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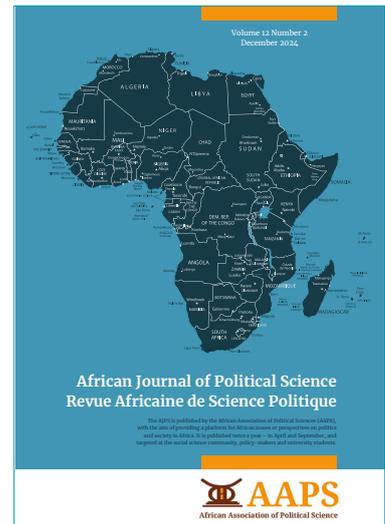
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EDITORIAL

Africa's Political Questions Today

SIPHAMANDLA ZONDI , TINUADE OJO  & JOSEF KEUTCHEU 
Editors

Preface

Africa stands at a crossroads, a continent of immense potential yet facing a complex web of political, social, and economic challenges. In an era marked by rapid globalization, technological advancement, and shifting geopolitical alliances, the political questions confronting Africa today are both urgent and consequential. From debates about governance and democratization to struggles over resource management and economic justice, the continent's future is shaped by forces both internal and external.

Some of the discussions in this edition seek to explore the most pressing political issues facing Africa, offering insights into the opportunities and dilemmas that define the region's contemporary landscape. Key themes include the quest for sound governance and elections, the impact of regional integration, the pursuit of sustainable peace, the challenges of education and exchanges, contested intellectual debates, and the intricate scandal of foreign influence in African politics. These issues intersect with critical concerns such as youth unemployment, climate change, human rights, and the legacy of colonialism, creating a complex matrix that demands nuanced analysis and bold solutions.

The articles draw on diverse voices who offer perspectives that are as varied as the continent itself.

This plurality is essential, for Africa is not a monolith; it is a mosaic of 54 nations, each with its own history, culture, and political trajectory. Yet, amidst this diversity, common aspirations emerge – peace, prosperity, justice, and dignity.

In presenting these challenges and opportunities, the aim is not merely to diagnose problems but to inspire solutions. Africa's future depends on bold leadership, engaged citizenship, and innovative thinking. By examining these critical political questions, this edition hopes to contribute to a broader understanding of the continent's trajectory and to the global conversation about its place in the 21st century.

It is to the resilient people of Africa, whose courage and creativity illuminate even the darkest moments, that this work is dedicated.

The work on this edition and volume would not have been possible without the hard work of fellow editors, Tinuade Ojo and Joseph Keutcheu, the contributions of the authors and peer reviewers. We thank the journal team at UJ Press as well.

Siphamandla Zondi
Editor-in-Chief

Analysing the manipulation of the youths, election violence and democratic retrogression in South Africa

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Abstract

Since the introduction of elective democracy in the 1990s, South African youths have played a significant role in the democratic process. Sadly, though, while some are building from the past experiences of the 1976 youth, others are deeply engrossed in crimes, violence, and thuggery. Several factors have been identified as the drivers of South African youth into different forms of criminalities. Prominent among them are the pauperisation of the youth by the state, unemployment, and their manipulation by the political elite. Rather than replicating the character of the youth of the 1970s who fought for better education and life, as well as the freedom of the black population during the dark days of apartheid. Some of the youths have turned to drugs and election violence, while others have become personal securities to top politicians, owing to difficult economic hardship. The paper opined to address this anomaly, there is a need for the South African youth to rediscover themselves by positioning themselves in politics and never expecting the government to empower them cheaply. Furthermore, the voice of the youth must not only be heard but be felt through character, integrity, discipline, and quality leadership. Through this, they will be able to shape policies, the direction of government, and the future of generations to come. Qualitative research techniques were used for this study. Data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions in five sampled locations in KwaZulu-Natal. The thematic and inductive methods of analysis were used to aid in the analysis of the generated data.

Keywords: Democracy, Democratic Retrogression, Election violence, youths, South Africa.

Introduction

Expectations were very high when the apartheid regime in South Africa was dismantled and replaced with democratic rule. The first all-inclusive elections in 1994 marked the beginning of a new dawn for all categories of South Africans and, especially, the youth. It could be recalled that the youth of the apartheid era, especially in the 1970s and the 1980s, participated actively and played a crucial role in the liberation movement (Liliesleaf, 2017). With the introduction of democracy as a form of government that is supposed to create an environment that enables individuals to realise their potential, the role and the voices of South African youth began to disappear. This is because the post-Apartheid youth have, in fact, failed to recreate the energy, enthusiasm and mental philosophy or demonstrate the philosophical persuasions exhibited by the youth of the 1970s and 1980s (Glanvill, 2011). While it can be argued that the South African youth have played a key role in shaping certain policies of the government that relate to education through the “Fees Must Fall Campaign”, this by no means is sufficient (Ngcebetssha, 2018). Despite this effort, they are nonetheless still being confronted with many challenges, prominent among them are being used for the wrong reasons, particularly by the politicians during election periods.

Election violence is not new to South Africa and, most importantly, in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province, where the study was conducted. Election violence is not just inimical to democratic consolidation but contributes significantly to democratic retrogression (Plaut, 2018; Ashindorbe, 2018). In the body of literature, a lot has been written on election violence in KZN; however, not much has been said about the linkage between youth participation in elections, election violence and democratic retrogression. As a result, our knowledge of the role played by these variables is based on speculations and conjecture.

It is important to clarify here that the category of youths referred to in this study is those who participate in elections and, especially, the unemployed youth. Sadly, the post-apartheid youth have undoubtedly failed to recreate the energy, enthusiasm and mental philosophy the apartheid youth had. This study, therefore, sought to contribute to the growing body of literature on the manipulation of the youth who participate in elections, election violence and democratic retrogression in South Africa. This paper argues that, for the youth of South Africa to be recognised and accepted as stakeholders in their politics, they must not only be free from the manipulation of the politicians but that their voice must be heard and their presence felt positively in all facets of national life. In other words, the South African youth must get involved in the process and be seen actively playing a positive role in shaping the direction of the politics of the country instead of allowing the old guard to continue to determine their destiny.

Following this introduction, the next section reviews the literature on youth participation in elections and election violence to clarify the role they play in democratic retrogression in KZN and South Africa as a whole. This is followed by the third section, which describes the methods employed in collecting data for the study. The fourth and fifth sections present and analyse the data using the qualitative research method and thematic analysis, and then a conclusion is drawn.

