to mobilize. Cash handouts have this impact because patronage is by definition contingent on the political behavior of clients. In contrast to systems where most resources are distributed programmatically and citizens can benefit from public goods regardless of whether they turnout, in patronage systems access to resources is contingent on political behavior (Chandra, 2007; Weitz-Shapiro, 2012). Cash handouts therefore not only help to convince voters that they should support a particular candidate, they also mobilize them to turnout to vote in order to gain access to the patronage resources that the patron will allocate in the future. They are an example of what Nichter (2008) calls “double persuasion”; or a material transfer that serves the double role of influencing vote choice and voter turnout.

More broadly, this chapter contributes to the literature on voter turnout outside of the advanced democracies. Whereas the literature on turnout in wealthier democracies is large, it is relatively small in developing democracies. The few studies that focus on turnout in Africa tend to emphasize formal institutional rules and individual characteristics.<sup>1</sup> Kuenzi and Lambright (2007), for example, find that in Africa the electoral

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<sup>1</sup>Outside of Africa, Chen and Zhong (2002) study individual’s decisions to vote in China’s local government elections. They report that those individuals who identify most closely with the regime are most likely to vote. In an earlier study with far different results, Shi (1999) finds that people vote in

formula and the concurrency of presidential and parliamentary elections are predictors of turnout. Bratton (1999) finds that participation in Zambia, which includes but is not exclusive to voting, is in large part determined by institutional linkages between individuals and the state. Similarly, Kuenzi and Lambright (2010) find that those individuals with greater linkages to political parties are most likely to vote. The contribution of this chapter is to demonstrate how an informal institution, clientelism, influences patterns of voter turnout.

## **8.1 Voter Turnout in Patronage Systems**

Voter turnout is one of the most widely investigated topics in political science. One school of thought emphasizes the “resources” required for democratic participation (Verba et al., 1993). Key among these resources are education and wealth. In the United States, a number of scholars have demonstrated a strong correlation between educational attainment and voter turnout (Sondheimer and Green, 2010; Verba et al., 1993). Similarly, levels of wealth and income have also been correlated with turnout in the United States (e.g. Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980).

Socio-economic models of turnout perform less well in explaining patterns of political participation in some developing countries. In Egypt, for example, Blaydes (2010) finds that illiterate voters are more likely to vote than are literate ones. Surveying a number of Latin American countries, Booth and Seligson (2006) find that the poor are more likely to vote. Bratton (2006) finds similar results in multiple African countries: poorer people are more likely to vote and to participate in community meetings in the

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China’s elections because of a desire to punish corrupt officials and facilitate political change. In Egypt, Blaydes (2010) argues that voters turnout because they expect material rewards and Nichter (2008) comes to a similar conclusion in Argentina. In Eastern Europe and Latin America, Kostadinova and Power (2007) find that turnout is higher in founding elections but decreases rapidly thereafter.

countries surveyed by the Afrobarometer. One goal of this chapter is to explain these patterns.

The calculus of voting model provides an alternative framework within which to think about voter turnout. The calculus of voting model suggests that people will only vote when the expected benefits of voting outweigh the costs (Downs, 1957; Riker and Ordeshook, 1968). If the probability of being the pivotal voter in an election is  $p$ , the additional benefit from having one's preferred candidate in office is  $B$ , and  $C$  is the cost of voting to the voter, then a rational voter will only vote when:

$$pB > C \tag{8.1}$$

This equation produces the well-known "paradox of voting." The probability of being a pivotal voter in any sized election, but particularly national elections, is essentially zero, ensuring that any cost to voting will exceed its expected benefit. A number of scholars have since altered the original model to help resolve this. For instance, the simple model has been expanded to integrate other benefits that citizens might derive from voting. Downs (1957) and Riker and Ordeshook (1968) expand the simple decision formula presented above to include an additional parameter,  $D$ , where  $D$  represents these benefits. For Downs,  $D$  encapsulates the value to citizens of having democracy continue. According to Riker and Ordeshook (1968),  $D$  captures a citizen's duty to vote. For their part, Gerber et al. (2008) argue that social pressure is an important component of  $D$ , and illustrate with experimental evidence that social pressure greatly increases the probability that an individual will vote in the U.S. context.

The calculus of voting model depends on a critical assumption: that an individual voter can enjoy  $B$  regardless of whether they vote. This is true, however, only when governments provide pure public goods, goods that are non-excludable and non-

rivalrous (Samuelson, 1954), or distribute resources programmatically and on the basis of transparent rules. When politicians are largely involved in the provision of both excludable and targeted goods—patronage—the decision-making calculus for voters changes significantly. In these conditions, where politicians target voters and individuals with benefits that are believed to be contingent on political behavior, allegiance, or identity, voters have instrumental reasons to vote in order to increase the likelihood that they will receive these resources (Chandra, 2007; Weitz-Shapiro, 2012).

The experimental results presented in previous chapters demonstrate that cash handouts influence perceptions of a candidate's credibility with respect to the future provision of patronage goods. In so doing, cash handouts also impact perceptions of the potential instrumental value of one's vote. They are therefore persuasive, in the sense that they help attract support for the distributing candidate, and mobilizing, in the sense that voters perceive that access to the benefits the patron will provide are contingent on their individual or community's political participation. In other words, cash handouts mobilize instrumental political participation by voters.

While cash handouts mobilize voters to the polls, they also induce a more immediate form of instrumental political participation. Because politicians face such strong incentives to distribute money on the campaign trail, potential voters know that they can leverage participation to increase their income. This strategy is especially appealing to unemployed individuals, for whom the opportunity cost of participation is low. People can increase their income by presenting themselves as vote sellers when politicians come to their home areas, taking advantage of the lack of information politicians have about many local areas. Often they will even collude with the political mobilizers that politicians hire, who will pay them to turn out and make the politician feel as if their campaign investments have been effective.

In focus group discussions I held in the Rift Valley, some people told me that they collect t-shirts and hats from different political parties so that they can attract handouts from as many parties as possible. Others told me that they will send different family members to different political events in the hopes of maximizing household income. In the most recent election, one candidate for governor in Taita Taveta County noted that “money took the upper hand of the developments we were offering. In my own area where I was running for Governor, I have never seen so many people at dusk along the road and when a vehicle approaches they would cheer regardless of who it was.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, these individuals were participating in the hopes of receiving cash handouts. Similarly, money is used to draw people to campaign events and rallies. A newspaper article describes a Jubilee Alliance rally in Kisii Country as follows: “Of interest was the rumor that Makadara MP Mike Sonko was to splash cash to the crowds from one of the three choppers, the rumor was a blessing and indeed a game changer that pulled crowds to the otherwise ignored rallies, many abandoned their activities in the farms with the hope of picking a 1000 shillings note.”<sup>3</sup>

## 8.2 Data

To demonstrate the link between cash handouts and voter turnout in Kenya, I use data about the 2002 and 2007 elections collected by the Afrobarometer. Data about the 2002 elections are taken from the Afrobarometer Round 3 survey conducted in Kenya in 2005. Data about the 2007 elections are taken from the Afrobarometer Round 5 survey conducted in 2011. Afrobarometer draws nationally representative samples from each

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<sup>2</sup><http://www.nation.co.ke/News/politics/Narc-Kenya-blames-voter-bribery-for-poor-showing-/-/1064/1724674/-/6sm7ibz/-/index.html>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.kenya-today.com/politics/video-jubilee-team-shocked-unexpected-cold-reception-in-kisii>



of its target countries and Round 3 survey includes data on 1400 respondents while Round 5 includes information about 2400 respondents.

I focus on voter turnout during each election. Using the survey data, I operationalize turnout as a dichotomous indicator taking on a value of 1 if the individual voted in the 2002 or 2007 elections and 0 if the person did not vote in the election.<sup>4</sup> To capture experience with cash handouts during, I generate a dichotomous variable measuring whether or not an individual had been approached by a political-party representative and offered a bribe or gift in exchange for a vote during the 2002 or 2007 elections. I generate this variable from an Afrobarometer question that asks: “And during the 2002 [07] elections, how often [if ever] did a candidate or someone from a political party offer you something, like food or a gift, in return for your vote?” Respondents could answer “never,” “once or twice,” “a few times,” “often,” or “dont know.” In 2002, about 40 percent of respondents claim to have been approached at least once. In 2007, about 32 percent of respondents claim to have been approached at least once. I assign these respondents to a value of 1 on the vote-buying variable, while all others are assigned a value of 0. I should note that respondents do not report whether they accepted the bribe or gift. The data also contain no information about the magnitude of the gift. Rather, we only know that a party representative or supporter with an offer to exchange money or resources for a vote approached them. As such, it is perhaps best to interpret the treatment as exposure to an offer of a cash handout.

I include a number of control variables. First, I create a poverty index from a set of Afrobarometer survey questions about material deprivation. The question asks: “Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or your family gone without”: 1) enough

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<sup>4</sup>I generate this variable from a survey question that asks the following: “With regard to the most recent, 2002 national elections, which statement is true for you?” The allowed responses are: “You voted in the elections,” “You decided not to vote,” “You could not find the polling station,” “You were prevented from voting,” “You did not have time to vote,” “You did not vote for some other reason,” and “You were not registered.”

food to eat; 2) enough clean water for home use; 3) medicines or medical treatment; 4) enough fuel to cook your food; 5) a cash income; 6) school expenses for your children. Respondents selected one of five options: “never,” “just once or twice,” “several times,” “many times,” and “always.” I assign these responses values from 0 to 4, where 0 corresponds to “never” and 4 corresponds to “always.” I then average each individual’s responses to these items to generate a poverty index where higher values therefore capture a higher level of poverty. As not all households have school-age children, I do not use question about school fees in the construction of this index.

Some studies suggest that individuals might derive benefits from voting because of its purported intrinsic value (Gerber et al., 2008; Riker and Ordeshook, 1968). When people value democracy and the act of voting, their utility from voting increases and they are more likely to accept the costs. Measuring the extent to which an individual intrinsically values voting is difficult, and measuring it exactly is certainly not possible. I therefore approximate an individual’s intrinsic benefit from voting by using their opinion about democracy as the best form of government. I suggest that those who claim that “democracy is preferable to any other kind of government”—rather than “in some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable” or “for someone like me, it doesn’t matter what kind of government we have”—have a greater belief in the intrinsic value of democracy. I construct a dichotomous variable marking each of these individuals with a 1.

In addition, individuals who are connected to political parties may be more likely to vote (Bratton, 1999; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2007). I use a survey question asking respondents whether they “feel close to a political party.” Additionally, I control for an individual’s level of education, residence in an urban area, gender, and age.

## 8.3 Results

### 8.3.1 Poverty and Voter Turnout

Before examining the relation of cash handouts to voter turnout, I first explore whether poverty predicts voter turnout. In contrast to findings from advanced democracies where wealthier and more educated individuals are more likely to vote, I expect that where patronage relationships dominate the system of distributive politics, the poor should be more likely to vote than those who are wealthy. This is because access to resources that impact the welfare of the poor is often made contingent on political participation and identity in patronage dominated regimes.

Consistent with this expectation, the results presented in Table 8.1 suggest that those living in poverty in Kenya are more likely to vote than are the wealthy. The first two columns present results from the 2002 elections. Even after controlling for a range of covariates, including education, gender, residence in an urban area, and a number of political factors, poverty remains a strong predictor of voter turnout in Kenya. Substantively, the average marginal effect of a one unit change on the four-point poverty scale is a 4 percentage point increase in the probability of voting. This implies a roughly 16 percentage point different in the turnout rate among the poorest and wealthiest Kenyans in the sample. The final two columns present results from the 2007 elections. In the bivariate specification, poverty remains a positive predictor of turnout. In the multivariate model, however, the effect of poverty drops in magnitude and the coefficient loses statistical significance.

