

Peacebuilding and Nigeria's 2023 General Election: An analysis of cases from Benue and Plateau State

John Tavershima Agberagba

Department of Conflict Management and
Peace Studies (CECOMPS) University of Jos
Plateau State, Nigeria

Anna Mafuyai Alahirah

Department of Conflict Management and
Peace Studies (CECOMPS) University of Jos
Plateau State, Nigeria

Celine Akudo Agboola

Department of Conflict Management and
Peace Studies (CECOMPS) University of Jos
Plateau State, Nigeria

Abstract

INEC staff work ethics; voter intimidation and inducement; security agents' use of firearms, and peacekeeping at polling units. These topics are common election issues that arose in the 2023 Nigerian general election. This article is necessary to address the gap in the scholarly literature on Nigerian elections and its consequent lack of impact on election policy. We use cases from Benue and Plateau states based on participatory observation and descriptive presentation; and were view data from the internet, books, and articles. We theorise, Human Needs, the cases and find that the Police used pep-talk, threats, and firearms during the 2023 general elections in Benue state, but pep-talk is paternalism, an inhibiting satisfier; threats are pseudo-satisfiers and firearms are destructive satisfiers. Moreover, party agents and supporters used abuses and "religious shaming," inhibiting satisfiers against each other and INEC officers in Plateau. Similarly, the agents and party supporters used cooked food and drinks, salt, Maggi cubes, and bags of rice even on voting day to induce voters. However, INEC staff succeeded in their work, and the elders in keeping peace because they used a synergic satisfier, that is, INEC used self-managed hard work and the elders used wisdom to prevail on agents and supporters not to share induced material at the polling unit. Therefore, we recommend the followings, that is, community elders and youth be trained and paid to maintain peace at polling units; voters be given a meal on election days to reduce voter inducement; some of the prescribed 1999 Nigerian constitutional synergic satisfiers be made rights of Nigerian as a problem-solving for empowering women, youth, the Police, and community elders in minimizing voter intimidation and inducement to conduct credible, free, and fair elections without violence in Nigeria.

Keywords: Nigeria, Peacebuilding, election intimidation, inducement, synergic, satisfiers



Introduction

Case study, experiences from Benue and Plateau states

Two of us in these cases were voters and participant observers at NKST Primary School Akaajime, Gboko Local Government Area (LGA), Benue state, and Yingi in Giring LGA of Plateau state. The third person worked as INEC ad-hoc staff at Kuyambana with 21 polling units and Talgwang LGAs with 12 polling units as a Registration Area Collation officer (RA). We were fulfilling our civic duty and also engaging in the elections as peace scholars. We are citizens of the Nigerian state, "a sovereign community, politically organized for the promotion of common ends and the satisfaction of common needs."¹ INEC is the instrument through which this state formulates, expresses, and realizes its election for choosing our democratic government. As stakeholders in Nigeria, we examine INEC staff conduct, INEC/Voter intimidation and inducement, voter peacekeeping, and the security agents' activities; analyse and make recommendations for improving general elections in Nigeria.

INEC staff and voters

We the observers noticed that INEC staff arrived at about 9 am in Benue and 8 am in Plateau on the national election day and they arrived at about 8 am in Benue and 7:30 am in Plateau on the state election day. In Plateau, the process was disorganised initially as the BVAS was slow and there was confusion about the voting lines so, it took a long time to vote on the first day, but it was improved upon on the second cycle of elections. However, INEC staff were very friendly with voters and treated the people with a lot of respect, and worked very hard. In Plateau, the RA did not get all the material for collation but the person managed with what was available. The person collated data when the Polling Unit (PU) collation officers arrived, that is, open BVAs and check the number of registered and accredited voters to make sure there was concordance then it was sent to the RATECH to upload the results to the INEC server before it was entered on the result sheets. This RA says the BVAS was the best thing for the election because it prevented over-voting and where they occurred the units were cancelled. For instance, 1123 were registered in one unit, and 500 were accredited and voted, but the person believes that 623 did not come out because they could not bypass the BVAS.

INEC staff intimidation

The RA reports some ad hoc staff intimidation in Plateau state,

- a) Party agents to Polling Unit (PU) collation officers, that is, there were instances where the party agents vehemently refused the results that were presented by the PUs. They argued to the point of getting physical. The armless security personnel had to work very hard to

¹Harry Elmer Barnes, "Theories of the origin of the state in classical political philosophy," *The Monist*, 34 (1924): 15, accessed 19 December 2022, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27900975>.