Contextualising Youths and election violence: A review of literature

Election has remained one of the key components of liberal democracy all over the world. It is essentially the means by which leaders are chosen and politically empowered to preside over any territorial entity by a people. More than that, the election does not only empower people politically but at the same time effect changes to political power (Ashindorbe, 2018). Elections may be considered an officially acceptable process of selecting a person(s) for public office or registering a political proposition through voting (Gwinn and Nortan, 1992). The processes of electing representatives are well prescribed and are contained in the constitutions or the electoral Acts of such a state as a legal document. Elections are not just cardinal characteristics of democratic governance but a confirmation that sovereignty truly belongs to the people. Majekodunmi and Adejwon (2012) assert that elections only make meaning to people in a democratic context as they lead to the choice of decision-makers through the majority of citizens. Thus, elections and democracy are inextricably linked (Aniekwe and Kushie, 2011). For any elections to be considered acceptable and used as a yardstick for democratic sustainability, they must be free and fair. Simply put, the elections must be seen to be transparent and create room for a level playing field for all participants. Notably, the electoral laws must be applied to all political parties and individuals as well as the institutions of government. Although the notion of a free and fair election presupposes several conditions, including the absence of manipulation, violence, and fraud, it emphasises the impartiality of the electoral body (Electoral Commission). It encourages mass participation by the electorate at all stages of the electoral process (Alemika and Omotosho, 2008). An election is viewed as a mutual security pact and operates with the coherent consent of the elite under conditions of bound uncertainty (Przeworski, 1991:12).

Election Violence

Electoral violence is a form of political violence differentiated by its timing, perpetrators and victims, objectives, and methods (Bekoe 2012: 2). Some election violence emanates from policy formulation and implementation of electoral laws, leading even to the conduct of the polls. When such policies are made to favour a particular interest, such as political parties, ruling elites and or an ethnic group- particularly in developing countries of Africa- violence is likely to erupt as the process's sanctity and the poll have already been tainted with. Thus, any random or organised action taken (often by the ruling party) to determine, delay or in any way influence an electoral process through the application of threat, verbal attack, hate speech, blackmail, destruction of property, physical assault and assassination is viewed as electoral violence (Fischer, 2002:8).

One common feature that differentiates electoral violence from political violence is that electoral violence is often utilised with the aim of achieving specific political objectives that will usually affect the entire electoral process and outcome. Secondly, it may take place at all levels/stages either before the election, during the election or after elections and thirdly, different actors are involved (state and non-state actors), which is why the process of electoral dispute resolution is often complex as many parties are involved and often end in deadlocks (Seifu, 2012). Election violence could assume different forms: pre-election period, violence during elections and post-election violence. All these three forms of election violence could play a vital role in any democracy and its consolidation.

To capture political power, the political elite employs all forms of intrigue and manipulation to guarantee them winning elections. In the process of intrigues and manoeuvrings, violence becomes inevitable. Electoral violence, therefore, has been defined as a subset of political violence (Taylor, 2018). Taylor further reasoned that election violence could be thought to be a kind of election malfeasance and, thus, very similar to election rigging, vote-buying and other forms of electoral malpractices /fraud. On the other hand, Schuld (2013) describes election violence to include a more severe form of political assassinations that has become a recurrent dismal. Certainly, the province of KwaZulu-Natal is notorious for political killings, which explains why election violence is without doubt a common feature of most elections in KZN (Höglund and Jarstad 2011). Despite all attempts by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders to stem the menace of election violence in KZN, the desired result has not been achieved yet. This calls for more efforts across the board to ensure that the incidences of election violence are permanently addressed.

Studies have shown that the youth have been at the centre of most election-related violence, particularly when it comes to thuggery, burning and destruction of the electoral materials across Africa and other developing democracies (Samuel, 2017; Okello, 2016; Eneji and Okeorji, 2018; Isola, 2018). The involvement of the youth in election-related violence is not a surprise, considering the way and manner in which they have been neglected by successive governments for many years. Eneji and Okeorji (2018) reveal that the youth have been enmeshed in violent contestations due to structural conditions, which have necessitated this violence. Eneji and Okeorji (2018) argue that poverty, unemployment, lack of education, drugs and lack of social security have exposed most of the youth to being manipulated by politicians and other criminal activities outside the realm of elections.

In the KwaZulu-Natal province and in the wider South African society, election violence could start with mere protest action, which could gradually turn into real violence (Schuld, 2013). Among some of the factors that have triggered election violence among the youth in South Africa are the feelings of constant alienation by their political leaders (David, Mayisa, Struwig, Gordon

and Roberts, 2016). Disillusionment with the ruling African National Congress (ANC) has been building over the years owing to the failure of the ruling party to fulfil most of its promises to the youths. Angered by the insensitivity of the ANC to the hardship of ordinary citizens, especially among the black population, makes them vulnerable to the manipulation of the elite that elicits these violent reactions. Taylor (2018:7-8) outlines a number of factors that motivate young people into election violence, such as the weaknesses of electoral management bodies, the presence of pre-existing social conflicts, the partiality of international election observer groups toward particular candidates and the failure to prosecute perpetrators of election-related violence. Samuel (2017) also identified how fierce competitive elections among political rivals have resulted in violence during and after elections. Elections, of course, can exacerbate tension, and this, without doubt, has a negative aftermath on the consolidation of democracy.

It has been argued that young people have found themselves embroiled in this undemocratic disorder because of their hopeless and disadvantaged status within the current South African political landscape (Mugisha, Ojok, Kiranda, and Kabasa, 2016). Admitting the fact that youth are much unrepresented in the political arena, how come they suddenly become violent actors? Two plausible explanations can be derived from this question: In the first instance, youth demographic dominance is used to champion the interests of particular dominant elites with little or no response to the mirage of issues confronting the youth. By extension, many youths in South Africa and Africa are exploited by the older political elites who use them as a climbing ladder to attain their own political gains. In the second instance, however, young people see electoral violence as the last resort to creating their own spaces within the political arena (Okello, 2016). Thus, so long as the youth in South Africa continue to react to their social dislocation through violence, the future of democracy is seriously in doubt. The persistence of election violence championed by the youth will, without doubt, culminate in democratic retrogression. However, a strategic political shift that focuses on the youth will doubtlessly transform them into useful instruments for national development rather than an instrument of violence by the elite.

Methodological Issues

This paper draws on a qualitative research technique in which data was collected across five locations (Umlazi, KwaMashu, Ulundi, Nongoma, and Nkandla) of KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa.

The data for this study was collected through the instrumentality of interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The participants for this study were selected using purposive sampling techniques.

Table 1: Samples and population of the study

Divisions of Province	Population	Sample	Sampling method	Interview	FGD (Members per group)
KwaZulu- Natal					
KwaZulu-Natal Province	Politicians	5	Purposive sampling	5	FGD1(10)
	Electorates	5		5	FGD2(8)
Total		10		10	18

Source: Field Work 2019. Sample Size= 10

As shown in Table 1, a total of 10 people were interviewed, while 18 participated in two separate focus group discussions across the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The category of people interviewed included politicians and electorates. Among the research participants are five politicians and five electorates. Given the importance of this study, the research participants were further

categorised to include males and females who have, at one point or the other, participated in politics and elections before. Out of the 10 participants, four were serving Councilors, two were seasoned politicians, and the remaining four were youths who were politically conscious. This same categorisation was carefully followed in the selection of the participants for the focus group discussion. All the participants for this study were purposively selected to participate willingly.