These tentative findings are consistent with those of Bratton (2006), who finds that the poor are more likely to participate in politics across a number of African countries. Booth and Seligson (2006) similarly find that the poor are more likely to vote in Latin America. The results are also consistent with those of Blaydes (2010), who finds that

Table 8.1: **Poverty and Turnout in Kenya's 2002 Elections.** Dependent variable: Dichotomous measure of whether an individual voted in the 2002 or 2007 elections.

	2002 Elections		2007 Elections	
Poverty Index	0.187*** (0.063)	0.212*** (0.075)	0.184*** (0.057)	0.054 (0.062)
Age		0.085*** (0.009)		0.101*** (0.008)
Male		0.522*** (0.138)		-0.059 (0.102)
Residence in Urban Area		-0.121 (0.146)		-0.251** (0.104)
No Formal Education		-0.899*** (0.330)		-0.623* (0.335)
Only Primary Education		-0.548*** (0.209)		-0.273* (0.156)
Only Secondary Education		-0.329 (0.202)		-0.438*** (0.145)
Feels Close to a Political Party		0.513*** (0.140)		0.281*** (0.103)
Democracy is Preferable		0.319** (0.155)		0.679*** (0.113)
Constant	-0.065 (0.221)	-3.306*** (0.440)	0.751*** (0.079)	-2.536*** (0.303)
Observations	1,265	1,258	2,381	2,370

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

illiterate Egyptians are more likely to vote than literate ones. They are all consistent with the broader claim: because of the contingent nature of patronage, poorer voters who rely on the state for critical resources will turnout in at higher rates when patronage dominates the system.

### **8.3.2 Cash Handouts and Voter Turnout**

What are the effects of cash handouts on an individual's decision to vote? Table 8.2 presents logistic regression results. In both 2002 and 2007, experience receiving handouts strongly predicts individual voter turnout, even after controlling for additional covariates. In 2002, the average marginal effect of handouts on voter turnout was about 14 percentage points, a substantial increase in the probability of voting. In 2007, the magnitude of the effect drops, but the effect is still statistically significant. During that election, the average marginal effect of cash handouts on voter turnout was about 5 percentage points.

### **8.3.3 Robustness**

Though Table 8.2 shows a strong correlation between cash handouts and voter turnout, the data are observational and so selection bias could be impacting the inference (e.g. Morgan and Winship, 2007). If vote-buyers target those who are also more likely to turnout—perhaps because they know the returns to their investment are likely highest amongst such people—then these analyses will overestimate vote-buying's mobilizing influence. To help reduce this potential selection bias, I also analyze the Afrobarometer data using propensity score matching (Ho et al., 2007; Rosenbaum and Rubin, 1985).

Propensity score matching involves calculating the probability that an observation will receive “treatment,” in this case a handout, conditional on observable covariates.

Table 8.2: **Cash Handouts and Voter Turnout.** Dependent variable: Dichotomous measure of whether an individual voted in the 2002 or 2007 elections.

	2002 Elections		2007 Elections	
Received Cash Handout	0.759*** (0.123)	0.810*** (0.138)	0.326*** (0.100)	0.323*** (0.112)
Poverty Index		0.155** (0.077)		0.025 (0.063)
Age		0.086*** (0.009)		0.101*** (0.008)
Male		0.472*** (0.141)		-0.070 (0.103)
Residence in Urban Area		-0.169 (0.150)		-0.249** (0.104)
No Formal Education		-0.925*** (0.342)		-0.591* (0.335)
Only Primary Education		-0.538** (0.219)		-0.260* (0.157)
Only Secondary Education		-0.312 (0.211)		-0.445*** (0.146)
Feels Close to a Political Party		0.544*** (0.142)		0.256** (0.104)
Democracy is Preferable		0.293* (0.160)		0.691*** (0.113)
Constant	0.276*** (0.074)	-3.431*** (0.444)	0.863*** (0.055)	-2.588*** (0.301)
Observations	1,278	1,258	2,399	2,370

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Individuals are then matched using one of a number of methods based upon these scores—methods include “exact matching” and “nearest neighbor matching”—and observations that cannot be matched are dropped from the dataset. This adjustment to the data improves covariate balance and can reduce selection bias. By ensuring that treatment and control groups have common support on pre-treatment covariates, the estimated effects also becomes less dependent on the functional form of the parametric model used in the analysis. In instances where pre-processing completely eliminates the relationship between treatment and other covariates, the estimated causal effect will be the same, regardless of the parametric model being used (Ho et al., 2007).

While matching can improve the inference, it will not fully solve problems of omitted variables bias. We can only match on the observable characteristics of individuals that are captured in the Afrobarometer survey. Thus, if vote-buyers target those who they believe are most likely to turnout to vote for reasons unrelated to the pre-treatment covariates introduced into the calculation of the propensity scores, some bias in the estimation of vote-buying’s causal effect may remain. Therefore it is best to understand propensity score matching as a method with which to improve, rather than completely solve, the inferential problem posed by the non-random allocation of vote-buying offers.

I use nearest neighbor matching, using as pre-treatment covariates each of the control variables in Table 8.2. To match the data, I use the R program *MatchIt* developed by Ho et al. (2007). The process results in 206 unmatched observations in the 2002 data and 808 unmatched observations in the 2007 data. Following Ho et al. (2007), I re-analyze the data using only the subset that were matched. Table 8.3 presents the results, which are comparable to the result on the full samples.

Table 8.3: **Cash Handouts and Voter Turnout Using the Matched Datasets.** Dependent variable: Dichotomous measure of whether an individual voted in the 2002 or 2007 elections.

	2002 Elections		2007 Elections	
Received Cash Handout	0.714*** (0.133)	0.809*** (0.147)	0.305*** (0.116)	0.302** (0.126)
Poverty Index		0.143* (0.084)		-0.032 (0.076)
Age		0.087*** (0.010)		0.093*** (0.010)
Male		0.570*** (0.155)		-0.037 (0.128)
Residence in Urban Area		-0.253 (0.165)		-0.268** (0.130)
No Formal Education		-0.838** (0.380)		-0.353 (0.477)
Only Primary Education		-0.518** (0.246)		-0.058 (0.197)
Only Secondary Education		-0.250 (0.238)		-0.225 (0.181)
Feels Close to a Political Party		0.492*** (0.158)		0.345*** (0.130)
Democracy is Always Preferable		0.259 (0.182)		0.842*** (0.137)
Constant	0.330*** (0.088)	-3.420*** (0.511)	0.886*** (0.079)	-2.607*** (0.380)
Observations	1,052	1,052	1,562	1,562

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1



## 8.4 Turnout Monitoring

I argue that cash handouts mobilize Kenyans to turn out to vote because they increase perceptions of the instrumental value of their vote. In other words, they are mobilized to vote in order to increase the likelihood that they will benefit from patronage resources provided by the candidate distributing cash handouts. However, an alternative story suggests that cash handouts increase turnout because voter turnout can be monitored by those distributing the money (Nichter, 2008; Remmer, 2010). This section provides evidence that the relationship between voter turnout and cash handouts is not solely driven by direct turnout monitoring by party agents of individual voters.

The first pieces of evidence which suggest that turnout monitoring cannot fully explain the relation of cash handouts to turnout are the experimental results presented in previous chapters. Both the survey list experiment and the survey embedded audio experiment show that cash handouts impact vote choices and prospective evaluations of candidates. This is evidence that cash handouts are both persuasive and mobilizing, which turnout monitoring cannot explain.

A second piece of evidence emerges from the audio experiments. Recall that in the second round of experiments presented in Chapter 6, I randomly assigned participants to hear audio recordings about political candidates in which information about a candidate's vote-buying behavior and ethnicity were randomly assigned. After participants listened to these recordings, I asked them how strongly they agree with the following statement: "The candidate or his agents will know if the people who attended the rally go to vote." This statement captures the extent to which respondents perceive that turnout can be monitored. Fully 75 percent of the entire sample disagrees or strongly disagrees with this statement. Another 10 percent neither agreed nor disagreed. This means that a large proportion of the sample believes that no candidates or

agents monitor the voter turnout of those who attend their rallies, regardless of whether they vote buy or their ethnic background. Further, the vote-buying treatment has no effect on perceptions of turnout monitoring. For example, when I transform this continuous measure into a dichotomous one that takes on a value of 1 if the respondent either agree or strongly agrees with the statement, I find that the difference in proportion between the vote-buying and control group is  $-0.002$  ( $p = 0.95$ ). I find similar results with the 5-point continuous scale. Put simply, participants do not believe that candidates who distribute cash handouts are more likely to monitor the voter turnout of handout recipients.

Finally, perceptions of turnout monitoring are very low, even among people who receive cash handouts. As part of the survey I conducted after the second round of experiments, one survey question asked: “When people receive money [from politicians], do people from the party that gave the gift watch the person to make sure they go to vote?” Of the 645 people in my sample, only 10 percent responded yes to this question. Additionally, those who receive cash handouts do not have different beliefs than those who do not. About 45 percent of the sample report that they received a cash handout during the 2007 elections. Only 11 percent of those who received a cash handout during the 2007 election believe that parties watch to make sure they go to to vote. Perceptions of turnout monitoring are therefore very low among ordinary Kenyans, even those who receive cash handouts.

## **8.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the relation of cash handouts to voter turnout. I argue that cash handouts are both persuasive, in that they help attract votes, and mobilizing, in

that they incentivize instrumental political participation on the part of resource-seeking voters.

## CHAPTER 9

### **Pre-Colonial Institutions and the Nature of Clientelism in Contemporary Africa**

The previous chapters have explained why politicians in Africa directly hand out cash to voters during political campaigns. Building upon my own observations from Kenya and existing qualitative and ethnographic accounts from other countries on the continent, I argue that politicians distribute cash to voters to establish credibility with respect to the future provision of patronage goods. With materials from Kenya, I test a number of different implications of this informational argument using empirical methods that help to solve inferential and measurement problems that can bias inferences about vote buying.

In this final empirical chapter, I ask why politicians in Africa choose to invest heavily in this direct vote-buying strategy in some places but less so in others. This question is important because, while clientelism is generally considered pervasive to politics in Africa (e.g. Wantchekon, 2003), it is a flexible and diverse political strategy that can take on different forms (Piattoni, 2001). Afrobarometer data shows, for example, that direct cash handouts are widespread in countries such as Kenya and Mali. At the same time, cash handouts are not especially prevalent during political campaigns in countries such as Senegal, a country notable for the amount of clientelism in its politics (Beck, 2008; Boone, 2003). Why does clientelism manifest itself in the massive distribution of cash handouts, what I refer to as direct vote buying, in some parts of Africa but not in others? In asking this question, I sidestep the usual question of why clientelism exists or persists (e.g. Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Lehoucq, 2007; Weitz-Shapiro, 2012),

and instead pursue the less studied question of why clientelism takes different forms in different places.<sup>1</sup>

As African societies are still largely rural, I expect that clientelist vote-getting strategies will be a function of the opportunities provided by political and social organization in the countryside. Across and within African countries, there is substantial variation with respect to the degree of centralization and hierarchy in traditional and religious institutions, variation that has its roots in the pre-colonial period (Boone, 2003; Genaioli and Rainer, 2007; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2013; Tignor, 1971). Ethnic groups such as the Ashanti of Ghana, the Buganda of Uganda, the Yoruba of Nigeria, and the Wolof of Senegal, each had well-developed centralized political institutions, with multiple tiers of hierarchical authority above the village. Other equally politically important groups such as Kenya's Kikuyu, Nigeria's Igbo, and Senegal's Diola, were extremely decentralized, with no real hierarchy existing above the village level. Even within villages, power was structured in a relatively egalitarian manner, with councils of elders rather than individual hereditary chiefs serving as the political authority.

I show in this chapter that these pre-colonial institutions have implications for the practice of contemporary democracy because of their influence on the nature of clientelism in the countryside. Where centralized and hierarchical traditional institutions persist, politicians and parties target benefits directly to these local intermediaries in exchange for blocks of voters. The clientelist strategy therefore takes the form of *wholesale vote buying*. In contrast, where strong, centralized, and hierarchical traditional elites are not present, politicians bypass local intermediaries and go directly to the voters. The clientelist strategy therefore takes the form of *direct vote buying*, which has been the focus of this dissertation.