- bring them back to their senses. Some of the agents team up to pull down the winning party using the overvoting weapon.
- b) Party agents to Registration Area (RA) collation officer, that is, this RA was threatened and forced to cancel some polling unit's election results in Talgwang, Langtang south LGA, which were not supposed to be cancelled but the person did it for personal security reasons.

Voter intimidation

The following kinds of voter intimidation took place in Benue and Plateau,

- a) Party agents to party agents, that is, there were instances of agents abusing themselves before the voters and soliciting support from voters.
- b) Party supporters to party supporters, that is, the dominant party supporters were talking over other party supporters. There was "religious shaming," some party supporters were deemed good Christians, but they were shamed in public for supporting non-Christian or not Christian enough candidates. They were even told that they will never hold religious positions in their churches again. The female agents and supporters were targeted most by both male and female agents and supporters of dominant parties.
- c) Dominant party supporters, intoxicated with alcohol, laughed and made fun of minor party agents; calling them derogatory names; telling them, are you not ashamed of yourselves? In fact, during vote counting, only three-party agents (APC, PDP, & LP) came out to hold their counted ballot papers. The others were afraid and so just stood afar and watched how the votes were counted.
- d) Some party agents were drinking alcohol in front of everybody; these were the agents that were causing the most intimidation.

Voter inducement

In Benue, the three major political parties (APC, PDP & LP) brought cooked food and drinks, bags of salt, Maggi packets, and 5kg bags of rice for voter inducement, but not everything was shared on site. The cooked food and drinks were shared; everyone across the party supporters took the food and drinks. Nobody was denied food and some mothers even took for their children at home. However, the other items were not shared in the place because local community elders refused that they are shared in the polling unit because they did not want the votes in the unit to be cancelled. In Plateau, the APC gubernatorial candidate provided canopies and chairs to sit on; they also gave food and drinks to APC members that voted in that polling unit.

Peacekeeping elders

In Benue, a group of community elders kept order and peace in the polling unit using simple appeals to troublemakers and possible lawbreakers. An elder stopped two party agents from drinking together and later were insulting one another to the point of fighting. The elder just called the two by names and he

said to them to stop it; “we are peaceful here and there is no police officer and we do not want trouble we just want to cast our vote so, stop it,” and the young men stopped. One of them went home and brought drinks and started offering them to those who cared to take them. On the first day of the elections, a group of elders drove away some party agents who arrived with bags of salt to distribute to voters. As soon as they arrived, they were ordered not to stop their bikes but to ride on. The agents just rode on out of the polling unit. In another instance, some party agents wanted to intimidate INEC staff that they were not working very fast and that they did not agree to attend to an important personality of their party immediately. The elders asked the agents to get away from the voting place and leave the staff alone and they obeyed. On the second day of the elections, a group of elders with the support of the youth stopped a Jeep carrying salt and bags of rice to come and distribute at the polling unit from gaining access to the unit. It took about an hour to make sure this party agent went away but they stayed with them until the agents went with their gifts. In another instance, an agent brought Maggi packets ready to share but she was told that she could not do it at the polling unit. As she was going a group of voters started following her but the elders went after them and appealed to them to come back and vote. I was surprised that most of the voters came back only a few went with the woman. In Plateau, most of the elders that voted were advanced in age, some of them could not walk without support and so were brought in and immediately voted and returned home.

Police visit

In the Benue case, throughout the election period, this polling unit had no police officer or civil defense personnel stationed at it. The community elders were maintaining order. However, a Police squad visited the polling unit on the state election day in the afternoon after a polling unit nearby had some young men trying to snatch ballot boxes. Six policemen and one police woman came in a Toyota Hilux vehicle; they went up and spoke with the INEC staff first. Afterward, they called us together, the voters online and those who had voted, but were keeping vigil over the votes. The leader of the squad addressed the crowd thus;

We are from Abuja and we have been sent to come and maintain order at the election polling units in Gboko. We are happy to see you acting peacefully in this unit. We want to say to you that you are not standing for elections and so there is no need to fight with each other over election matters. The children or family members of those standing are not here fighting so why should you be fighting for them? (applause from the crowd) You have heard how we dealt with the young men who were trying to steal ballot boxes; if you behave any-how, we will deal with you any-how. Stay safe and behave well and God bless you.