To elicit the views of the interviewees, a focus group discussion was incorporated to aid in collecting quality data for the study. The questions for both the interview and the focus group discussion revolve around issues like: the motivations for youth involvement in election violence, and why do the politicians like to use the youth, and how can this problem be addressed? The questions for the interview were open-ended, with ample opportunity for the respondents to express themselves beyond the question asked. All these questions sought to understand how the political elite have succeeded in manipulating the youth over the years, into participating in a series of election-related violence, and what can be done to mitigate the menace.

After receiving ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal to proceed to the field for data collection, the researcher had to seek further permission from the African National Congress (ANC) to interact with its members. With the granting of permission, the researcher engaged politicians and the electorates on issues relating to the role of the youths in championing election violence in KZN without hesitation. First of all, the researcher had to explain to the participants the purpose of the research and that their participation was voluntary. The study adopted interpretivism as a philosophical approach used to study social order through the subjective interpretation of the participants involved (Bhattacharjee, 2012:19; Creswell, 2012). The researcher identified the participants face to face as they were purposively selected to participate in the study (Archibald and Munce, 2015:34). The face-to-face interview took a minimum of 40 minutes per participant, while the focus group discussion took a maximum of 1 hour 30 minutes. Permission was also sought for to use an audio recorder for the interview and the focus group discussion.

The generated data was subjected to a qualitative method of analysis by the researcher. With regard to the responses from the interviews and focus group discussion, all the transcripts were processed and analysed after coding. First of all, all the interviews and the focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim. This study utilised four steps in thematic analysis. These include the identification of major themes; allocation of codes to main themes; thematic classification of responses, and thematic integration of responses into texts. Qualitative data analysis was also utilised in the focus group discussions and interviews to derive patterns and meanings. Matrix was also utilised to aid the classification of responses and easy analysis of all the responses. In simple terms, what the Matrix does in any data analysis is that it significantly contributes to the display, presentation, pragmatic evaluation, and the dissemination of findings in a study (Averill, 2002). The author argues that Matrix analysis is one of the strategies used to advance knowledge and enhance the development of evidence in qualitative research.

The manipulation of the youth, election violence and democratic retrogression

It is no longer news that youths have, over the years, been foot soldiers of politicians, championing the course of election violence all over Africa and KwaZulu-Natal in particular. This menace is not just bad but detrimental to social, political and economic development rather than negatively contributing to democratic retrogression. The youth in South Africa have been manipulated due to their vulnerability and their selfish interest, too. This section examines the manipulation of the youths into election violence by the elite and its impact on democratic retrogression in KZN. Matrix 1. Below is a detailed record of the responses of respondents to facilitate easy analysis.

Matrix 1: Summary of youth's involvement in election violence

Subtheme/sub question	Respondent responses	Source(s)
Poverty, Unemployment and Vulnerability of the youths	<i>Because they are the most vulnerable. They are vulnerable not because they are agile, but they are vulnerable. This is a young man who has no job, who has no business, and then free money is coming from somewhere. Sometimes free cars coming and some promise that can make life beautiful for you."</i>	FGDKZN2
	<i>Yes, because the politicians give them what they lack</i>	FGDKZN 1
	<i>No. it's because the youths are idle and want to be seen doing something, be it good or bad. They, politicians can psyche the youths as they have much influence on them.</i>	SPAKZN
	<i>Because most of the youths have been deliberately kept in poverty and unemployed by the state for this purpose. And they must be the ones to do it because the power and influence of money cannot be resisted. And because these youths are very active, and through their untapped energy, they can be manipulated in the wrong way.</i>	KHUKZN
The youths, energetic, drugs and the political elite	<i>...Do other sexes have the strength like the youths? Is it the women? Is it old people? Do they have the strength to carry a gun and shut people?</i>	GRAKGS
	<i>Because most of the youths are using drugs, alcohol, cocaine, cigarette, etc so, they can be used by the political elite</i>	KUNKZN
	<i>The youths are energetic and unemployed hence, they are susceptible to be used. Some are being used as a hit squad for politicians, personal security and bouncers for the politicians</i>	SBOKZN
	<i>The youths have the energy, the exuberance, they have the strength to muster everything and handle all the harsh condition.</i>	OBETKGS
	<i>Because the youths are the most active group of people, and our energy is needed by the politicians always at any time.</i>	SNHKZN
	<i>Youths are the majority in society and besides, they are still young and energetic. So, they can be easily manipulated.</i>	NKOKZN
The clash of interest between the youths and the Politicians	<i>...it depends on the interest because the youths too have their own interest. Whoever you are going to use for political achievement (to achieve a political goal), must have their interest. So, the youths have their own interest but what strikes their interest is the political education they are being given...</i>	ENGRKGS
	<i>...the youths are looking for money here and there. Therefore, they will do anything to survive. Reasons being that poverty has affected so many of these youths and the only means to survive is to do what is available for survival. So, what they are desirous at the time of election is money.</i>	NKOKZN

Poverty, Unemployment and Vulnerability of the Youth

Apart from poverty and unemployment, the youth remain very vulnerable, as the data have revealed. Their vulnerability stems from the fact that they are idle and easy prey to the politicians who would need their services when the need arises. This could mean that since these youths have always been at the mercy of the politicians, the politicians have devised a way of psyching the youths to do their bidding, principally because they (the youth) have been deliberately impoverished by the state. Considering their energetic nature as well as their idleness, they become very useful tools in the hands of politicians. A participant noted that:

“Because most of the youths have been deliberately kept in poverty and unemployed by the state for this purpose. And they must be the ones to do it (violence) because of the power and influence of money, which cannot be resisted. And because these youths are very active, and through their untapped energy, they can be manipulated into the wrong way” (KHUKZN).

It is very clear from the remarks here that the youth have become redundant in society mainly because the state has failed to prioritise them. Therefore, they are disposed to give their energy

and time to those who need them. Interestingly, the data reveal that the pauperisation of the youth and their vulnerability makes them susceptible to the manipulation of the politicians for election violence, which in turn leads to democratic retrogression

The youth, energetic, drugs and the political elite

The youth are generally known to be energetic, and this energy exposes them to many social problems, such as drugs and the manipulation of the elite. Their energy is easily tapped as a hit squad, personal security for politicians, bouncers in clubs and for politicians. This may mean some have channeled their energy into taking cocaine, a substance the politicians like to see them use and get high. A respondent observed that:

The youths are energetic and unemployed; hence, they are susceptible to be used. Some are being used as a hit squad for politicians, personal security, and bouncers for political gains (SBOKZN).