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<sup>1</sup>See Beck (2008) for a study examining this variation in Senegal.

A central empirical implication of the argument is that direct vote buying—that is, cash handouts to voters—should be most prevalent in countries and sub-national geographic areas where pre-colonial political institutions were most decentralized and least hierarchical. In this chapter’s first empirical section, I test this prediction cross-nationally. With data on the structure of pre-colonial political institutions collected by Murdock (1967), I show that the amount of direct vote buying at the national level increases as the share of the population in a country that belongs to a centralized ethnic group decreases; that is, vote buying is more prevalent where pre-colonial institutions were less hierarchical and centralized. This correlation is robust, even after controlling for poverty, levels of economic development, urbanization, ethnic fragmentation, and level of democratization, all factors that are associated with pre-colonial institutions and which could drive variation in vote buying.

Despite my best efforts to control for country-level factors in the cross-national analysis, a range of potential country-specific omitted variables may bias the results. The second empirical section thus turns to explaining internal variation in vote buying in three African countries: Kenya, Senegal, and Uganda. Analyzing the relation between vote buying and pre-colonial institutions within these two countries allows me to hold country specific cultural, institutional, and political factors fixed, strengthening the inferences. The latter two countries provide an excellent setting to test the central claim of this chapter because both exhibit substantial within-country variation with respect to pre-colonial institutions (Beck, 2008; Boone, 2003; Gennaioli and Rainer, 2007; Green and Bandyopadhyay, 2012). Both countries are home to ethnic groups that had among the most politically centralized pre-colonial institutions on the continent, for example the Wolof in Senegal and the Baganda in Uganda, and to groups that were extremely decentralized with little or no structured hierarchy above the village, for example the Diola of Senegal and the Langi of Uganda. In each country I find, consistent with the

cross-national analysis, that individuals who belong to ethnic groups with decentralized pre-colonial political institutions are substantially more likely to experience direct vote buying than are members of ethnic groups with more centralized pre-colonial institutions.

The country cases strengthen my evidence in two additional ways. The first is with respect to response bias. One concern is that members of centralized groups may be more likely to underreport experience with vote buying, underreporting that could be driving the correlation between pre-colonial institutions and present day vote buying. With the survey list experiment data I collected in Kenya, I alleviate this concern. More specifically, I show that patterns of response bias do not differ across ethnic groups with different pre-colonial institutions.

Second, it is possible that, despite my attempts to control for poverty and wealth, what is driving the results are different levels of development between groups with different pre-colonial institutions. If more centralized groups are wealthier, it could be their relative wealth, rather than their institutions, driving the correlation. The advantage of my case selection is that the countries differ in the extent to which centralized groups are the wealthiest and most politically powerful. Importantly, in Kenya the ethnic group generally assumed to be wealthiest and most educated—and most politically influential—is the Kikuyu, one of the most decentralized groups. On the other hand, the more centralized groups are among the least wealthy. If decentralized groups are targeted because they are poorer, we should not observe the correlation between pre-colonial centralization and vote buying in Kenya. Yet, as in Senegal and Uganda, I find that more decentralized groups in Kenya are more likely to experience vote buying.

The evidence therefore suggests that direct vote buying in Africa is more likely to occur where strong local intermediaries are not present. The finding is puzzling given that most observers expect that parties will only buy votes where they have the local

capacity to monitor voters, a capacity that strong local intermediaries would seem to provide (e.g. Lehoucq, 2007; Stokes, 2005). When we view direct vote buying through the lens of the informational theory put forth in this project, however, the strategic logic underlying the results is clarified: politicians use cash handouts to establish credibility with voters in settings where they cannot efficiently or reliably seek blocks of votes through local political elites.

Beyond contributing an answer to the question of where vote buying is most likely to occur, this chapter also contributes to the literature on the long-run impact of early institutions. Acemoglu et al. (2001), for example, argue that the structure of colonial property rights has had long-run effects on economic development. Gennaioli and Rainer (2007), Green and Bandyopadhyay (2012), and Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2013) show how pre-colonial institutions in Africa have shaped contemporary development outcomes both across and within countries. Each shows how ethnic group pre-colonial centralized authority, in essence the degree of state development, predicts greater contemporary development outcomes. Boone (2003) shows how pre-colonial political hierarchies and social structures influenced the state-building strategies of colonial and post-independence regimes. Hariri (2012) draws on data from a global sample to argue that pre-colonial state development outside of Europe (not just in Africa) has hindered the development of democracy. Stronger pre-colonial states, Hariri (2012) argues, were able to buttress themselves and their societies against the infusion of European institutions and ideas. The contribution of this chapter is to demonstrate empirically how pre-colonial institutions shape vote-getting strategies in contemporary African democracies.



## 9.1 Local Institutions and Strategies of Clientelism

African political parties tend to be most organized in urban areas (Bratton, 2008; van de Walle, 2007). Most political elites reside in the capital and are socially distant from the rural population, even if they represent constituencies in the periphery (Nugent, 2007). Yet in democratic elections, these parties and politicians must win the votes from an electorate that remains largely rural and agricultural (Stasavage, 2005).

My argument in this chapter is that the structure of rural political and social organization plays a central role in shaping clientelist strategies in contemporary African democracies. A growing literature acknowledges the diversity and importance of traditional political structures in Africa, a diversity that has its roots in the pre-colonial period (Boone, 2003; Gennaioli and Rainer, 2007; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2013; Tignor, 1971). Just as these varying local institutions shaped the state-building strategies of central government political elites during the colonial and immediate post-independence periods (Boone, 2003; Tignor, 1971), I expect that differences in these local institutions also influence strategic choices over vote-getting strategies in democratic elections.

Broadly speaking, a key difference between local institutions is the extent to which their traditional political and social structures are centralized and hierarchical.<sup>2</sup> Some ethnic groups, such as Kenya's Kikuyu and Kamba, and Nigeria's Igbo, were extremely decentralized politically during the pre-colonial era (Tignor, 1971). In some cases, the groups were so decentralized and fragmented that the concept of a common identity did not emerge until the colonial and even independence periods (Berman, 1998; Southall, 1970). In many of these communities, authority was not vested in the hands of an individual chief—communities were often instead governed by councils of elders—and

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<sup>2</sup>Of course, ethnic groups have many other dissimilarities.

individual villages or homesteads did not recognize any authority above the community level (Tignor, 1971). As Boone (2003) describes Senegal's Diola ethnic group, many ethnic groups were in the pre-colonial period "egalitarian, territorially fragmented, and lacking in any customary administrative procedure, including chieftaincy" (pp. 100).

In contrast, other ethnic groups had pre-colonial structures that were centralized, very hierarchical, and state-like. The Ashanti ethnic group, for example, had an empire that covered much of contemporary Ghana and which had many characteristics of a hierarchical bureaucratic state (Wilks, 1966). The Wolof kingdoms of pre-colonial Senegal were highly centralized and hierarchical, with strict social and political demarcations that resembled European feudalism (Boone, 2003). The Yoruba of Nigeria and Baganda of Uganda had similarly structured kingdoms prior to the arrival of British colonizers.

In part because of the colonial tendency to rule indirectly through the co-optation of the traditional elite (e.g. Mamdani, 1996), the local institutions that characterized pre-colonial times have broadly speaking persisted through the post-independence period. It is these institutions, I argue, that shape the strategies of clientelism pursued in the contemporary democratic era.

Where centralized and hierarchical traditional institutions persist, I expect that politicians will target benefits directly to these local intermediaries in exchange for blocks of voters. The clientelist strategy will therefore take the form of *wholesale vote buying*, whereby politicians seek to buy blocks of voters through the transfer of private benefits to local leaders. In contrast, where strong, centralized, and hierarchical traditional elites are not present, I expect politicians to bypass local intermediaries and go directly to the voters. The clientelist strategy therefore takes the form of *direct vote buying*.

The mechanisms through which local intermediaries can deliver blocks of voters are varied. The most obvious way leaders can deliver votes is to use their monopoly

control over resources—jobs, land, services, and so on—to coerce and control voters (Medina and Stokes, 2007). This form of clientelism has been widespread historically. In ancient Roman elections, elites would seek to buy the favor of tribal elites and other notables in exchange for a block of electoral support (Yakobson, 1999). In Chile, rural landowners delivered the votes of their employees to conservative parties prior to the adoption of stricter ballot secrecy laws (Baland and Robinson, 2008). In 19th century Germany, rural political elites, religious leaders, and employers exerted substantial control over voters, taking advantage of the absence of the Australian Ballot (Anderson, 1993). The strategy of control for local power brokers, and especially employers, was straightforward: “factory owners simply ordered their staff to vote for their candidate and fired them when they did not” (Anderson, 1993, pp. 1456).

Other less coercive delivery mechanisms are also available. Strong local intermediaries may be able to help coordinate the vote choices of voters who for strategic reasons want to vote as a block in order to attract resources from the state. Local intermediaries may have more credibility and legitimacy with voters than do political party elites. A chiefly endorsement may therefore be effective electorally because voters trust these leader more than they do politicians. Alternatively, voters may interpret chiefly endorsements as a sign that the chief and the politician will work together to provide public goods to their communities (Baldwin, 2013).

Whatever the delivery mechanism, the strategy of wholesale vote buying becomes less efficient and less reliable where social and political institutions are decentralized and egalitarian. One reason is simply mathematics: local intermediaries have the ability to control, coordinate, or influence fewer voters as the level of hierarchy decreases.

Additionally, where institutions are decentralized and egalitarian, local leaders have less control over voters, which makes it difficult for them to deliver voters in a block. Writing of Kenya’s Kamba, Kikuyu, and Masai, and Nigeria’s Igbo, Tignor (1971)

notes that each “were decentralized and fragmented into a number of autonomous communities administered by councils . . . the influence of these men was not hereditary or authoritarian. Their positions depended on tendering good advice and having it accepted by their peers” (pp. 341). These egalitarian structures meant that no single individual or group exerted economic or social control over other community members, or had monopoly control over crucial resources; the very tools required to coercively deliver voters in a block. As Boone (2003) notes in her discussion of the more decentralized and egalitarian groups of Senegal, political leaders at the center simply “could not find interlocutors who were trusted enough, powerful enough, to package local populations into secure and acquiescent electoral blocs” (pp. 99). Local intermediaries in decentralized groups thus have both fewer voters to deliver and less power to deliver them, which undermines the effectiveness of the wholesale strategy.

Leaders of historically centralized and hierarchical groups also have greater sources of legitimacy that are separate from the state. While leaders of hierarchical and centralized groups were often co-opted by the colonial regimes, a collaboration which no doubt impacted their legitimacy, their continuity means that they still retain some of their traditional or religious legitimacy. The story with respect to decentralized groups is much different. When the British encountered decentralized groups in their colonies, their response was often to create systems of chieftaincy where they had not previously existed and to install collaborators as chiefs (Tignor, 1971). The authority of these chiefs was purely administrative and derived from the coercive power of the colonial state. In the democratic era, as the state has become less overtly coercive, the power of these administrative chiefs to control voters has diminished.<sup>3</sup> They still have power over some local matters, but as the bureaucratic representatives of the government in communities, rather than as a traditional elite with a source of legitimacy or power in-

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<sup>3</sup>A high level Provincial Administration official in Kenya made this point to me during an interview. In Kenya, chiefs are bureaucrats that are part of the Provincial Administration.

dependent from the state. The implication is that, among decentralized groups, chiefly endorsements will not have the same electoral impact as they do among centralized groups. This in turn reduces the effectiveness of the wholesale vote-buying strategy.

In sum, when politicians and political parties develop their vote-getting strategies in areas where voters belong to decentralized groups, they cannot turn to local leaders to deliver large blocks of voters in exchange for private benefits to the intermediaries. There simply are not leaders who have control over enough voters to make this strategy effective. Moreover, politicians also cannot work through local intermediaries to establish credibility with voters because the local leaders themselves are relatively lacking in legitimacy; at least legitimacy of the sort that would help a politician win votes. In these conditions, I expect politicians to bypass local intermediaries. The clientelist strategy will involve direct vote buying, which the previous chapters have shown is an effective way for politicians to establish credibility with voters.