They then got in their vehicle and left in a hurry. This visit lasted just about 7-10 minutes. It was later reported three young men attempted to snatch ballot boxes and the BVAS but they were shot dead.²

The RA from Plateau reports that throughout the collation period, the Registration Area had police officers, civil defense personnel, and other para-military personnel stationed at it. The security agents were not armed and so it was very difficult to control party agents and their supporters. Thus, INEC staff and others were left at their own risk from electoral violence.

Case study analysis, atheoretical conception

This conceptualisation will consider effective politics by peaceful means, violence as an extension of effective politics, and problem-solving as the best effective politics. The concepts address the behaviour of INEC staff, community elders, party agents and supporters, and the police.

Effective politics by peaceful means

We argue that the INEC staff, peacekeeping community elders, and the non-deployment of armed security agents at the polling unit serve the belief that effective politics is not about making negative peace, that is, “the absence of violence and any other significant relations,”³ nor positive peace, “the absence of violence and occasional cooperation,”⁴ but it is about making unqualified peace, “the absence of violence attained by ongoing cooperation,”⁵ and as such producing a peaceful society. By a peaceful society we mean, “a society with an extremely low level of physical aggression among its members as well as shared beliefs that devalue aggression and/or positively value harmonious interpersonal relationships.”⁶ Where belief systems are very important and their peacefulness “is cosmologically constructed and morally embedded in a cosmological universe of meaning.”⁷ The resolved peacefulness is based on, “a complete rejection of violence.”⁸ This is what is common to the three groups that rejected aggression, coercion, or violence as a means of doing practical politics. This is true of peaceful societies that we can find in the Upper Xingu River basin in Brazil, Malaysian Orang Asli societies such as Batek, Chewong, and Semai, and perhaps the five Nordic nations (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) plus the Ju/wasi people who live in Botswana, Namibia, and Angola—

²Idoma Television, “Thugs shot dead why snatching ballot box in Benue,” *YouTube* 2023, accessed 11 April 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orJKIZfV7Co>.

³Christopher, M. Pieper, “Peace, definition and concepts of,” in *Encyclopedia of violence, peace, & conflict*, Vol. 2 G-Po, edited by Lester Kurtz, (London, New York, Oxford: Elsevier, 2008), 1548.

⁴Pieper, Peace, 1548.

⁵Ibid, 1554.

⁶Karolina Baszarkiewicz, “Peaceful societies,” in *Encyclopedia of violence, peace, and conflict*, Vol. 2 G—P, edited by Lester Kurtz, (London, New York, Oxford: Elsevier, 2008), 1557.

⁷Baszarkiewicz, Peaceful societies, 1563.

⁸ibid.

southern Africa.⁹Thus, the non-deployment of security agents in both Benue and Plateau cases and the peace-keeping elders in Benue state. Nonetheless, some politicians see it differently, they believe that violence, even war, can be used as practical politics as we saw with the party agents and supporters.

Violence is an extension of practical politics

Hence, we argue that there is a tradition of using aggression and coercion as means of effective politics that users justify. The theory of violence, war, and politics starts with the father of war, Clausewitz, who said of the logic of war, "war is an act of force, and therefore there is no logical limit to the application of that force."¹⁰ However, he said, war "is a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means"¹¹and he further insisted that if war were to break from the political then it is, "something pointless and devoid of sense."¹² For Clausewitz, "the battle ... is not merely reciprocal slaughter and its effect is more a killing of the enemy's courage than of the enemy's soldiers," for "loss of moral force is the chief cause of the decision."¹³That is why Schell says, "following Clausewitz's cue, let us call this moral defeat."¹⁴Hence, violence in politics is used to gain a moral upper hand and to win whether in democratic elections or otherwise.

For instance, the great guerrilla warlord Mao of China said, "what is the relationship of guerrilla warfare to the people? Without a political goal, guerrilla warfare must fail, as it must if its political objectives do not coincide with the aspirations of the people and their sympathy, co-operation, and assistance cannot be gained."¹⁵For Mao then, "politics meant, above all, the activities and the interests, as he conceived them, of common people ... If anything, politics is the final arbiter, with force playing only an assisting role."¹⁶ Even democratic governments use violence as part of politics. For example, the first American president, George Washington who combined a distinguished military career with politics said to his fellow country women and men in his farewell address, "Your Union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other."¹⁷ And of America's relationship with the external world he said, "observe good faith and justice towards all Nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all."¹⁸Otherwise,

⁹Douglas P. Fry and Genevieve Souillac, "Peaceful societies are not utopian fantasy," *The exist. Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, 22 March 2021, accessed 11 April 2023, <https://thebulletin.org/2021/03/peaceful-societies-are-not-utopian-fantasy-they-exist/#:~:text=Historically%20and%20anthropologically%20documented%20peaceful,nations%2C%20and%20the%20European%20Union>.