From the data in Matrix 1. above, it is evident that the youths are viable instruments in the hands of the politicians who use them for political adventure. Some have resorted to taking drugs such as cocaine and other deadly substances inimical to their health. So, their youthful exuberance has been gainfully harnessed by the political elite to advance the course of their political career.

The clash of interest between the youths and the Politicians

From the data in Matrix 1. Above, it has been revealed that the youth who participate in election violence do so not just because they are being manipulated by the politicians but surprisingly because they (the youths) have their own interests. Part of the interest of the youths is to benefit from the booties that come from the primitive accumulation by the politicians. This clearly explains why the youth have found politicians to be their best friends: because of the benefits of good cash, cars, foreign trips, and, above all, a life of luxury. Some of them want to ride beautiful cars, wear designer clothes and shoes, and have fun with the best ladies in town, hence, their participation in election violence. Engaging in this act is far better than living in abject poverty and chronic unemployment. A research participant stated that:

...it depends on the interest because the youths too have their own interest. Whoever you are going to use for political achievement (to achieve a political goal), must have their interest. So, the youths have their own interest, but what strikes their interest is the political education they are being given... (ENGRKGS).

Rather than becoming true ambassadors of their countries, which are built around honesty, integrity, and patriotism, most of the youths, as shown by the data, would rather join the bandwagon of unpatriotic groups than stay away. Meaning they are willing to sell their integrity for monetary gains because it is better than living in poverty. After all, it is a 50/50 thing because they will get what they want, and they (the youths) will equally get what they want; fair and balanced! Reacting to the way the youths have suddenly changed their behaviours owing to the effects of money and poverty, a respondent noted that:

...the youths are looking for money here and there. Therefore, they will do anything to survive. Reasons being that poverty has affected so many of these youths and the only means to survive is to do what is available for survival. So, what they are desirous at the time of election is money (NKOKZN).

Desperate times lead to desperate decisions and actions. This is the reality in KZN among the young people now for sale to the highest bidder, especially the political elite. This means survival to an ordinary young South African is far more important than any so-called form of morality. The implication, then, is that since poverty is severe and unemployment is at the highest levels, desperate youths will give up anything for survival.

In summary, this section has revealed the relationship between the manipulation of the youth into active participation in election violence and the resultant effect that leads to democratic retrogression. Without a doubt, the youth have been used by politicians for the wrong reasons, including election violence. However, the study also shows that besides poverty and unemployment, which have been labelled as factors for their involvement in election violence, the youth also have their agenda for allowing themselves to be used by politicians. They see it as a means of making easy and fast money rather than being poor and redundant. These, put together, undermine democracy and its consolidation efforts.

What is the implication of these findings?

The findings of this study are discussed below using the elite theory to support the manipulation of the youth into election violence. The elite is known to be a tiny group of individuals who exert so much influence in a political society. The theory helps give an understanding of how societies are structured socially, economically, and politically. The origin of Elite theory can be traced to the philosophical works of Gaetano Mosca (1858–1941), Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), and Robert Michels (1876–1936). Mosca explained how tiny minorities out-organise, out-smart, and outwit large majorities, arguing that “political classes” – Mosca’s coinage for political elites – usually have “a certain material, intellectual, or even moral superiority” over the people they rule over (Higley, 2010; Lopez, 2013). The elite theory has been adopted to aid your understanding of youth involvement and participation in election-related violence in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Manipulating the youths for election violence and democratic retrogression

There is no doubt the young have been very central in most election violence across Africa. However, their involvement has not been healthy for the growth of democracy, especially in KwaZulu-Natal. The data revealed that some of the reasons for the involvement of the youths in election-related violence include Poverty, unemployment and their vulnerability (David and Manu, 2015). Interestingly, more data show that beyond their manipulation by the politicians, the youths have their own selfish interest in participating in the election even outside the influence of the politicians. They want to benefit from the loot of the politicians, which is why they even go ahead to approach them for any possible assignment. Below is the summary of the Matrix of all responses.

Matrix 2: Summary of research on youths' involvement in election violence

Research question	Emergent theme/s	Interaction with literature	Sources
Youths' involvement in election violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Poverty, Unemployment Vulnerability of the youths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The youths, energetic, drugs the political elite - The clash of interest between the youths and the Politicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of free and fair elections -Destruction of life and property -Increasing levels of instability and lawlessness -Sharp divisions and unhealthy rivalries -Intimidations and political killings -Loss of credibility in the electoral process -Political parties and the leadership style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maduegbuna (2015) - Ndulo and Lulo (2010) - Ashindorbe, (2009) - Taylor (2018) - Eneji and Okeorji (2018@) - Plaight (2018) - Isola (2018) - Samuel (2017)

Conclusion

This paper interrogated how the youth are being manipulated into electoral violence in KwaZulu-Natal and the consequences of that to the democratic retrogression in South Africa. Through the data collected, it was revealed that the conduct of the politicians in seasons of elections has been terrible, hence the tendencies towards manipulating the most vulnerable group, the youth, in violence. The study further showed that the historical past (colonialism) and the current influence of the colonised societies still resonate significantly on the day-to-day affairs of the former colonies with implications that seem to impede stability. It further identified Poverty, Unemployment and Vulnerability of the youths as some of the loopholes that allow for the manipulation of young people into violence during election time. Consequent upon their pauperisation, the youth, though energetic, have resorted to drugs, which make them susceptible to being used by the political elite. Interestingly, young people have devised a new means of survival under the harsh economic realities that they face daily. In seeking to achieve their objectives, there is a clash of interest between the youth and the Politicians. Certainly, this has constituted a real setback to the maturation of democracy. Clearly, this study has unpacked the reasons for the manipulation of the youths into election violence and the consequences of democratic retrogression in South Africa.

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Electoral Violence and Political Alienation in Africa

A Survey of the 2019 Nigerian General Elections

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Abstract

The research investigated the impact of electoral violence on voter alienation in Africa using Nigeria as a case. It attempted to ascertain the cause of low turnout of voters in the 2019 general elections and to determine the extent to which violence in elections can affect participation by gender, age and educational status. The aim of the study was to find out the relationship between violence and alienation in the Nigerian electoral process. The study adopted the survey research design and used data elicited from a sample of 1,200 respondents selected from six local government areas representing the six geo-political zones. The simple percentages and Chi-Square statistical techniques were utilized to test and determine the degree of association intrinsic in the stated hypotheses. The findings from the study show a positive relationship between violence and alienation. Thus, electoral violence is responsible for the alienation of voters from the electoral process. Consequently, the following suggestions are made: The federal and state governments should put on modalities to mitigate the incidences of violence during elections; perpetrators of electoral violence should be sanctioned; accordingly, while the African Union should closely monitor the various African States electoral processes to sanction any breach and mitigate incidences of violence in elections.