A central implication of the argument is that direct vote buying should be most prevalent in countries and regions where ethnic groups were more decentralized, less hierarchical, and more egalitarian prior to colonial rule. The remainder of this chapter tests this hypothesis. First, I do so cross-nationally with a sample of 15 African countries. I then turn to tests of the hypothesis that focus on within-country variation in Kenya, Senegal, and Uganda.

## **9.2 Pre-Colonial Political Centralization and Cross-National Variation in Vote Buying in Africa**

In this section, I test the hypothesis that direct vote buying should be more prevalent in countries where pre-colonial political structures were least centralized. To capture pre-

colonial state centralization, I use data from Murdock's (1967) *Ethnographic Atlas*.<sup>4</sup> The Murdock (1967) data compile information from anthropological studies to form a dataset of social, political, and economic characteristics of ethnic groups around the world. Importantly, the Murdock (1967) data was designed to capture the properties of these groups before Europeans influenced their behavior.<sup>5</sup>

The Murdock (1967) data include a measure of ethnic group "jurisdictional hierarchy beyond local community," which captures each group's level of centralized political authority. More specifically, the variable is coded with respect to the levels of hierarchy that exist above the local community. The most decentralized groups, which include Kenya's Kikuyu, have no political authority beyond the local community and are coded as 1. Petty chiefdoms, which have one level of political authority above the local community, are coded as 2. More centralized groups have two levels ("larger chiefdoms") and three levels ("states") have two and three levels of political authority above the local community. Ghana's Ashanti ethnic group, who once boasted one of West Africa's more organized empires (e.g. Wilks, 1966), are coded as a "larger chiefdom" (3), while groups such as South Africa's Zulu and Nigeria's Yoruba are coded as once being "states" (4). The Murdock (1967) data also has a code for "large states" (5), but in practice the most centralized groups in pre-colonial Africa are coded as a 4.

In this section, I use Gennaioli and Rainer's (2007) measure of the share of the population in each African country that belongs to a centralized group. Gennaioli and Rainer (2007) use the Murdock (1967) to code ethnic groups as *centralized* or *fragmented*. Centralized groups include larger chiefdoms and states, while fragmented groups include petty chiefdoms and those ethnic groups with no political hierarchy

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<sup>4</sup>I follow Gennaioli and Rainer (2007), Green and Bandyopadhyay (2012), and Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2013) in using these data.

<sup>5</sup>The Murdock (1967) data was compiled on the basis of anthropological research conducted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Undoubtedly, data of this sort are full of biases (e.g. Said, 1979). To my knowledge, these are the best data available.

above the local community. They then calculate the share of each country's population that belong to a centralized group.

To measure contemporary levels of direct vote buying, I use data from Afrobarometer's Round 3 surveys. The Round 3 surveys include data about 15 countries for which data about pre-colonial political institutions are available.<sup>6</sup> To measure the amount of vote buying in a country, I use the Afrobarometer survey question that asks: "And during the [most recent] elections, how often [if ever] did a candidate or someone from a political party offer you something, like food or a gift, in return for your vote?" Respondents could answer "never," "once or twice," "a few times," "often," or "don't know." I use responses to these questions to generate country level vote-buying rates that measure the share of respondents in each country that reports being offered something at least once or twice.

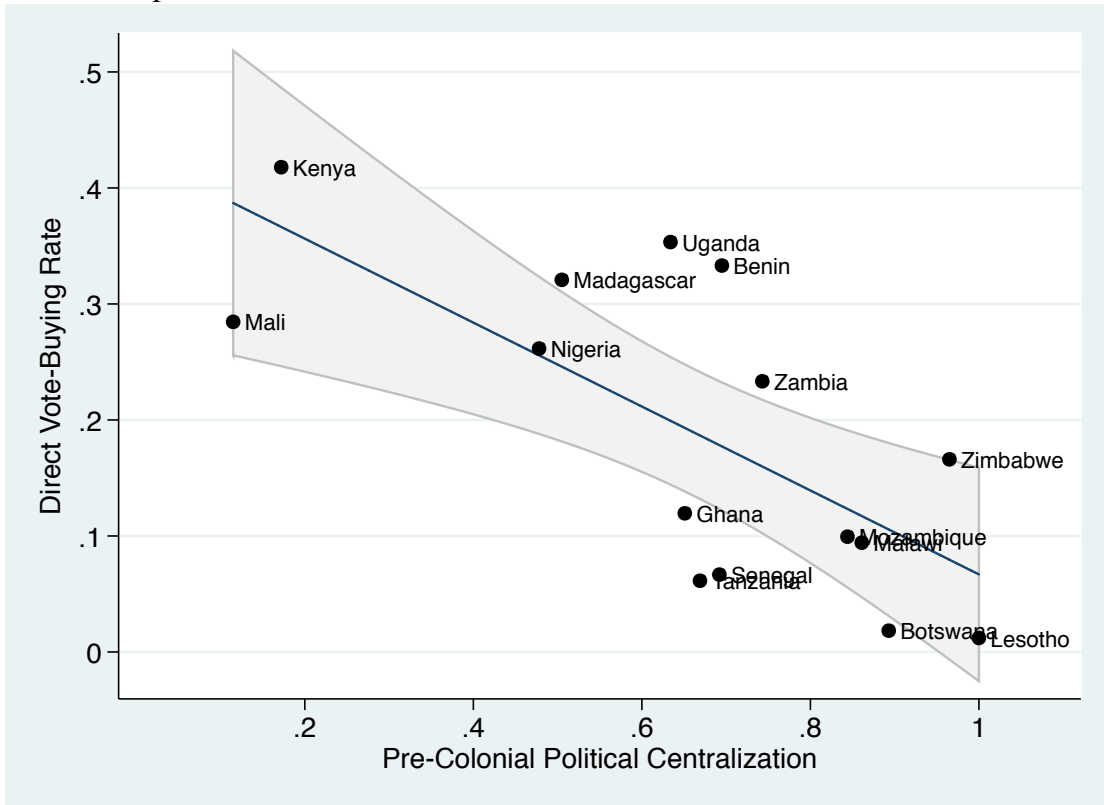
Figure 9.1 presents the bivariate relationship between pre-colonial political centralization and contemporary levels of vote buying. The horizontal axis measures the share of the population in each country that belongs to a centralized group. The vertical axis captures the share of the population that was offered a bribe or gift during their country's most recent election prior to 2005. With respect to pre-colonial institutions, the Figure makes clear there is a great deal of variation within Africa. Countries such as Kenya and Mali are home to ethnic groups that are almost entirely decentralized. Conversely, the residents of countries such as Botswana, Lesotho, and Malawi come almost exclusively from centralized groups. The Figure also shows the strong correlation between these institutions and present day levels of vote buying.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>These countries are Benin, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

<sup>7</sup>If I redraw the figure excluding Kenya and Mali, countries that are extreme in their levels of pre-colonial decentralization, the regression line becomes even more steeply negative; that is, this correlation is robust to the exclusion of Kenya and Mali.

Figure 9.1: **Pre-Colonial Political Centralization and Vote Buying in Africa.** The vertical axis is the share of respondents in each country who report being offered a bribe or gift from a politician in their country's most recent election. The horizontal axis captures the share of the country's population that belongs to an ethnic group with centralized pre-colonial institutions.





A number of omitted variables may be driving the correlation in Figure 9.1. For example, more centralized groups may simply be wealthier, more developed, and more urbanized than decentralized groups (Gennaioli and Rainer, 2007; Green and Bandyopadhyay, 2012; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2013). Indeed these groups may have developed more centralized institutions partly because they were more economically developed before the colonial era. Thus the members of such groups would be less likely to be targeted and influenced by vote buying. Additionally, countries with more centralized pre-colonial institutions may be less democratic (Hariri, 2012). To the extent that political competition incentivizes vote buying, we would then expect countries with more centralized groups to experience less vote buying. Finally, countries with more centralized pre-colonial institutions may be less ethnically fragmented, which may relate to overall levels of vote buying.

To account for wealth differences, I control for each country's GDP per capita (logged). I also generate a poverty index for each individual in the sample using the Afrobarometer question that asks: "Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or your family gone without": 1) enough food to eat; 2) enough clean water for home use; 3) medicines or medical treatment; 4) enough fuel to cook your food; 5) a cash income; 6) school expenses for your children. Respondents selected one of five options: "never," "just once or twice," "several times," "many times," and "always." I assign these responses values from 0 to 4, where 0 corresponds to "never" and 4 corresponds to "always." I average each individual's responses to these items to generate a poverty index where higher values therefore capture a higher level of poverty. I then average the poverty index by country to generate a country-level poverty measure. I control for each country's degree of ethnic fractionalization using Posner's (2004) measure of Politically Relevant Ethnic Groups (PREG). I control for level of democracy with the Polity score of each country at the time of the election most proximate to the Afro-

barometer survey. Finally, I control for the share of Afrobarometer respondents that reside in a rural area.

Table 9.1 presents the results from linear regression analyses in which the dependent variable is the share of the population in each country that experienced direct vote buying during the election prior to the Afrobarometer survey. Column 1 presents the simple bivariate relationship. In Column 2, I control for GDP per capita (logged). In column 3, I introduce the full battery of controls. In column 4, I remove Kenya from the sample to show that results are not being driven by that case.

Despite the small sample, the results are statistically strong and consistent with the central hypothesis of this chapter: countries with less centralized pre-colonial institutions experience more direct vote buying in contemporary elections. According to the coefficients in columns 3 and 4, moving from Kenya, where about 20 percent of the population belongs to a centralized group, to Zambia, where about 70 percent of the population belongs to a centralized group, is associated with a reduction in direct vote buying of about 20 percentage points.

### **9.3 Within-Country Tests**

The results in the previous section present initial evidence consistent with the notion that direct vote buying is more likely to occur in settings where pre-colonial institutions were less centralized. The problem with the cross-national analysis is that it is difficult to control for all potential country-specific factors that may be related to pre-colonial institutions and contemporary levels of vote buying. This problem is compounded by the small number of countries in the Afrobarometer sample, which limits the number of control variables I can introduce into the analyses.

Table 9.1: **Pre-Colonial Political Centralization and Vote Buying in Africa.** Dependent variable is the share of respondents in each country who report being offered a bribe or gift from a politician in their country's most recent election. Pre-colonial political centralization captures the share of the population that belongs to an ethnic group with centralized pre-colonial institutions.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Pre-Colonial Centralization	-0.36*** (0.10)	-0.33** (0.11)	-0.40** (0.14)	-0.41* (0.20)
GDP per capita (log)		-0.02 (0.04)	0.00 (0.06)	0.01 (0.07)
POLITY Democracy Score			-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Poverty Index			0.18 (0.14)	0.19 (0.16)
PREG			0.10 (0.13)	0.11 (0.15)
Share Residing in Rural Area			-0.10 (0.16)	-0.10 (0.17)
Constant	0.43*** (0.07)	0.59* (0.27)	0.25 (0.52)	0.23 (0.58)
Observations	15	15	15	14
R-squared	0.50	0.51	0.66	0.56

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

An additional concern is with respect to response bias in survey questions about vote buying. Chapter 2 details the problem of social desirability bias on direct survey questions relating to vote buying. The degree of response bias could vary across countries in a way that, for idiosyncratic reasons, happens to correlate with pre-colonial institutions. An even bigger problem could arise if response bias is systematically associated with pre-colonial centralization. The central concern is that members of centralized groups could be more likely to underreport vote buying,<sup>8</sup> underreporting which could be driving the correlation observed at the cross-national level.