¹⁰Jonathan Schell, *The unconquerable world, power, nonviolence, and the will of the people*, (Allen Lane an imprint of Penguin Books, 2003), 16.

¹¹Schell, *The unconquerable*, 15.

¹²Schell, *The unconquerable*, 16.

¹³Ibid., 17.

¹⁴Ibid., 18.

¹⁵Ibid., 82.

¹⁶Ibid. 83.

¹⁷Simon SebagMontefiore, *Speeches that changed the world, the stories and transcripts of the moment that made history*, (Quercus: Smith-Davies Publishers, 2006), 36.

¹⁸Montefiore, *Speeches*, 36.

you take up arms with them. Thus, the political leaders who fought Hitler for example, Sir Winston Churchill said, "Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands."¹⁹ And he went on to say that if they failed the world would, "... sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the light of perverted science."²⁰ The war was fought for freedom, liberty, and rights cause. As Vyacheslav Molotov's speech on the Nazi invasions of the USSR to the nation read, "Ours is a righteous cause. The enemy shall be defeated." Hence, arguably the three political parties, APC, PDP, and LP who were using violence can claim that they were fighting for a just cause to save the soul of Nigeria as indeed APC was saying in Benue state. Additionally, how else do we explain the biggest democracy in the world, the US' reply to Chinese military exercises by it, and the Philippines holding the largest-ever military drills after China exercises encircling Taiwan with military drills?²¹ The US bring 12,000 troops and 5,000 Philippines troops for its largest military exercises. This is an exhibition of the US military might. In the case of China, Tessa Wong reports, "China makes peace while baring teeth,"²² China flew fighter jets across the Taiwan Strait and blocked entry points in its waters in a display of Chinese military might intimidating Taiwan. This exercise began the day after a state visit by the French president marking a high point in Chinese diplomacy. Wong argues that China's "dream" is to use this as a means of securing global economic ties.²³ This demonstrates the use of aggression and intimidation as an effective means of politicking.

Nonetheless, the end game of aggressive and intimidating politics is not violence or conflict but justice, and peace. Several historical politicians argue thus, on national reconstruction, Jawaharlal Nehru said to the people of India, "freedom and power bring responsibility."²⁴ Eamon De Valera, the leader of the Irish nation, said to the people of Ireland on the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising, "political freedom alone was not the ultimate goal. It was to be, rather, the enabling condition for the gradual building up of a community in which an ever-increasing number of its members ... able to have the happiness of full life."²⁵ And on how to act on political matters, the US President Richard M. Nixon in his address to the nation in 1973 over the Watergate scandal said, "the truth should be fully brought out—no matter who was involved. ... Justice will be pursued fairly, fully, and impartially."²⁶ Similarly, on the oval office of political leaders, Nixon said, "This office is a sacred trust and I am determined to be

¹⁹Ibid., 94.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Kelly Ng and Joel Guinto, "US and Philippines begin largest-ever drills after China exercises," *BBC News*, 11 April 2023, accessed 5 April 2023, US and Philippines begin largest-ever drills after China exercises - BBC News.

²²Tessa Wong, "The dove or the dog: China makes peace while baring teeth," *The BBC News*, 13 April 2023, accessed 5 May 2023, The dove or the dog: China makes peace while baring teeth - BBC News.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Montefiore, *Speeches*, 120.

²⁵Ibid., 138.

²⁶Ibid., 176-177.

worthy of that trust.”²⁷Therefore, the end game for aggressive and intimidating politics even when violence is used is to resolve conflict and bring about nation-building where justice and peace prevail. Hence, we turn to a peacebuilding approach that can bring about justice and peace in a state without the use of aggression or violence in politics in a democratic system like Nigeria.

Peacebuilding—Problem-solving approach is effective in politicking

We make the important point that the Nigerian state is built on the principles of democracy and social justice, 1999 Constitution, 14. 1;²⁸ sovereignty belongs to its people and government derives its legitimacy from the people, 1999 Con., 14. 2a; thus, the security and welfare of the people is the primary purpose of government, 1999 Con., 14. 2b; hence the participation of the people to elect its government is by the provisions of the Nigerian constitution, 1999 Con., 14. 2c; thus, we theorise with the Human Needs from the Nigerian constitution, a peacebuilding measure.