Keywords: Political Alienation; Electoral Violence; Voter Abstention; Voter Turnout; 2019 General Elections.

Introduction

Democracy the world over is based on the principles of adequate representation and participation. Without the participation of the citizenry in the democratic practice, there would be no democracy or a democratically elected government. This is so because an election that serves as the forum for selecting or electing representatives into a democratic government involves the ardent participation of the citizens. An election thus serves as a contact point between the people and the elected representatives. If this linkage or contact point is weakened by a low-level participation, it could lead to a destabilization of the political system since adequate participation in the voting process signifies voters' confidence, support, and legitimacy of the political and governance system. However, there is global evidence of a continuous and sustained reduction in voter turnout at every election period (International IDEA, 2016). In Africa, violence has become infested with electoral conduct. The Nordic African Institute (2012) stated that a study of over fifty countries data by Kewir et Gabriel in 2018 found that all countries studied at some point had incidences of violent elections. In Nigeria, statistics show a declining percentage of voters in various elections especially from the Fourth Republic (i.e., 1999 to 2019) (International IDEA

database, 2015; 2019). The survey is based on the Nigerian 2019 general elections. The central thesis of the study is that electoral violence is a factor of alienation that is responsible for the low-level of voter turnout during elections in Nigeria and the 2019 general elections. Nigeria was chosen as a case because the country has a history of many incidences of electoral violence. Since the spate of violent elections has similar characteristics in the political trajectory of African states, findings from the study can be generalized to the African continent. Studies conducted on electoral violence in Africa such as in Kewir et Gabriel (2018) and Shenga and Pereira (2019) have focused on the effect, causes and consequences of electoral violence on participation and voters abstention. None of these studies investigated electoral violence as a cause of voter alienation linking them with the variables of gender, age and educational status to determine the degree of alienation by violent elections. Thus, this study is novel and a contribution to extant literature for this initiative.

A Conception of Violence and Electoral Violence

The term violence has been explained from the point of the employment of force illegitimately to enforce decisions or actions on other people against their will (Kolawole, 1988; Höglund, 2006; Keane, 1996). Subsequently, violence can be construed in terms of the employment of physical force or power deliberately (whether as threats or attempted) against one's self, another person, a group or community that has the likelihood to or results in psychologically harm, deprivation, and an injury or death (WHO 2002). Violence has been pigeonholed into three typologies- physical violence, structural violence, and psychological violence. Physical violence relates to harm or attacks that inflict injury on persons which can lead to death. Structural violence has to do with the unfair and biased treatment of people in society. Psychological violence deals with harm or injury to the mind of the individual such as all forms of threats, harassment, indoctrination, and brainwashing (Jinadu 1980, Galtung 1985, 1991; Schröder & Schmidt 2001).

According to Höglund (2009 in Taylor, 2018: 8),

...widespread agreement on a clear definition has proven relatively challenging. Broadly speaking, electoral violence can be grouped within one of two more common fields of political analysis ... First, electoral violence can be thought of as a subset of political violence and thus conceptually similar to communal violence, rebellion, and civil war... Electoral violence might be thought of as a type of political violence that is defined by four criteria: 1) the motive of the violence, 2) the timing of the violence, 3) the actors perpetrating the violence, and 4) the targets of the violence...

Violence refers to acts inimical to the electoral process, which is carried out by agents that are anti to credible, free, and fair elections. Such acts as perpetrated against the actors in the electoral process include blackmail, coercion, various forms of threats and intimidation as well as inflicting physical injury including assassinations and deaths (Fischer, 2002 and Sisk, 2009). Electoral violence has been differentiated from other types of violence by Höglund (2009), who aver that electoral violence is a type of violence associated with the processes of elections and voting periods, which is intended to influence electoral processes and outcomes.

“Alternatively, electoral violence can be thought of as a type of election malfeasance, and therefore more similar to election rigging, vote-buying, and other forms of electoral fraud. Violence is then one element of the menu of manipulation that can be used to manipulate election results” (Schedler 2002 in Taylor, 2018: 8). According to (Nwolise 2007), electoral violence epitomizes any type of planned action that is tantamount to physical, psychological, and structural threats directed at either to intimidate, harm, blackmail, or pressure a candidate for political office. This

action could be before, during, or after the conduct of an election intended at influencing and subverting the otherwise fairness of the electoral process.

“In terms of motivation, violence is usually intended to influence the outcome of an election. The specific type of violence employed can take a variety of forms, but it is temporally close to Election-Day. The perpetrators of violence are generally actors who have a vested interest in the election outcome, such as members of the state security apparatus (police, military, etc.), militias that are loyal to particular parties, and rank-and-file party supporters. For this subject, electoral violence can be “understood as a coercive force, directed towards electoral actors and/or objects that occur in the context of electoral competition... [It] can occur before, during, or after elections and it can target a variety of actors, including candidates, activists, poll workers, election observers, journalists and voters” (Birch & Muchlinski forthcoming, in Taylor, 2018: 8). Electoral violence has also been seen as any action that overtly threatens the physical and psychological structure of the human being resulting in any form of damage or harm directed at political events, electoral materials, and electoral actors including, the destruction of property (IFES, 2011). From the foregoing, violence associated with electoral activities can be construed as acts directed overtly or covertly, directly or indirectly aimed at undermining the actors in the electoral process. The objective of agents of electoral violence is to influence the processes of elections unduly and to gain an advantage over other political rivals or opponents.

The Concept of Political Alienation

The term political alienation can be construed as the relative continuing sense of estrangement from or rejection of the prevailing political system by the individual citizen. The politically alienated desires to vote, but their feeling of insignificance to the system restricts them. They feel that their interests are not regarded and represented by political leaders (Glasberg & Shannon, 2010). The alienated are of the view that political leaders who hold offices are incompetent, self-seeking, and corrupt; thus, they are suspicious, hostile, distrustful, and skeptical of these leaders. They believe that the political process as a whole is fraudulent; a betrayal of public trust and a charade (Campbell et al, 1954). Alienation has been given several connotations but the overriding notion which best describes the term is that of ‘powerlessness’ i.e. erosion of the individual’s freedom and control (Seeman 1959; Roberts 1987). Thus, “alienation can be conceived as the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his behavior cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcement, he seeks” (Seeman 1959: 784). Roberts (1987) described ‘powerlessness’ as a result of a sense of the loss of self-worth. Powerlessness and self-estrangement have been identified as the fundamental features of alienation (Seeman 1959; Korzeniewski, 1994; Dalton, 2007). Further discourse by scholars described political alienation as a blend of a feeling of inefficacy and a lack of confidence in political institutions (Kim, 2005; Catterberg & Moreno 2006).