In this section, I better control for cross-country differences by analyzing the within-country relation between pre-colonial political centralization and contemporary vote buying in Kenya, Uganda, and Senegal. The advantage of focusing on variation within these countries is that I am able to hold a number of country specific historical, institutional, and cultural features fixed. I can therefore analyze how the structure of pre-colonial institutions relates to the decisions about how to win votes made by politicians facing similar environments in other respects. Studying within-country variation allows me to control for country-specific tendencies to underreport experience with vote buying on surveys, which may be related to the norms surrounding vote buying in different countries.

### **9.3.1 Kenya**

To test the argument in Kenya, I return to the survey data introduced in Chapter 2. Recall that those data contained information on experience with vote buying of a nationally representative sample of 2000 Kenyans. The survey also included a survey list experiment designed to identify the degree of response bias in survey questions about vote buying in Kenya. Using information about survey respondents reported ethnicity,

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<sup>8</sup>I have no reason to expect over reporting from decentralized groups

I am able to match the Murdock (1967) ethnographic data to the survey data and subsequently code each individual as belonging to a centralized or decentralized group.<sup>9</sup> These data allow me to accomplish two goals. First, I can examine whether pre-colonial centralization predicts patterns of vote buying within Kenya, as the argument predicts. Second, I can determine whether response bias to survey questions about vote buying varies systematically with membership in centralized or decentralized groups.

As Figure 9.1 illustrates, Gennaioli and Rainer (2007) estimate only about 20 percent of Kenya's population belongs to an ethnic group with any level of pre-colonial centralized authority. There is thus very little variation across Kenya's ethnic groups with respect to the centralization of authority before the arrival of the British. The majority of the population belong to groups such as the Kikuyu and Kamba, which were extremely decentralized in the pre-colonial era. In fact, these groups were so decentralized that the notion of a common identity did not develop until the colonial period (Berman, 1998; Southall, 1970). This may explain why clientelism has taken the form it has taken in Kenya: politicians engage in extensive direct vote buying around elections in part because of the absence of a hierarchical and structured traditional leadership that can foster the wholesale purchase of blocks of voters.

Despite the extreme levels of decentralization in pre-colonial Kenya, some of the country's ethnic groups were more centralized. The Luhya of Western Kenya are classified as a larger chiefdom, as are the Borana, Samburu, and Somali from north central and north east parts of the country. Table 9.2 presents all of the ethnic groups in the sample that I am able to classify, along with their classifications and their share of survey respondents. Following Gennaioli and Rainer (2007) and coding only the larger chiefdoms as centralized, about 24 percent of the classified sample—that is, groups

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<sup>9</sup>Unfortunately, the Murdock (1967) data seem to be missing information for the Kalenjin. Rather than impute the information on the Kalenjin from geographically proximate and culturally similar groups, I choose to leave them out of the sample.

with a Murdock (1967) classification available—are from centralized groups. This is comparable to the Gennaioli and Rainer (2007) estimate for all of Kenya.

Before turning to a test of the main hypothesis, I first examine whether response bias differs between centralized and decentralized groups. I define response bias here as the difference between the population estimate I generate from the direct question about vote buying and the estimate I generate from the list experiment. As the list experiment is designed to reduce response bias, this difference can at the very least define a lower bound on the extent of bias.

Figure 9.2 presents different estimates for the share of the population that received a handout during the 2007 election. The far left bars present the estimate from the full sample, with the dark bar representing the direct question estimate and the light bar representing the list experiment estimate. As one can see, the estimates from these two survey methods are identical—in the full sample there is no evidence of response bias.

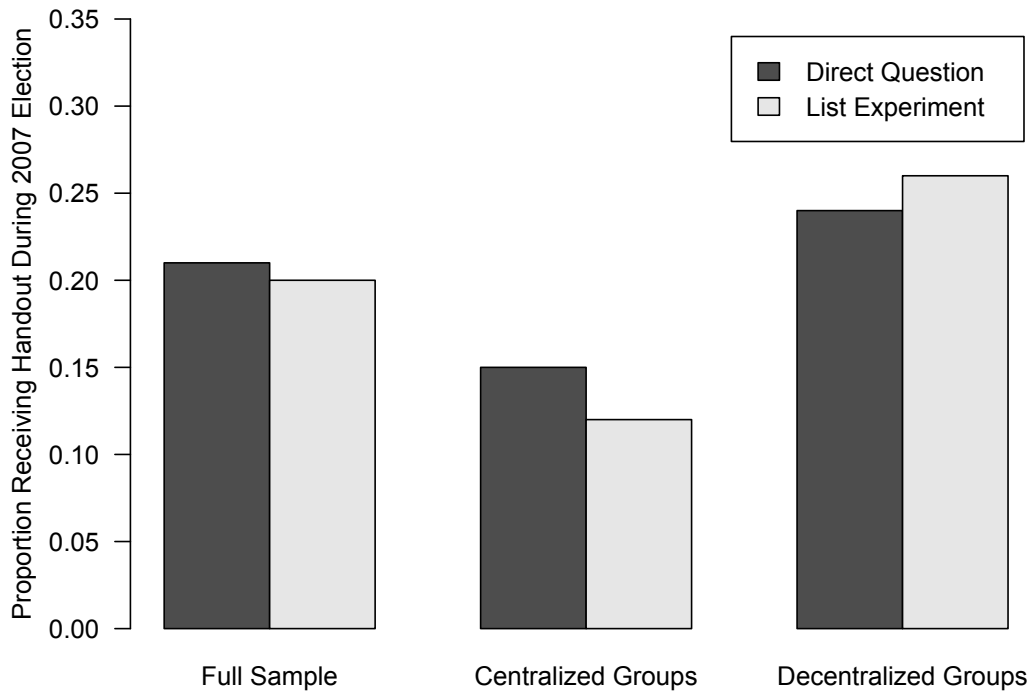
The middle two bars restrict the sample to the centralized groups. The concern with these respondents is that they may be more likely to underreport experience with direct vote buying, under-reporting which would drive a correlation between pre-colonial institutions and vote buying. As the Figure shows, the estimates from the two methods are very close. If anything, the direct question estimate is higher than the list experiment estimate (though they are not statistically different). The far right set of bars presents results among the members of decentralized groups. Again, the estimates are virtually identical. These findings demonstrate that membership in different types of ethnic groups is not correlated with response bias in survey questions about vote buying, at least in Kenya.

Figure 9.2 also provides initial evidence consistent with the argument. Whether measured directly or through the list experiment, rates of vote-buying are substantially higher among members of decentralized groups. This pattern is striking because the

Table 9.2: **Ethnic Group Pre-Colonial Centralization in Kenya.**

Group	Murdock Classification	Share of Sample
Borana	Larger chiefdom	.05
Samburu	Larger chiefdom	.9
Somali	Larger chiefdom	5.6
Luhya	Larger chiefdom	13.2
Nandi	Petty chiefdom	.1
Kuria	Petty chiefdom	.8
Teso	Petty chiefdom	.95
Masaai	Petty chiefdom	1.3
Kisii	Petty chiefdom	7.3
Kamba	Petty chiefdom	9.75
Luo	Petty chiefdom	10.75
Pokot	No authority above village	.05
Taita	No authority above village	.4
Embu	No authority above village	1.5
Turkana	No authority above village	1.65
Meru	No authority above village	5.75
Kikuyu	No authority above village	20.7

Figure 9.2: **Pre-Colonial Centralization and Response Bias in Surveys in Kenya.** Data from a nationally representative survey and survey list experiment about vote buying during Kenya's 2007 elections. The bars present direct question and list experiment estimates of the share of respondents who received a handout from a party or politician during that election.





largest decentralized group in Kenya, the Kikuyu, are also among the wealthiest and most educated in the country, which should reduce levels of vote buying among them. Table 9.3 turns to more formal tests of the hypothesis. In each model, the dependent variable is whether or not the respondent received a handout during the 2007 election. For ease of interpretability, I estimate each model using ordinary least squares, but the results are consistent when I use logistic regression models. I cluster standard errors by ethnic group.

In the first three columns, I use the dichotomous measure of pre-colonial centralization suggested by Gennaioli and Rainer (2007), where more centralized groups take a value of 1. The first column presents the bivariate relationship. The second column adds controls for the respondent's residence in a rural area, gender, and age. The model also includes controls for the unemployment rate, the share of households with electricity, and levels of education in each respondent's sub-location, which in Kenya is equivalent to a large village or neighborhood.<sup>10</sup> In the third column, I also include controls for each of Kenya's regions. In each model, the result is the same: members of ethnic groups with pre-colonial centralized institutions were about 10 percentage points less likely to receive a handout in 2007. This is about a 40 percent reduction in the probability of receiving a handout.

In the second three columns, I use the continuous measure of pre-colonial centralization, which in Kenya runs from 1 to 3. In columns 4 and 5, the results are in the expected direction but not statistically significant. In column 6, when I introduce regional controls, the coefficient is negative and significant. Moving one point up the pre-colonial political centralization scale, which corresponds to adding an additional layer of hierarchical authority to the institutional structure, reduces the probability of being targeted directly by a vote buyer by about 5 percentage points.

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<sup>10</sup>These data come from the 2009 census.

Table 9.3: **Pre-Colonial Political Centralization and Vote Buying in Kenya.** Each model is a linear probability model in which the dependent variable takes a value of 1 if the respondent was offered a bribe or gift during the 2007 elections.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Pre-Colonial Centralization (dichotomous)	-0.10*** (0.03)	-0.11*** (0.03)	-0.09** (0.03)			
Pre-Colonial Centralization (continuos)				-0.05 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.05** (0.02)
Residence in Rural Area		-0.03 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.06)		-0.03 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.06)
Male		-0.08*** (0.02)	-0.08*** (0.03)		-0.08*** (0.02)	-0.08*** (0.02)
Age		0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)		0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Unemployment Rate		-0.23** (0.09)	-0.20 (0.12)		-0.21** (0.09)	-0.18 (0.12)
Share with Electricity		-0.14 (0.13)	-0.08 (0.11)		-0.16 (0.15)	-0.09 (0.11)
Share with No Formal Education		0.48 (0.30)	0.86*** (0.24)		0.38 (0.35)	0.83*** (0.26)
Primary Completion Rate		0.46 (0.37)	0.70** (0.26)		0.40 (0.40)	0.66** (0.27)
Secondary Completion Rate		0.67** (0.3)	1.05*** (0.31)		0.62* (0.34)	1.05*** (0.32)
Constant	0.25*** (0.03)	0.00 (0.31)	-0.40 (0.24)	0.31*** (0.07)	0.11 (0.37)	-0.27 (0.26)
Regional Controls	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Observations	1,615	1,573	1,573	1,615	1,573	1,573
R-squared	0.01	0.04	0.05	0.01	0.03	0.05

Robust standard errors clustered by ethnic group in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

### 9.3.2 Uganda

In this section I test the argument with evidence from Uganda, Kenya's neighbor to the west. Uganda is an excellent case because, while it is about average on the Gennaioli and Rainer (2007) measure of country-level pre-colonial centralization, the country's ethnic groups exhibit substantial variation with respect to their pre-colonial political centralization (Gennaioli and Rainer, 2007; Green and Bandyopadhyay, 2012). Several of the country's largest ethnic groups, including the Baganda, Banyankole, and Banyoro, had centralized, hierarchical, and relatively powerful kingdoms prior to the arrival of the British. Groups such as the Acholi, Bakiga, and Iteso, on the other hand, are described by Murdock (1967) as either petty chiefdoms or groups with no centralized authority above the community.

In Uganda, vote buying is prevalent during election campaigns. The distribution of money and material goods to potential voters was especially intense during the country's February 2011 presidential and parliamentary elections (Conroy-Krutz and Logan, 2011). Yoweri Museveni, in power since 1986 and running on the ticket of his National Resistance Movement (NRM) party, won the elections with 68 percent of the vote. Handouts to voters, or vote buying, was reportedly widespread during the elections, with 25 percent of respondents in one post-election survey reporting that they were offered a handout during the campaign and 43 percent reporting that they observed parties distributing handouts (Conroy-Krutz and Logan, 2011).