Human Needs theory

The Human Needs theory argues that there is a widespread belief that social problems are due to personal failings, that is, the youth in both Benue and Plateau states who were drunk, or drinking alcohol mixed with unknown substances lacked intelligence and diligence. The belief is that social problems stem from a lack of social consciousness, that is, a moral obligation to observe social norms.²⁹ However, there is a human dimension that is being ignored and this human dimension has to be included to remove the blame game and seek the source of conflict and the environmental conditions that promote conflict and violence, this should lead to institutional change. Hence, conflict including violence will have to be defined as a problem to be resolved rather than a situation in which behaviours have to be controlled.³⁰ Hence, we need not just to look at ways of controlling violence or aggression, but look at the root causes of conflict and violence. Therefore, the proposition is that some aggressions and conflicts are the direct results of some institutions and social norms being incompatible with inherent human needs. The argument is that some aggression and anti-social behaviours can be stimulated by social circumstances. Who knows if these youths were brought up properly? Why were people taking the food and drinks brought for voter inducement? Was it selfishness or a case of survival? Given the condition of those who were taking the food and drinks, we believe the latter is the case.

Therefore, there are human limits to abilities to conform to such institutions and norms, the person is not wholly conformable. On the contrary, the needs that are frustrated by institutions and norms require satisfaction. They will be

²⁷Ibid., 178.

²⁸Constitute, Nigeria's Constitution of 1999 with amendments through 2011, constituteproject.org, pdf. (Henceforth referred to as 1999 Con.)

²⁹John Burton, *Violence explained: The sources of conflict, violence and crime and their prevention*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997).

³⁰Burton, *Violence explained*.

pursued in one way or another including violence and social deviance.³¹These human needs are a common human evolutionary heritage that is non-material and non-hierarchical in nature, that is, safety/security, belongingness/love, self-esteem, personal fulfilment, identity, cultural security, freedom, distributive justice/subsistence, participation,³² and gender equality.³³ While it is these human needs that are frustrated, their satisfaction requires satisfiers. In this sense, there is a clear distinction between human needs seen as inherent common human evolutionary heritage, and satisfiers seen as particular means by which different societies and cultures aim to satisfy their needs.³⁴So, food and shelter are satisfiers for the need for subsistence.

Moreover, human needs do not change, but satisfiers change due to factors such as individual, character, gender, physical and psychological condition, or age.³⁵Manfred Max-Neef argues that there is no one-to-one correspondence way of satisfying human needs and satisfiers. One satisfier can satisfy various needs and a need may require satisfaction by various satisfiers. This relation is seen as not even fixed, but variable according to time, place, and circumstances. He explains this relationship with the example of a mother who breast-feeds her baby is simultaneously satisfying the infant's needs for subsistence, protection, affection, and identity.³⁶ However, the situation will be different if the baby were fed mechanically.³⁷ The baby might just be satisfying the need for subsistence, but not that of affection and identity. Given that human needs have satisfiers for their satisfaction; conflicts arise about how satisfiers are managed in society.

Satisfiers have their characteristics and Max-Neef identifies satisfiers for analytical purposes of five types, 1, violating or destructive; 2, pseudo; 3, inhibiting; 4, singular; and 5, synergic satisfiers, depending on how they relate to the whole needs system.³⁸ It is the characteristics of satisfiers that explain the needs' satisfaction and the needs' frustration. That is, the choice of a given satisfier instead of others affects the way needs are satisfied in holistic terms or enables conflict, aggression, or violence. As such, the first four categories of satisfiers do not belong to civil society as they are usually imposed, induced, ritualised, or institutionalised by authorities. They are the ones associated with conflict, aggression, and violence. However, the fifth category—synergic satisfiers, are satisfiers that are derived from liberating processes that arise

³¹Ibid.

³²John T. Agberagba, *Religion and Conflict Resolution: Fr. Francis Libermann's "Project for the Blacks" (1846) and its relevancy to 21st century Nigeria*,(Saarbrücken: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing, 2014a). 15.

³³John T. Agberagba, *Women's Peacebuilding Initiatives in the Benue Valley, Nigeria: Gender, Fundamental Human Needs and Conflict Resolution*,(Saarbrücken: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing, 2014b), 410-411.

³⁴Ivonne Cruz, Andri Stahel, and Manfred Max-Neef, "Towards a systemic development approach: Building on the human-scale development paradigm,"*Ecological Economics*, 68:15 (2009), 2024, accessed 20 May 2012, www.elsevier.com/locate/ecolacon.