An analysis of Alienation as the Cause of Voter Abstention

The concept of political alienation as popularized by Seeman (1959), Roberts (1987) and Finifter (1970) can be construed as the relative continuing sense of estrangement from or rejection of the prevailing political system by the individual citizen. The politically alienated desires to vote, but their feeling of insignificance to the system restricts them. They feel that their interests are not regarded and represented by political leaders. The alienated are of the view that political leaders who hold offices are incompetent, self-seeking, and corrupt; thus, they are suspicious, hostile, distrustful, and skeptical of these leaders. They believe that the political process as a whole is fraudulent; a betrayal of public trust and a charade (Seeman 1959: 784). Seeman (1959)

and Finifter (1970) identified five alternative meanings of political alienation- powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness isolation, and self-estrangement. Political powerlessness, normlessness, and self-estrangement are the main factors that may account for the abstention of eligible voters from the electoral process in Nigeria. Closely linked to these variables is political disappointment indicated by Finifter (1970) (an individual's disinterest in a political decision or participation because of bad governance and corruption by political leaders). These variables speak of the individual's own perceived incapacity to affect electoral and political outcomes. Also, there is the issue of distrust of government by the electorates which could result from unfulfilled electoral promises. There is also the case of corruption by political elites and leaders and the belief by the electorates that their interests are not taken into account by the Nigerian government. Thus, citizens and eligible voters become alienated from the electoral process and the entire political system.

Pertinent to the issue of alienation is of violence either before, during or after the electoral activities. Electoral violence has become a phenomenon experience in Nigerian elections and is capable not only in alienating the voters from the electoral process but also, in instigating them to attack the political system. Apart from abstaining from the electoral and political process, the alienated may engage in other acts that are adverse to the political system and the respective government; since they do not share the view that the system is just and responsive to their feelings. Given the fact that the alienated do not share the values operative in the political system, they may choose to attack those values and support civil disorders, protests, revolution, electoral violence, etc. against the political process and the state. It can thus be hypothesized that those who distrust the existing political process are an ideal audience for extremist appeals; and an explosive potential for radical-revolutionary programmes. For instance, among the reasons given by the Boko Haram terrorist group for taking up arms against the Nigerian State was bad governance resulting in corruption, poverty, and failure to meet the socio-economic needs of Nigerians especially, in the Northern States (Walker, 2012; Forest, 2012). Thus, it is likely that the alienated may support or even be recruited by such sects to subvert the state. From the foregoing, it is clear that alienation takes place in two forms, passively (i.e. withdrawal from participation) and actively (i.e. participating in acts that may disrupt the political process). Since the resultant effect of alienation has its dangers both passively and actively, it should be given adequate attention.

Elections and Violence in Africa: A Brief Analysis

Violence in the electoral circle has been rampant in Africa and studies by scholars are a pointer. Bleck and van de Walle (2019), Fisher (2002) and Straus and Taylor (2012) stated that hundreds of general elections have recorded about 25 per cent violence since 1990. For instance, elections have been violent in Nigeria, Sudan (Bratton, 2013; Sisk, 2012), Kenya (Burchard, 2015; Mueller, 2012), Cote d' Ivoire, Zimbabwe (Boone and Kriger, 2012), Uganda (Blattman, 2009), Togo (Bocker, 2012), Zambia in 2016 (Bleck and van de Walle, 2019), and Mozambique in 2019 (Shenga and Howe, forthcoming, in Shenga and Pereira, 2019). Thus, electoral violence has resulted in the death of thousands of people with hundreds of thousands others displaced such as in Zimbabwe (2000-2008), Kenya (2007-2008) and Cote d' Ivoire (2010-2011) (International Peace Institute, 2011). The causes of violent related activities before, during and after elections are multifaceted. The Nordic Africa Institute (2012) broadly categorized these causes into two broad divisions- structural factors and electoral process factors. The structural factors include the subsisting power configuration in an emerging democracy such as political exclusion, poor governance, informal patronage practices and poor economy. The electoral process factors include flawed or failed elections, electoral fraud and a weak or manipulable Electoral Management Body. Thus,

electoral violence is closely associated with some costs. Aside the deaths recorded and the harm to the processes of elections, electoral violence could lead to a crisis of legitimacy, political stability and consolidation of the democratic process. It could also, lead to humanitarian crisis due to displacements. In serious situations, it could exacerbate armed conflict, insurgencies, terrorism and a general breakdown of law and order that could result in military coup d'état truncating the democratic process The Nordic Africa Institute (2012).

Electoral participation and the 2019 general elections in Nigeria

The consolidation and sustenance of the democratic structure through a free, fair, credible and periodic election is the most fundamental challenge of most African countries including Nigeria (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1997; CDD, 2019). Abiding by the rules of the game in ensuring a credible electoral outcome has posed a serious challenge to the Nigerian state since the birth of the Fourth Republic (1999– 2019). Since 1999, six civilian administrations have been installed, while five general elections have been organized by civilian governments (till 2019) in the quest for democratic consolidation. That is, the elections conducted between 2003 and 2019 have witnessed the transfer of political power from one civilian administration to another. For example, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (the incumbent president in 1999) was reelected president in 2003 on the platform of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). Also, the Late Alhaji Umaru Yar'Adua of the PDP won the 2007 general election and was sworn in as president. In April 2011, the Acting President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan (who became president following the death of President Umaru Yar'Adua) won the 2011 elections and was sworn in as president on the platform of the PDP (Aniekwe and Kushie, 2011). Furthermore, Muhammadu Buhari, the candidate of the All Progressive Congress (APC), an opposition party, won the March 28, 2015, presidential election (BBC (April, 2015). President Buhari was re-elected as president on the platform of the APC, on February 23, 2019 (Ojetunde, 2019).

Though democracy (transition of government) was consolidated in the period between 2003 and 2019, various elections conducted during these periods were infested with electoral frauds leading to several electoral and violent conflicts resulting in loss of lives, displacements, and destruction of property worth billions of naira. For example, For example, the 1999 general election witnessed a presumably more peaceful atmosphere with minimal violent incidences arguably because it was midwifed and supervised by the military. Subsequent elections especially those of 2003 and 2007 conducted under the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo were marred by serious irregularities and violence and were adjudged as the most fraudulent and corrupt elections conducted in the history of the Nigerian State (Kurfi, 2005; Animashaun, 2010; Aniekwe and Kushie, 2011). The 2003 general elections were bedeviled with numerous irregularities and malpractices such as fraudulent electoral practices, ballot box stuffing, intimidation of voters, assassinations, killings, etc. It has thus been contended by political analysts that the election of 2003 was a charade and a mockery of voters and the electoral process because it was a process of merely selecting pre-determined winners by political elites and their caucuses (IFES, 2011; Abimbola & Adesote, 2012). Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2004) for instance, reported that about one hundred persons lost their lives and with many sustaining various degrees of injuries during the election period (between April and May 2003) in Nigeria.