Uganda provides a nice contrast with Kenya because of the relative power of centralized versus non-centralized groups in each country. In Kenya, the incumbent in 2007 was a member of the Kikuyu ethnic group, one of the most politically decentralized groups in pre-colonial Africa. The Kikuyu are widely perceived as being the wealthiest and most politically powerful group in Kenya. In Uganda, the situation is

the opposite. The incumbent, Yoweri Museveni, is a member of the Banyankole ethnic group, which is a group with centralized and hierarchical pre-colonial institutions. If the patterns I found in Kenya also hold in Uganda, we can be more confident that it is the nature of pre-colonial institutions, rather than something specific to the groups in power in Kenya, that are driving the results.

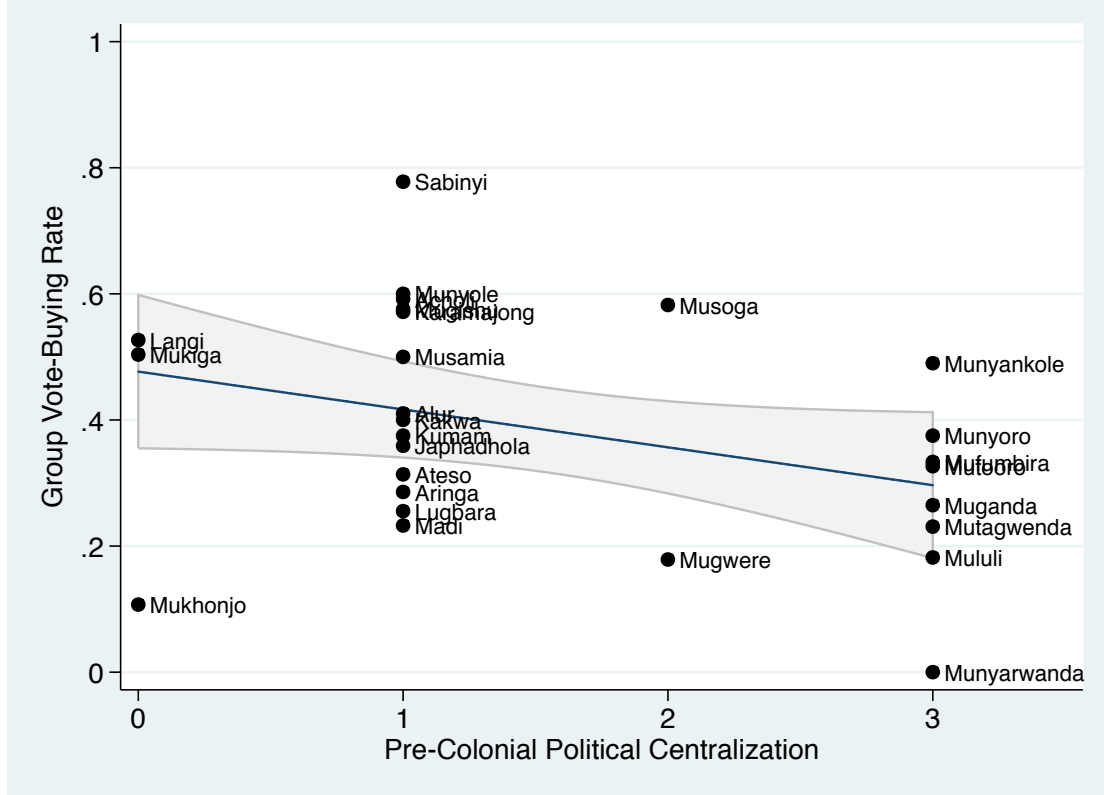
The most recent Afrobarometer Round 5 survey conducted in Uganda in 2012 includes a question about vote buying during the 2011 elections. Of the 2,400 Ugandans surveyed, 41 percent report being offered a bribe or a gift during the election. The Afrobarometer data also include a question about ethnic identity. I use this variable to match each respondent to the Murdock (1967) pre-colonial centralization data.

I create two different pre-colonial centralization variables. The first is a dichotomous measure that mirrors that of Gennaioli and Rainer (2007): I code groups as being centralized if they receive a score of 3 or higher on the “jurisdictional hierarchy beyond local community.” In the Afrobarometer sample, about 52 percent of respondents belong to centralized groups. The second measure is continuous, running from 0, least centralized, to 3, most centralized.

Figure 9.3 presents the relation between pre-colonial centralization and the direct vote-buying rate within each ethnic group. The latter is simply the share of the population in each ethnic group that experienced direct vote buying during the 2011 elections. The Afrobarometer data are not meant to be representative at the ethnic group level. Moreover, the sample sizes in each group can be very small, which means these group-specific vote-buying rates are likely to be very imprecise. Nevertheless, there is a negative relationship between pre-colonial centralization and contemporary levels of vote buying targeted directly toward members of an ethnic group.

In Table 9.4, I present results from regressions in which the dependent variable is the dichotomous measure of individual experience with direct vote buying during the 2011

Figure 9.3: Ethnic Group Pre-Colonial Centralization and Vote Buying in Uganda.



campaign. For ease of interpretation, each model is a linear probability model.<sup>11</sup> In the first two columns, I focus on the dichotomous measure of pre-colonial centralization. Column 2 includes controls for the respondent's level of poverty, residence in a rural area, level of education, gender, age, and connection to a political party. The third and fourth columns are the same as the first two, except I use the continuous measure of pre-colonial centralization.

The results show that pre-colonial political institutions predict variation in direct vote buying within Uganda. Individuals that belong to ethnic groups that were decentralized prior to colonial rule are about 5 percentage points more likely to experience direct vote buying, which is equivalent to about a 12 percent increase in the probability of being targeted. Even within the same country, where politicians face similar institutional incentives, pre-colonial institutions help to explain some of the variation in vote buying.

### **9.3.3 Senegal**

Finally, I test the argument in the West African country of Senegal. Unlike Kenya and Uganda, Senegal was colonized by the French. Moreover, while the country has been labelled a clientelist democracy (Beck, 2008), rates of direct vote buying in the country are relatively low (see Figure 9.1).

Senegal is home to ethnic groups with a diversity of pre-colonial institutions. In the Wolof areas, for example, institutional structures were extremely centralized and hierarchical. Rigid social categories delineated social groups in a manner resembling European feudalism (Boone, 2003). Boone (2003) describes pre-colonial Wolof society as follows:

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<sup>11</sup>The results are the same if I use logistic regression.

Table 9.4: **Pre-Colonial Political Centralization and Vote Buying in Uganda.** Each model is a linear probability model in which the dependent variable takes a value of 1 if the respondent was offered a bribe or gift during the 2011 elections.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Pre-Colonial Centralization (dichotomous)	-0.059*** (0.020)	-0.050** (0.021)		
Pre-Colonial Centralization (continuous)			-0.038*** (0.009)	-0.033*** (0.009)
Poverty Index		0.018 (0.012)		0.020* (0.012)
Rural		0.048 (0.030)		0.047 (0.030)
No Formal Education		0.020 (0.034)		0.015 (0.034)
Only Primary Education		-0.000 (0.033)		-0.007 (0.033)
Only Secondary Education		0.015 (0.037)		0.013 (0.037)
Male		0.019 (0.021)		0.019 (0.021)
Age		0.001 (0.001)		0.000 (0.001)
Close to a Political Party		0.078*** (0.023)		0.076*** (0.023)
Constant	0.445*** (0.015)	0.280*** (0.053)	0.482*** (0.019)	0.320*** (0.054)
Observations	2,375	2,335	2,343	2,305
R-squared	0.004	0.013	0.007	0.016

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

“There was a large population of non-cultivators that included a political aristocracy, an Islamic religious nobility, a warrior caste, and artisans. Rich political-military traditions reached back to the era of the Djolof Empire. Social organizations followed the lines of ‘sharp and close hierarchies’ characterized by ‘intimate articulation of political and social structure’ (pp. 47)

Importantly, these “old [Wolof] structures that many have described as ‘feudal’ are still visible in the oldest zones of settlement, where dense networks of villages are organized hierarchically around leading families, some of whom trace their land rights and political privileges back six or seven centuries” (Boone, 2003, pp. 47). With the fall of the Wolof aristocratic elite during the colonial era, religious leaders from Sufi Islamic brotherhoods adapted those same institutions to maintain and reinforce their power. Senegal’s Mouride brotherhood, for example, is a hierarchical religious institution with substantial power in the countryside, in part because of its vast land holdings (Cruise O’Brien, 1971). It is not surprising, then, that Senegal’s post-independence leaders worked hard to cultivate patronage relationships with the Mouride and other brotherhoods in exchange for blocks of votes (Cruise O’Brien, 1971).

The pre-colonial institutions of other large groups such as the Diola and Sereer contrast substantially with those of the Wolof. Of the Diola, for example, Boone (2003) notes that “village communities are largely independent” and “with a few exceptions, recognized no common authority” (pp. 100). Even within villages, which are composed of extended family groupings, there is no “unified, village-wide political structure” (Boone, 2003, pp. 101)

In this section, I use data from the Afrobarometer’s Round 3 survey conducted in Senegal. I use the reported ethnicity information provided by the Afrobarometer to match respondents to the Murdock (1967) ethnographic data. Table 9.5 provides



information about the ethnic groups in the sample and their classification by Murdock (1967). Three groups are classified as larger chiefdoms; that is, they had two levels of hierarchical authority above the village level prior to colonial rule. Four other groups are classified as petty chiefdoms, which had only one level of hierarchy above the village. These classifications match my expectations given existing research on the structure of rural political and social life in Senegal (Beck, 2008; Boone, 2003). The Bainouck are the only group without any hierarchy above the village, and they make up one-quarter of one percent of the sample. I therefore focus the analysis on the dichotomous measure of pre-colonial centralization, which classifies as centralized all groups with two or more levels of hierarchy above the village (Gennaioli and Rainer, 2007).<sup>12</sup>

The Afrobarometer survey asks respondents about direct experiences receiving bribes or gifts during the country's 2000 elections. In those elections, Abdoulaye Wade and his Senegalese Democratic Party defeated the long-ruling Socialist Party, the party of founding president Leopold Senghor, in presidential and parliamentary elections. I construct the vote buying measure in the same way as I do in the Uganda and cross-national analyses. In the Afrobarometer sample, about 63 percent of respondents belong to centralized groups. This figure is comparable to Gennaioli and Rainer's (2007) estimate that about 69 percent of the Senegalese population belong to an ethnic group that had pre-colonial institutions.

Table 9.6 presents the main results. As in the previous analyses, each model is a linear probability model for ease of interpretation. The inferences are the same when I use logistic regression. I cluster standard errors by ethnic group.

In the first column, I present the bivariate association between pre-colonial centralization and present day direct vote buying. As in Kenya and Uganda, Senegalese ethnic

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<sup>12</sup>The dichotomous and continuous measures are basically identical in Senegal.

groups with more centralized pre-colonial institutions are substantially less likely to be targeted with direct vote-buying offers. Members of centralized groups are about 4.3 percentage points less likely to experience direct vote buying, a 45 percent reduction from the direct vote-buying rate of 9.5 percent in groups without hierarchical and centralized pre-colonial institutions.

Column 2 shows that these results are robust to the inclusion of controls for individual level poverty, age, gender, education, and residence in a rural area. Column 3 shows that the results are robust to the inclusion of regional controls. Finally, in column 4 I add a dummy variable indicating whether the respondent is a member of the Wolof ethnic group. As Table 9.5 shows, the Wolof make up almost 50 percent of the sample and are one of the more historically centralized and hierarchical groups in the country. I include this dummy to ensure that the results are not being driven entirely by patterns among the Wolof, which may have nothing to do with pre-colonial institutions, and find that they are not. In Senegal, as in Kenya and Uganda, direct vote buying is far more prevalent among groups without a centralized and hierarchical traditional institutional structure.

## **9.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has stepped back from the question of why direct vote buying is effective to address the question of why clientelism takes the form of direct vote buying in some places but not others. I find that across and within countries in Africa, clientelist vote-getting strategies vary with the nature of political and social organization in different areas. In particular, direct vote buying is far more prevalent where traditional political and social institutions are decentralized and lacking in hierarchy.