³⁵Cruz, Stahel, and Max-Neef, Towards a systematic, 2023.

³⁶Manfred Max-Neef, "Development, and human needs," in *Real-life economics: Understanding wealth creation*, edited by Paul Ekins and Manfred Max-Neef, (London, New York: Routledge, 1992), 199

³⁷Max-Neef, Development, 199

³⁸Ibid.

from grass root communities.³⁹ Synergic satisfiers are the kind that stimulates the satisfaction of needs holistically. They satisfy a given need but also stimulate the satisfaction of other needs at the same time. They are apt for use in situations of elections. Thus, let us examine the kind of satisfiers used in the case study before we can recommend those synergic satisfiers that should be used in the Nigerian general elections.

The Police, INEC staff and elders, and the satisfaction of human needs

The pep-talk of the Police squad, we are happy to see you acting peacefully; the children or family members of those standing are not here fighting so why should you be fighting for them? This is the police being paternalistic and paternalism is considered to be an inhibiting satisfier. It generally over-satisfies a given need and seriously impairs the possibility of satisfying other needs. In this case, the talk is about the protection of votes, but it impairs the human need for understanding and identity. Voters are adults and not children, they do not need pep-talk from the police. The language of threat, that is, “if you behave any-how, we will deal with you any-how” by security agents amounts to the use of a pseudo-satisfier as it gives the false sense of vote security in the short term, but it annuls in the medium and long term the safety of voters in a democracy like Nigeria. The use of arms by security agents to secure votes is the use of destructive satisfiers that are applied under the pretext of protection but annihilate the possibility of satisfying the human needs of affection, participation, and freedom. The security agents do not have a right to shut at sight civilians because they want to snatch ballot boxes with machetes. This frustrates the human need for safety and security for citizens which are the original aims of having security agents in the first place. Burton insists that this is the human cost of unemployment to young people seeking their identity in society, and anti-social behaviours are a consequence; it is a struggle for recognition as a person.⁴⁰ Who does not know that unemployed young men going about snatching ballot boxes with matches are not used by corrupt politicians? Should they be killed? No, rather unemployment needs to be addressed. Indeed, Burton argues that this type of youth violence creating insecurity requires society to change and not the youth who should be “punished,” but that they need to be rehabilitated in a changed environment,⁴¹ that is, be given or assisted to be gainfully employed.

Contrasted, the INEC staff succeeded in their work, and the elders in Benue state in peacekeeping because they used a synergic satisfier—self-managed production. INEC staff just did their work very well, even without food. The elders used wisdom by simply calling the youth who wanted to cause trouble by name and asking them to behave well. Since they are known and well-respected people in their community, the youth guessed the consequence of continuing their delinquency. Both INEC staff and the elders were targeting securing the votes, but they also satisfied the human needs of protection, understanding, self-esteem, and identity of all the voters in the polling unit including the undisciplined youth. We cannot but praise INEC for training their staff to be that

³⁹Ibid., 205.

⁴⁰Burton, *Violence explained*.

⁴¹Ibid.

friendly with voters and dedicated to duty and the community elders for having self-managed skills to keep order in their community. Nigerian society needs to change where it remains power-elite dominated, and a holistic approach to problems is politically unpopular. If democracy is to survive in Nigeria, we need to move from power-elite politics to community-based problem-solving solutions. Burton calls this a new, a-disciplinary way, of problem-solving⁴² that provides opportunities to find resolutions to societal problems like ballot box snatching by thugs in Nigerian elections.

Voter intimidation and inducement, and the satisfaction of human needs

Burton argues that traditional democracy assumes that the minority should be prepared, not only to conform with the discriminatory norms of the majority but that they also have the inherent capability of such conformity;⁴³ so rather than resolve problems the majority seeks to control the minority. Furthermore, Burton argues that coercion in a global system where weapons are available and communities controlled by ineffective elites gain sympathy and support from external forces to fight back.⁴⁴ Indeed, it was this type of colonial politics—a democracy, that the majority and more powerful colonised the less powerful that lead ethnic minorities not to participate in the political processes for independence in Nigeria. This culture is perpetuated by the Nigerian political elite (neo-colonialists) copied by their party agents and supporters to abuse, and talk over, smaller party agents, supporters, and INEC staff. Similarly, they used “religious shaming” and name-calling to coerce others to either vote for them or not vote at all. Voter intimidation by party agents and supporters is an inhibiting satisfier, obsessive followership, to gain power, but it undermines and frustrates the basic human needs of protection, love, participation, and freedom of the minority. The fact that these agents could drink in front of everybody and some were even drunk demonstrates their level of high-headedness. Richard Rubenstein insists that when faced with minority rejection, the elite think that applying the right combination of threats and rewards, “deterrence” and “positive reinforcement” is what they need to win.⁴⁵ However, it is not and we need to find synergic satisfiers that will resolve this conflict for the majority and the minority.