The general election of 2007 was adjudged the worst election yet, in post-independent Nigeria (HRW, 2007). The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES- Nigeria) stated that there were nine hundred and sixty-seven (967) incidences of "pre- and post-election violence" (Omotosho, 2007; HRW, 2007; IFES-Nigeria, 2007). An interview conducted by HRW prelude to the 2007 elections showed that some eligible voters indicated their unwillingness to participate

in the election. For instance, a retiree from Oye- Ekiti indicated the resolve of some elderly men and women not to participate in the 2007 elections for fear of electoral violence. During the April 2007 elections, close to three hundred (300) persons reportedly lost their lives. The resultant turnout level of eligible voters was very low as many registered voters were discouraged by the spate of violence across the country (HRW, 2007; Asemota, 2011; Binniyat, 2011). The election of 2011 was generally accepted as partially fair by observers from the local and foreign divide. Although also marred by irregularities such as the intimidation of voters, snatching of ballot boxes, vote- buying, etc., it was a marked improvement from previous elections such as in the 1999, 2003, and 2007 elections (Yusuf 2011; Bekoe, 2011). "...Unfortunately, the election adjudged as one of the most credible in the history of Nigeria was dented by the escalation of an unprecedented level of post-electoral violence in which unquantifiable lives and property were lost/ destroyed..." (CDD (2019: 29).

Nigeria's 2011 elections were the most violent in the country's modern history as more than 800 people were killed in just three days following the presidential election ... The 2011 elections represented the greatest bloodshed in the country since the 1967-70 civil war. This violence was largely triggered by the loss of Muhammadu Buhari (now running under the banner of the Congress for Progressive Change [CPC]) to PDP incumbent Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from the South who had assumed the presidency after the death in office of President Yar'Adua. As with the re-election of Shagari in 1983, Jonathan's decision to run and subsequent victory was seen violating the unwritten agreement between North and South to share power by alternating presidential representation every two terms. Many Northerners felt that as Yar'Adua had died in office during his first term, the North was still owed another full term of the Presidency and were therefore aggrieved by Jonathan's candidacy (The Fund for Peace, 2018: 14).

The general elections of 2015 (March 28th and April 11th) have been adjudged the best election ever conducted in Nigeria (Gabriel 2015). Election monitors from both domestic and foreign divide scored the election high. The election was relatively peaceful. The technological innovation by INEC- that is the introduction of biometric voters' registration and use of the Smart Card Reader improved efficiency and standard of the election. Also, sensitive electoral materials such as the result sheets and ballot papers were customized and possessed high- security features and codes. However, despite these great improvements in the electoral process, the 2015 election was not without flaws. Some of the anomalies identified in respect to the election include "late arrival of election materials, overcrowding, failure of the card reader, result manipulation and voting of under-aged in some units in the Northern part of the country" (Udu 2015, p. 102).

According to the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) (2019; 29):

...The 2015 general election did not witness much electoral violence largely because of the spirit of sportsmanship demonstrated by the incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan, who conceded defeat and willingly handed over power to the opposition that emerged victorious at the polls.

The 2019 general elections were violence infested. The European Union Observer Mission stated that:

The election became increasingly marred by violence and intimidation of voters and INEC officials, primarily by party supporters. This harmed the integrity of the electoral process and may deter future voter participation. Party leaderships did not take sufficient steps to rein in their supporters but accused opponents of using violence to disrupt the process and/or selectively depress turnout. Based on updated

information available from media and other sources, during the campaign and the three election days observed, approximately 145 people were killed in election-related violence (European Union, 2019: 33).

In the same vein, the African Union Election Observer Mission to the 2019 general elections in Nigeria reported that generally, the election was peaceful; however, the reports of bomb blasts and violence in some regions (South South, Middle Belt and Northeast) affected the general peaceful atmosphere of the elections adversely. Furthermore, electoral materials were destroyed such as ballot boxes, voter registers and over four thousand smart card readers. The fire that gutted the Independent Electoral Commission's Warehouses in Plateau and Anambra States significantly impacted the Election-Day process (AUEOM, 2019).. Despite the general atmosphere of peace, there were significant instances of violence during the elections capable of affecting participation. Thus, the violence that marred the February 23, 2019, presidential and national assembly elections in Nigeria led to the arrest of one hundred and twenty-eight (128) people for various electoral offenses which include ballot box snatching, malicious damage of items, vote trading and homicide; while several explosives were recovered (Yahay, 2019).

Stating the Problem

The electoral or voting statistics in Nigeria especially from 1999 to 2019 show a gradual and continuous decline. For example, the 1999 general elections recorded a 52.3% turnout of registered voters. In 2003 it was 69.1%; 58% in 2007; 53.7% in 2011; 43.6% in 2015, and 34.7% in 2019 (International IDEA database, 2015; 2019; Ojetunde, 2019). These statistics show a decline in the turnout of registered voters aside from the voting-age population who did not even register. This trend can harm the country's level of democratic development. Low turnout levels in Nigeria can be associated with several factors closely linked to socio-political and economic development. These factors may include the perceived inability of the citizens to influence the political and electoral mandate of the ruling elites; the loss of confidence in the political parties, and candidates as a result of bad governance; electoral violence; poor management of elections by the Electoral Management Bodies; poor electoral procedures, and electoral malpractices. Any of these factors or their combination could adversely affect turnout significantly resulting in alienation.

The research was guided by the following questions: what is the impact of electoral violence on political alienation?; what is the impact of electoral violence on political alienation by respondents' gender?; what is the impact of electoral violence on political alienation by respondents' age?; and what is the impact of electoral violence on political alienation by respondents' educational status?

Generally, the study aimed to determine the effect of violence on low voter turnout in the Nigerian electoral process and to identify the degree by gender, age, and educational status. Specifically, the objectives of the study were: to find out the relationship between electoral violence and political alienation in the electoral process of Nigeria; to determine the degree of relationship between political alienation and electoral violence by respondents' gender; to determine the degree of relationship between political alienation and electoral violence by respondents' age; and to find out the degree of relationship between political alienation and electoral violence by respondents' educational status.

1. There is no relationship between electoral violence and the alienation of voters from the electoral process of Nigeria by the respondents' gender.
1. **Interpretation:** This means that the alienation of voter by electoral violence has nothing to do with gender.

2. There is no relationship between electoral violence and the alienation of voters from the electoral process of Nigeria by the respondents' age.
2. **Interpretation:** This means that the alienation of voter by electoral violence has nothing to do with age.
3. There is no relationship between electoral violence and the alienation of voters from the electoral process of Nigeria by the respondents' educational status.
3. **Interpretation:** This means that the alienation of voter by electoral violence has nothing to do with educational status.