These findings contrast with expectations from the vote-buying literature. Most observers have suggested quite reasonably that vote buying should be more prevalent where parties have the capacity to monitor and control voters (Lehoucq, 2007). It is this power that helps them to avoid leakage; that is, to prevent voters from choosing a “take the money and run” strategy. Yet the patterns in Africa show that direct vote buying is *less* likely to occur precisely in countries and sub-national locations where traditional institutions are centralized, hierarchical, and powerful; precisely the places where local intermediaries are *most* likely to have the ability to monitor and punish voters for defecting from a vote-buying bargain.

Interpreting the patterns presented in this chapter requires an alternative conceptualization of vote buying, one that shifts away from an understanding of vote buying as a direct market transaction that requires contract enforcement. If we understand cash handouts to voters as a strategy for conveying information and establishing credibility with them, as I show in other parts of this project, the strategy of disproportionately targeting decentralized groups becomes more clear. Where groups are decentralized and lacking in hierarchy, politicians cannot rely on local intermediaries to deliver blocks of votes or to help them establish credibility through endorsements. Without a party organization penetrating into the countryside in these areas, politicians are forced to go directly to the voters, using money as a mechanism to signal that they will serve their interests if elected.

This chapter relates to the work of Koter (2013), who argues that ethnic mobilization should be less likely in African settings where traditional authorities are strong. The logic is that politicians can target strong intermediaries with resources in exchange for the votes of members of other ethnic groups. That is, strong traditional leaders can help politicians build multi-ethnic coalitions, thus reducing levels of ethnic voting. The contribution of this chapter and the results from Chapter 6 is to show how politicians

make credible their appeals to ethnic identities in settings where traditional institutions were decentralized and fragmented, and where, in some cases, the broad politically salient ethnic categories of today's politics were virtually non-existent until the end of the colonial era. While Koter (2013) assumes that ethnic mobilization will work where strong traditional authorities are not present, I demonstrate the central role of direct vote buying in facilitating ethnic mobilization among decentralized groups.

Further research is required to identify and explain variation in the mechanisms underpinning wholesale vote buying in Africa today. Understanding these mechanisms is important because of their vastly different normative and redistributive implications. My expectation is that local power brokers work to deliver blocks of voters in a number of different ways, using methods that vary across and within countries. Some may rely on direct or subtle forms of economic and social coercion. Others may help voters coordinate around candidates or parties that will benefit them in the future. The former seems quite clearly to be normatively undesirable and problematic from the perspective of democratic accountability. The latter, on the other hand, might best be understood as a form of interest group politics, which is common to many democracies. Either way, the implication of this chapter is that direct vote buying is most likely to occur where voters are autonomous and free from traditional coercive relationships, but not yet sufficiently coordinated and organized to advance their collective goals through interest-group politics.

**Table 9.5: Ethnic Group Pre-Colonial Centralization in Senegal.**

Group	Murdock Classification	Share of Sample
Wolof	Larger chiefdom (3)	48.42
Serer	Larger chiefdom (3)	12.00
Soninke	Larger chiefdom (3)	1.50
Total Centralized		63.92
Pular	Petty chiefdom (2)	25.00
Diola	Petty chiefdom (2)	4.67
Mandinka	Petty chiefdom (2)	3.33
Bambara	Petty chiefdom (2)	2.83
Bainouk	No authority beyond community (1)	0.25
Total Decentralized		36.08

**Table 9.6: Pre-Colonial Political Centralization and Vote Buying in Senegal.** Each model is a linear probability model in which the dependent variable takes a value of 1 if the respondent was offered a bribe or gift during the 2000 elections.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Pre-Colonial Centralization	-0.043*** (0.007)	-0.039*** (0.004)	-0.021* (0.011)	-0.029** (0.010)
Wolof				-0.014 (0.009)
Poverty Index		0.005 (0.008)	0.003 (0.008)	0.005 (0.008)
Male		0.037 (0.030)	0.040 (0.031)	0.037 (0.030)
Age		-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Residence in Rural Area		-0.037* (0.016)	-0.035* (0.017)	-0.036* (0.016)
No Formal Education		0.009 (0.039)	0.029 (0.038)	0.011 (0.040)
Only Primary Education		0.011 (0.025)	0.025 (0.025)	0.011 (0.025)
Only Secondary Education		0.022 (0.033)	0.030 (0.035)	0.023 (0.033)
Constant	0.095*** (0.005)	0.112** (0.039)	0.071 (0.050)	0.111** (0.039)
Regional Controls	No	No	Yes	No
Observations	1,193	1,172	1,172	1,172
R-squared	0.007	0.017	0.026	0.018

Robust standard errors clustered by ethnic group in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

## CHAPTER 10

### Conclusion

Democracy's third wave has led to a historically unprecedented rise in the number of countries holding competitive elections around the world (Huntington, 1991). With the spread of elections, scholars have increasingly turned their attention to questions related to the quality of these elections. It is in this context that the new literature on political clientelism and vote buying has emerged. Like other scholars working in this literature, I have been in part motivated by normative concerns about the influence of vote buying on democratic accountability and responsiveness in developing democracies, and especially those in Africa.

This project has also been motivated by the strong sense I got, while conducting fieldwork in Kenya, that conventional models of vote buying—which were developed in other contexts—simply do not do a very good job at describing and explaining what, to the outside observer, appeared to be widespread vote buying during Kenyan elections. I have continued to use the term vote buying in this manuscript, mostly because of convention. But what I realized very quickly in talking to Kenyans is that much of what we think looks like vote buying is actually not understood by candidate or voter as a transaction at all. Given just how widespread cash handouts are during political campaigns in Kenya, it seemed clear that better describing and explaining the role of cash handouts in the political system could lead to a better understanding of how democratic politics works in a place like Kenya.

I found that politicians use cash handouts to convey to voters their commitment to delivering resources to them and serving their interests in the future. I further found that distributing money on the campaign trail is critical to being taken seriously as a candidate. Those who do not hand out cash are widely perceived as too weak to win. Where access to resources depends on connections to those with political power, being perceived as a winner attracts strategic support from instrumental voters. These observations from Kenya, which resonate with those from ethnographic accounts of elections elsewhere Africa, form the basis of the informational theory of vote buying presented in this project.

While one goal of the project has been to develop a theoretical framework more consistent with patterns of vote buying in Kenya, an additional goal has been to subject the theory to a diversity of empirical tests that take seriously the inferential and measurement challenges involved in the study of vote buying. Most empirical research on clientelism and vote buying is either purely ethnographic or based upon survey data. While both can yield rich insights—indeed the former was central to the development of the informational theory—they are both vulnerable to the critique that their inferences are biased due to measurement problems, difficulties isolating vote buying’s causal impact, or both.

To address the empirical challenges involved in testing theories about vote buying, I have used multiple methodologies that reduce measurement bias and which are designed to identify vote buying’s impact on voters. For example, I use the item count technique, or list experiment, which in this project has served two purposes. First, it has allowed me to identify how and when vote buying is effective. Second, it has allowed me to demonstrate that direct survey questions about the receipt of cash handouts in Kenya are not subject to response bias. As a result, I am able to use with confidence direct survey questions about vote buying in a number of chapters in this manuscript.



I also analyze data from a set of survey experiments in which participants in Kenya listened to radio recordings about hypothetical political candidates. I randomly assign participants to hear subtle references about candidate's vote buying behavior and their ethnicity. The subtlety of the references helps to reduce response bias to post-recording questions about the candidates. Random assignment allows me to attribute any differences in post-recording questions to the vote-buying and ethnicity references. These experiments allow me to directly test implications of the informational theory.

The findings presented in each of the empirical chapters test different implications of the informational theory outlined in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4 I use survey data that I collected and from the Afrobarometer to show that patterns of vote buying are not consistent with the predictions of transactional vote-buying theories; that is, those that focus on cash handouts as the centerpiece of a market exchange between buyer and seller. In Chapter 5, I test a set of direct implications of the theory through analysis of data from the audio experiments. The results show that vote buying is effective through an informational channel, especially among poor voters. Chapter 6 uses a second set of experiments to show how the vote-buying signal serves to reinforce and perpetuate patterns of ethnic voting. In Chapter 7, I test an additional implication of the informational theory: that if the vote-buying signal is to be credible, politicians should provide more patronage goods to areas where vote buying is most intense. Using micro-level data about incidences of vote buying and the allocation of local public goods, I show that vote buying is associated with more, rather than less, investment in local public goods. In Chapter 8 I show that vote buying is not only persuasive, it is also mobilizes people to turn out to vote. Finally, I use data from across Africa to show that direct vote buying is most prevalent in areas where pre-colonial traditional institutions were least hierarchical and least centralized. The informational theory of vote buying helps to explain these patterns across and within African countries. Where groups are

decentralized and lacking in hierarchy, politicians cannot rely on local intermediaries to deliver blocks of votes or to help them establish credibility through endorsements. Politicians must therefore go directly to the voters, using money as a mechanism to signal that they will serve their interests if elected.

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss some of the broader implications of these results.

## **10.1 Implications**

### **10.1.1 Vote Buying and Political Machines**

One implication of this research is that models of clientelism or vote buying developed in some settings cannot be assumed to describe or explain what appear to be the same phenomena in other settings. Dominant models of vote buying often rely on the assumption that political parties or politicians can violate the secrecy of the ballot. The machine model of vote buying, developed to explain patterns in contemporary Latin America and in urban areas in the 19th century United States, provides a plausible explanation for how parties are able to enforce vote-buying contracts. Yet socially embedded and well organized parties are not present in all countries where vote buying is widespread. In emphasizing the role of money as a signal, this project explains how vote buying can work in the absence of a machine.

However, the implications of the findings go further. I show that in Africa, vote buying is most prevalent where political parties are least institutionalized and organized (see analysis in Chapter 3), and where local vote brokers are not available or sufficiently powerful (see Chapter 9). The project therefore not only shows why vote buying can be effective without a political machine. It also demonstrates that *vote buying is a strategic response to a lack of party organization or connections to local power brokers.*

The informational theory of vote buying helps to shed light on why cash handouts are strategically useful to politicians in this context: vote buying provides politicians a strategy with which to establish credibility with voters when other mechanisms are not available.

### **10.1.2 Vote Buying and the Secret Ballot**

Direct vote buying has historically been most effective and prevalent where ballot secrecy is not protected. The lack of secrecy allows parties to monitor the vote choice of those to whom they have distributed money, thereby solving a commitment problem inherent in a vote-buying transaction (Stokes, 2005). Nevertheless, vote buying continues to thrive in settings where ballot secrecy is institutionalized. The informational theory of vote buying explains how cash handouts can be effective even where parties cannot or do not directly monitor the vote choice of recipients.

An implication is that policies designed to further bolster ballot secrecy, while important, may not reduce the prevalence or effectiveness of vote buying in settings such as Kenya. Instead, the argument and results suggest that vote buying will lose its effectiveness when certain features of the structural environment change. For example, vote buying information will become less important when political parties become more institutionalized and can make more credible programmatic and material promises; when a middle class emerges that is not dependent on the state and political connections to politicians for resources; and when politicians' discretion over the allocation of state resources is diminished, reducing citizens' need to have a political representative who can personally deliver resources.

### **10.1.3 Vote Buying, Ethnic Politics, and Core Voter Targeting**

Chapter 6 shows that in Kenya, vote buying reinforces and perpetuates ethnic voting. The analysis in Chapter 9 helps to situate this finding into its broader context. Prior to colonial rule, Kenya's ethnic groups were extremely fragmented and decentralized. For the most part, conceptions of a broader common identity among today's politically relevant groups only emerged during the colonial and immediate post-independence eras. These broader ethnic coalitions were a political response to the structure of political competition in the larger Kenyan state, which required larger coalitions in order to secure power and state resources.