Nonetheless, Rubenstein suggests that the governing elite believe they can simply pacify their considered “unruly subjects” by discovering the point at which to give them a little pleasure that would produce “consensual” to their rule.⁴⁶ Hence, the use of voter inducement in terms of cooked food and drinks, salt, Maggi cubes, and rice even on voting day; the setting up of canopies. Why is this successful? While charity is a pseudo-satisfier, in this case, it is directed at the basic human need of subsistence, and a starving person, s/he does not have a choice. It is a matter of life and death. Secondly, these can be seen as gifts

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Richard E. Rubenstein, “Basic human needs: The next steps in theory development,” *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 6 (2001): 1, accessed 20 May 2012, http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol6_1/Rubenstein.htm.

⁴⁶Rubenstein, Basic human needs.

which is a singular satisfier that is targeted to a single need, in this case, survival, while it is neutral it does not stimulate the satisfaction of other needs e.g., protection, freedom, subsistence, security, etc.

Therefore, the destructive satisfiers—the use of arms by the Police; pseudo-satisfier—Police threat on dealing with people anyhow; inhibiting satisfier—pep-talk by Police; inhibiting satisfier—voter intimidation tactics; singular satisfier—voter inducement in terms of food items were imposed, induced, ritualised or institutionalised on civil society, the voter, by the political elite who want to win elections by any means. These cannot produce an enduring democracy in Nigeria. Rather, the synergic—self-managed hard work of INEC staff and self-managed conflict resolution by community elders, are examples of what can establish Nigeria as one amongst democratic nations in the world. Similarly, we identify the type of synergic satisfiers that can contribute to Nigerian democracy next.

Recommendations for peaceful election in Nigeria

We recommend constitutional synergic satisfiers as a problem-solving approach for empowering the women, the youth, the Police, and community elders; for minimizing voter intimidation and inducement for conducting free, credible, and fair elections without violence in Nigeria. Synergic satisfiers are satisfiers that are derived from liberating processes that arise from grass root communities.⁴⁷ Synergic satisfiers are the kind that stimulates the satisfaction of needs holistically. They satisfy a given need but also stimulate the satisfaction of other needs at the same time. The best place that these satisfiers are stated is in the Nigerian 1999 Constitution (1999 Con.) as amended.

Synergic satisfiers for the Police, community elders, and civil institutional leaders

The Police, community leaders, civil institutional leaders in schools from primary to tertiary; civil service leaders need an orientation such that their loyalty is to the nation and it overrides sectional loyalties, 1999 Con., 15.4; hence, they can empower the ordinary citizen in the following prescriptions of the Nigerian constitution,

First, local community leaders with some local youth must be trained, “as local election monitoring and peace corps,” to watch over election polling units; they should be well paid for this work.

Second, community members, pupils, students, and civil servants must be taught the ethics of Nigeria,

1. discipline, integrity, social justice, religious tolerance, self-reliance, and patriotism to Nigeria and not to ethnicity, race, religion, or political parties, 1999 Con., 23;
2. the respect for National symbols, the National Flag, Anthem, and Pledge, 1999 Con., 24a;

⁴⁷Max-Neef, Development, 205.

3. how to maintain the good name of Nigeria and be ready to offer national service as may be required, 1999 Con., 24b; how to respect the dignity of other citizens and the rights and legitimate interests of others in the spirit of common brotherhood, 1999 Con., 24c;
4. how every citizen must contribute to the advancement, progress, and well-being of the community where s/he resides, 1999 Con., 24d; and how to assist appropriate lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order, 1999 Con., 24e.

