

**Political Barter: A Study of Makati City's Emergency Cash Relief
Program and Its Link to Local Government Legitimacy and
Incumbent Electoral Support**

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ABSTRACT

Makati City ramped its pandemic response by implementing its own “Maka-Tulong 5K” cash assistance to its citizens. Although there are extant studies on the political dimension of cash assistance, the proliferation of this one-time provision merits further understanding. The research looked at the relationship between the beneficiaries’ perceived effects of the assistance and their local government’s legitimacy. It also examined the link between assistance received and prospective vote for the incumbent mayor in the 2022 elections. Using a descriptive research design and employing a structured questionnaire to the Slovin-sampled population (n=100) of citizen-beneficiaries, it is argued that positive perceived effects also confer high levels of local government legitimacy. However, facilitation of legitimacy by the assistance received is only at a moderate level as driven by the proximity of the cash effects with respondents’ needs. Moreover, the cash assistance could only potentially deliver incumbent votes. These results and findings were consolidated under ‘the system’s justification theory’ proposing that respondents had the motivation to provide legitimacy due mainly to the Makati government’s well-regarded pandemic response but such legitimation was regulated by the interface of situational-dispositional contextual factors.