Where groups were fragmented in the pre-colonial era, it is patronage resources that serve as the glue that solidifies these coalitions. As patronage linkages are by definition contingent on a flow of resources, I have argued that politicians use cash handouts to affirm their commitment to serving the interests of the ethnic coalition moving forward. This logic helps to explain why politicians and parties around the world often seek to "buy" the votes of their so-called core supporters with handouts during campaigns. This strategy appears inefficient, or at least redundant, until we note that the core voters of a patronage-dispensing party or politician are only core because they receive or expect to receive benefits. I show in the project that, during campaigns, cash handouts provide a mechanism through which to convince voters that they can expect to benefit from patronage resources in the future.

### **10.1.4 Studying Vote Choice in Africa**

The results have implications for general studies about the determinants of vote choice in Africa, and especially those regarding the respective roles of ethnicity, clientelism, and vote buying (e.g. Bratton et al., 2011; Lindberg and Morrison, 2008; Young, 2009b).

Often, studies treat these as factors that are independent of one another and of more “standard” retrospective or prospective evaluations of politicians’ performance. Yet I find in this study that candidates’ vote-buying behavior and ethnic identity interact to influence voters’ prospective evaluations of them. In other words, ethnicity and clientelism on the one hand, and prospective performance evaluations on the other, are not independent but rather interrelated.

Given this finding, empirical models of vote choice need to better match theoretical understanding of how material distribution and ethnicity interact in African contexts such as Kenya. Empirical vote choice models in which measures capturing ethnicity, experience with clientelism, and performance evaluations are entered separately into a regression model implicitly assume that these are independent. Inferences are then based upon which factor has the strongest predictive power. The results presented in this project demonstrate that such an empirical approach is not theoretically appropriate.

#### **10.1.5 Political Selection in Patronage Democracies**

In some sense, the findings from Chapters 5 and 6 imply that voters have a preference for candidates that distribute cash on the campaign trail. In this project, I have endeavored to situate this preference into its institutional context. Poor voters in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world do not have an intrinsic preference for politicians who engage in vote buying. Rather, the preference is strategic and instrumental. It results from the calculus of voting in settings where essential resources are not distributed on a programmatic basis. In patronage-dominated systems, access to resources depends on connections to politicians who can accumulate and distribute resources. Distributing money, even if it is perceived to be corrupt, conveys information about candidates’ skills in this respect.

The argument and findings relate more broadly to research that ask why “bad” politicians continue to be elected in democratic settings (e.g. Caselli and Morelli, 2004). In many democratic settings, candidates who are corrupt (Chang et al., 2010), are known to have mobilized violence or to be connected to criminal groups (Golden and Tiwari, 2009), or who engage in other immoral behavior still receive electoral support. Most research suggests that such patterns are due to information deficits, whereby voters are not sufficiently informed to punish candidates engaged in bad behavior, or due to direct or subtle forms of coercion.

This research suggests an alternative explanation: If bad behaviors convey information about skills in a domain that is important to voters in their context—for example with respect to the provision of resources or protection from violence—such behaviors can be effective in winning electoral support. Thus “bad” political behaviors such as vote buying can in some settings convey electorally useful information to voters, even when voters condemn and disapprove of those very behaviors.

This interpretation is most closely related to that of Vaishnav (2011), who argues that those with criminal records are successful in Indian elections because voters believe that criminals are best suited to protect caste interests. From this perspective, the selection of “bad” politicians is not only the result of information deficits or the ability of corrupt or criminal politicians to coerce voters (though these factors are certainly important in some contexts). Given the environment in which votes are cast, voters may have instrumental reasons to support politicians who engage in behaviors that are otherwise considered corrupt or morally objectionable.

#### **10.1.6 Normative and Policy Considerations**

While this project was motivated by a set of theoretical puzzles, it also began with a set of normative concerns. Observers are often concerned about vote buying because it

involves a “perverse accountability” (Stokes, 2005), whereby voters are held accountable for their vote choices by vote-buying machines. As the poor are generally most likely to be targeted with vote-buying transfers, the practice can undermine the political representation of the poor and lead to policies that favor groups whose votes cannot be won with material transfers (Khemani, 2012; Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Stokes, 2007a).

This project should serve to complicate one’s normative assessment of vote buying and the role of cash handouts in elections in developing democracies such as Kenya. It is clear, for example, that the mechanism driving vote buying’s effectiveness is central to evaluating the strategy normatively. The results demonstrate that much vote buying in Kenya is effective through an informational channel and that there are only limited attempts to monitor the vote choices of handout recipients. This mechanism should serve to ease concerns about perverse accountability. In fact, to the extent that handouts help voters make a decision about who will best serve their interests, we might even infer that handouts are helpful to voters in their limited information setting.

In Chapter 7, I also find that vote buying does not predict less local public goods provision. I take this as evidence for the informational theory, but the finding has substantive normative implications as well. It suggests that being targeted by large amounts of vote buying during a campaign does not necessarily reduce the likelihood of receiving valued public goods in the future. It is important, however, to be clear about the limits of the inference that can be drawn from this result. In particular, I cannot address the counterfactual of whether the poor in Kenya would be better off if vote buying were less prevalent in the country as whole. All I can say is that cash handouts during campaigns do not seem to reduce future allocations of local public goods.

The results also imply that voters in Kenya may be more autonomous than we might think. In Chapter 9, for example, I show that vote buying is most prevalent where politicians lack local intermediaries who might be able to use economic or social power to deliver votes in a block. In other words, candidates resort to vote buying where voters are relatively autonomous. Further, that politicians in Kenya, and elsewhere in Africa, feel the need to spend such vast sums of what is usually their own money may be a sign that politicians feel some accountability pressure from below, even if in this case it is a somewhat narrow accountability.

Additionally, the results in Chapter 8 show that cash handouts serve to mobilize voter turnout. The result is consistent with the experimental findings of Vicente (2012). If voters are able to vote as they please once they show up at the polls, this increased political participation may be normatively desirable. This is especially the case if handouts make the poor more likely to vote, which should increase politician incentives to provide policies that they desire.

On the other hand, the centrality of cash handouts to political campaigns presents some normative concerns. First, as I show in Chapter 2, this campaign strategy is extremely expensive. Most politicians spend substantial sums of money, usually from their personal finances or from loans, to finance their campaigns. This creates substantial barriers to entry into politics for less wealthy politicians, an issue not unique to Africa. Moreover, because of a lack of transparency in campaign finance, the demand for resources creates incentives for corruption to fund campaigns and for financial or even criminal interests to capture political elites. These issues are again not unique to Africa—they are manifest in the United States as well—but the fact that these are problems many democracies face does not make them any less concerning.

The massive use of cash handouts to voters is also not the most efficient use of resources or form of redistribution. Pooling the funds and investing in public goods



would likely yield greater welfare improvements. Alternatively, investing the funds in a cash transfer program that distributes the money equally or on the basis of need would likely be more welfare enhancing. Further, it would be more normatively satisfying than the current informal system in which funds are distributed at the discretion of politicians and their agents. This, of course, requires politicians to coordinate away from the vote-buying equilibrium to one in which they invest resources in this alternative way.

Finally, a normative evaluation of vote buying must also ask the question of what the alternative to vote buying might be. The question of the alternative to vote buying also speaks directly to policy implications. For the most part, the international donor community has advocated programs and campaigns that might reduce vote buying as part of the larger effort to improve governance in developing countries. Yet if we are to advocate policies that reduce vote buying, we must ask what office-seeking politicians will do instead of handing out cash.

Indeed vote buying is not the only electoral strategy that candidates employ in developing democracies. In African settings, for example, candidates also mobilize violence to intimidate voters, make programmatic promises, or engage in electoral fraud (Collier and Vicente, 2010; Robinson and Torvik, 2009). Incumbents also target state resources for electoral gain. These alternative electoral strategies are often studied in isolation. However, their relation to one another must be better understood before policy prescriptions can be made. For example, does a set of programs or policies that reduces opportunities for direct vote buying increase the chances that politicians will run their election campaigns on programmatic grounds? Or might that same program lead parties to resort to fraud or violence when the vote-buying strategy is not available? In the former case, a direct program to reduce vote buying can be justified. In the latter, however, it probably cannot, if only because the vote-buying strategy is more welfare

enhancing than violence or fraud, even if it is not the “best” of the entire universe of potential vote-getting strategies.

Further research is required to answer these questions and to explain where vote buying fits into the larger portfolio of strategies that politicians use to win elections in developing democracies. A first step in this process is to better understand when and why vote buying emerges as a vote-getting strategy in the first place. In this project, I have tried to advance this understanding.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **List Experiment Sampling**

I conducted the list experiment with a nationally representative sample of 2000 Kenyans. I designed the survey items and implemented them with the survey firm Synovate as part of their quarterly Social, Political, Economic, and Cultural Survey (SPEC). Synovate is one of the most reputable survey firms in Kenya, and the public opinion data collected by their SPEC surveys are referenced frequently by news and other sources. The survey was conducted in Kiswahili by trained enumerators. The SPEC collects a nationally representative sample of 2000 respondents sampled from all 8 of Kenya's provinces. The sample was stratified by province and by urban/rural location. Sampling points were selected through multi-stage cluster sampling. Using the 2009 census administrative boundaries, 55 of 69 districts were selected in the first stage. Sampling points—defined as the sub-location, the smallest administrative unit for which census data are available—were then selected using probability-proportion-to-size sampling, using data from the 2009 census.

After arriving at the selected sampling points, interviewers selected respondents in the following manner. First, interviewers identified a landmark at the sampling site (church, school, shop, and so on). Starting from the landmark, the interviewers used the summation method to select the first household to be sampled. This involves summing the last two digits of the date to determine the first household to be sampled. If the interviews took place on the 27th, the interviewers would have selected the 9th household

on the left from the landmark. After the first household, the interviewers sampled every fourth household on the left. If an interview attempt was unsuccessful, the interviewers continued to the immediate next household. After selecting a household, interviewers enumerated all occupants of the household over 18 years of age and used the serial number on the questionnaire to select the respondent. If the respondent was not home, the interviewer would return to the household three times to find the respondent. If the respondent was not available after the three attempts, another member of the household was substituted in the following manner: on even dates, the person above the original respondent on the household list was chosen and on odd dates the person below was selected.

## APPENDIX B

### Audio Experiment Recording Script

*Note that this is a rough and simplified version of the discussion that covers the main points in the recording. The discussion in the recording is in Swahili, follows this general framework, but is recorded in a vernacular way that would be familiar to listeners. As such, this is not an exact translation but rather a general outline of the discussion. The actual recordings can be provided upon request.*

Person 1: Did you hear about the campaign rally in [insert location of survey] the other day?

Person 2: No, who was here?

Person 1: Oh, it was very interesting. A politician from was here to try to gain support for his campaign to be a member of parliament.

Person 2: I see. What happened at the event?

Person 1: First some people from the local community spoke in support of his candidacy. There was also music and a lot of dancing.

Person 2: Ah, sounds like fun.

Person 1: Yes, and then he gave a speech to the crowd. He said that education is a big priority for him. He also said that we would work hard to bring roads, electricity, and clean water to our area. Everyone cheered when he complained that politicians have ignored us for too long and that we need jobs to make life better.

Person 2: I see. Did he mention corruption? Politicians always talk about corruption, but I wonder if they ever do anything.

Person 1: Yes, he did mention corruption. He promised he would do his best to make sure that the wananchi [the people] benefit from the country's resources, and that thieves can no longer be in government.

Person 2: Ah, I see. And does he have any qualifications?

Person 1: He says that he does. He studied business at university, so he says that he can help make the economy grow.

*Person 1: And after the speech, people from the campaign went out into the crowd handing out cash to people who were there.*

*Person 2: They handed out cash? I wonder how much they gave to people?*

*Person 1: My friend who was there got 500 Kenya shillings.*

Person 2: Wow, sounds like a big event. How many people were there?

Person 1: About 1000 people were there.

Person 2: That is a good turnout. I wonder if he will win the election.

Person 1: We will have to wait and see!

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