Synergic satisfiers for women and youth against voter inducement

Women and the youth are targets of voter inducement because they are jobless, vulnerable, and are also the majority of voters. John Burton suggests that in a society like Nigeria, young people, and we add women must be given work and a role in politics⁴⁸ if ballot box snatching is to vanish. Furthermore, Burton insists that looking to the future, more attention needs to be given to childhood education, and we add a gender-streamlined education to all citizens, that is not adversarial in nature to institutions, schools, and families.⁴⁹ It must be an education for the satisfaction of the basic human need of subsistence, participation, and personal fulfilment, for women and youth. The 1999 Nigerian Constitution, 18.3, 16.2 & 17.3, provides satisfiers for this purpose, that is,

1. the government should eradicate illiteracy by providing free, compulsory, and universal primary education; free secondary, tertiary, and adult literacy education. Rather than asking for affirmative action of 35% for women's inclusion in the political life of the nation which is a singular satisfier, charity, or a gift to women; let the curriculum of Nigerian education at all levels include the teaching of the following women;
2. **Nigerian heroines**, Chief Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, educator, political campaigner, human rights activist, and suffragist; Amina of Zazzau, the woman who led men into war; Queen Moremi Ajasoro; Nana Asma'u; Florence NwanzuruahuNkiruNwapa; Chief Margaret Ekpo; Hajiya Gambo Sawaba; and
3. **Christian Biblical heroines**, Shiphrah and Puah, Hebrew midwives in Egypt; Rahab, a Canaanite woman of Jerico; Ruth, a Moabite woman; Deborah, a prophet and a judge of Israel; and Esther, a brave and strong queen.

The inclusion of these heroines will inspire girls and women in a synergic way to participate in Nigerian politics; boys and men will also become socialized to accept girls and women as their equals. Furthermore, the Nigerian state must ensure that the provisions of Article 17.3 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution become a right to women and the youth, that is,

1. the right to work and a reasonable standard of living, 1999 Con., 17.3a;
2. right to rest, leisure, and a safe work environment, 1999 Con., 17.3b-c;
3. right to Health care, 1999 Con., 17.3d; and
4. right to equal pay for work, 1999 Con, 17.3e.

⁴⁸Burton, *Violence explained*.

⁴⁹Ibid.

It implies the right to having a reasonable national minimum living wage, pensions, unemployment benefits, and adequate food and shelter for women and youth, 1999 Con., 16.2d.

More specifically, until such a time as when the above synergic satisfiers against voter inducement can be met, the government should consider, that is,

- ✓ giving a meal to voters on voting days since most people who vote cannot afford a meal at the polling units. Yet, people should vote and protect their vote by staying until votes are counted, and transmitted.

This is a singular satisfier targeting subsistence for the day, but it will counter attractive food as voter inducement on voting days at the polling units.

Synergic satisfiers against voter intimidation

Given that the motto of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is Unity and Faith, Peace, and Progress, 1999 Con., 15.1, the state should adopt the following synergic satisfiers to tackle intimidation in the country, that is,

1. Social order demands that every citizen have equality of rights, obligations, and opportunities before the law, 1999 Con., 17.2a;
2. All associations that are formed with members across ethnic, religious, and sectional barriers; are granted interest-free loans and tax-free commercial ventures, 1999 Con., 15.3d;
3. any associations that discriminate on grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic, and gender should be banned, 1999 Con., 15.2; and
4. Nigerians must be granted full residence rights in all parts of the Federation, 1999 Con., 15.3b.

Conclusion

Peaceful societies teach their children and adults to strictly use synergic satisfiers and reject destructive, inhibiting, singular, and pseudo-satisfiers as examined here to act peacefully in their communities. Nigeria should follow the example of these peaceful societies. Presently, children are educated in families, schools, and institutions based on adversarial systems and so citizens follow it up in later life including politics. Local people "as local election monitoring and peace corps," must make money, and add value, to conducting peaceful elections if peaceful living is to become our way of life in Nigeria. It is encouraging bottom-up security collaboration and peaceful elections. We can give a meal to voters on voting days to reduce voter inducement. This article also makes strong synergic satisfier recommendations from the 1999 Nigerian constitution to the government on how to support the citizenry and INEC for conducting free, fair, and credible elections in Nigeria. For instance, synergic satisfiers in satisfying the human need for subsistence, satisfy at four levels, being in terms of physical and mental health; at the level of having food, shelter, and work; at the level of doing, feeding, procreating, rest, and work; and at the level of interaction, a living environment and social setting.⁵⁰ Synergic satisfiers are holistic to the need of the human being. However, this is a study based on

⁵⁰Max-Neef, Development, 206.

cases from Benue and Plateau states alone and so it comes with the inherent limitations of a small number of cases for the study. Nonetheless, this is a modest academic attempt to fill the gap in academia about election police and contribute to election understanding in Nigeria. We hope that other scholars will do similar analyses from other case studies and a combination of these kinds of studies will form the basis of a solid government policy on conducting elections in Nigeria.

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