This study is vital because of the dangers that continuous low voter turnout poses to the democratic system. This trend can adversely affect not only the legitimacy and stability of the electoral process but also impede many eligible voters from taking an active part in the governance and policy decisions of their country. It is also necessary to identify the nature and degree of alienation between or among the variables (gender, age, education) of interest in the electoral process circle as affected by electoral violence. This can help to encourage turnout especially the part of society most affected by alienation.

The approach to the study and analysis

The study adopted the ex-post facto and the descriptive analytical approach in the presentation and analysis of data. The population of the study is the Nigerian State covering the six Geopolitical Zones. The National Population Census of Nigeria in 2006 puts the figures of the Nigerian population at one hundred and forty million, four hundred and thirty- one thousand, seven hundred and ninety (140,431,790), (Nigerian Data Portal, 2006). A sample size of one thousand two hundred (1,200) respondents was sampled from the selected Six (6) Local Government Areas of the Geopolitical zones in Nigeria using the stratified random sampling technique. The geopolitical zones were stratified into 6, and the simple random sampling technique was used to select 3 zones, 6 zones from the 3 states and 6 local government areas from the 6 states. Thereafter, the systematic sampling technique was employed to select 1,200 respondents from the households in the 6 selected local government areas (see table 1&2 below). The sample size of one thousand two hundred (1200) respondents was arrived at by adopting the formula of Taro Yamane, the statistician which he developed in 1967 to calculate sample sizes from a given population (Yamane, 1967). The adoption of a 5% error margin and a 95% level of confidence, in calculating the population of one million, four hundred and ninety- seven thousand, one hundred and fifty- seven (1, 497, 157) yielded a sample size of 400. To account for possible attrition, reduce the level of error, increase sample representativeness, and the confidence level, the number of subjects was increased to 1,200 (that is 400×3). This action became imperative since the sample of 400 represents the minimum standard sample required for the study to produce a 95% confidence level in line with Yamane's formula. The questionnaire comprised of closed-ended question sets was utilized for the study. Primary data formed the nuclei of data collection for analysis and contingency tables were the mode of data presentation. Simple percentages and the Chi-Square statistical techniques were used to analyze the data. The simple percentage helped to ascertain the data percentages for easy analysis while the Chi-Square was utilized to test the hypotheses. The choice of the Chi-Square technique hinges on the fact that it measures the direction and degree of relationship of the variables involved in the phenomenon of study. Table 1 and 2 below shows the sample distribution and selection of the Geopolitical zones, states, local government areas and the population of the selected 6 local government areas from where the final selections of 1,200 respondents were made.

Table 1: Tabulation of Sample Distribution-1

Geopolitical Zones	Selected Zones	Selected States	Selected Local Government Areas
North- East			
North- West			
North- Central	North- Central	Plateau	Jos South
		Kogi	Dekina
South- East			
South- West	South- West	Oyo	Ibadan South West
		Ekiti	Ekiti West
South- South	South- South	Rivers	Degema
		Delta	Ughelli South

Source: Compiled by the Researcher

Table 2: Tabulation of Sample Distribution-2

Selected Local Government Areas	Population	Sample Size	Percentage (%)
Jos South	311, 392	250	21
Dekina	260, 968	209	17
Ibadan South West	283, 098	227	19
Ekiti West	179, 600	144	12
Degema	249, 461	200	17
Ughelli South	212, 638	170	14
Total	1, 497, 157	1, 200	100

Source: Nigeria Data Portal, 2006)/Researcher

In table 2 above, the sample size was arrived at by multiplying the population figure of each local government area by the total sample figure divided by the total population of the six selected local government areas. The percentage of the sample size was derived by multiplying each sample size by 100 divided by the total sample size figure.

For this study, a total of one thousand two hundred (1200) questionnaires were administered, out of which one thousand, and sixty (1060) were completed and returned by the respondents. Out of the 1060 respondents, the majority of them were males representing 57.1% while the females represented 42.9 of the sample. The age distribution shows that 66.04% of the respondents were between 18- 39 years old while 33.96% were 40 years old and above. This shows that majority of the respondents who took part in the study constitutes the youthful and virile age necessary for political participation. Also, 25.9% of the sampled respondents were married while 74.1% were single. Moreover, 28.3% of the respondents were secondary school certificate holders and below while 71.7% were OND/NCE/Post- Graduate certificate holders. This distribution shows that the majority of the respondents had basic education and thus were equipped to make informed responses useful to the study.

The effect of electoral violence on voter alienation in the political and electoral process in Nigeria

The study set out to investigate the effect of electoral violence on voter alienation in the political and electoral process in Nigeria using the 2019 general elections as a case. It also aimed at the determination of the effect of electoral violence on political alienation by the variables of gender, age and educational status. This was meant to identify the section of society most affected by alienation.

The findings of the study are summarized thus:

1. Voter alienation in the Nigerian electoral process is a factor of electoral violence.
2. Electoral violence as perpetrated by political opponents and parties during elections affects electoral participation and therefore, responsible for voter alienation in the Nigerian political system.

In respect to electoral violence:

1. The male respondents are more likely to be alienated from the electoral process than the females
2. The respondents from age 18 to 39 are more likely to be alienated from the electoral process than the respondents from age 40.
3. The respondents who hold secondary school certificates or below are less likely to be alienated from the electoral process than the respondents with OND/HND certificates and above

Conclusion and Recommendations

Citizens' participation in the process of governance is necessary to accomplish an equitable and civilized society. These tenets would not be achieved in Africa and Nigeria, if a majority of eligible voters continue to stay away from voting during elections as a result of recurring violence. It is on record that more than half of the population of eligible voters have not voted since the Fourth Republic in Nigeria and also that about half of registered voters or less have not also voted during elections. This situation calls for concern especially as it is worsening. The need for this study becomes imperative since the level or degree of voter turnout serves as a parameter for measuring popular will, credibility, and legitimacy of elected officials. Besides, they are vital to political socialization and serve as the bedrock for democratic stability. The study set out to examine the effect of violence on voter alienation in Nigeria as well as to determine the degree of alienation among the tested variables. The findings have been exhaustively discussed in the relevant section above. It is hoped that the relevant institutions and stakeholders in Nigeria and Africa would take cognizance of these findings and the recommendations hereafter to positively address the voter alienation challenge. It is also expected that the study would engender more scholarly investigation and interest in the electoral system and voting process in Nigeria and Africa.

Consequent upon the research findings, the following suggestions as solutions to voter alienation in Nigeria are made.

1. The federal and state governments should put on modalities to mitigate the incidences of violence during elections. This should be done to encourage the citizens especially those mostly affected by alienation (from the findings of the research) to actively participation in the electoral process. This could be ensured by designating adequate security personnel to ensure safety during voter registration, political rallies and campaigns and during the voting periods.

2. The security personnel should be charged with the responsibility of forestalling violence and most importantly to prevent any act or actions that negate the electoral regulations which often lead to violent outbreaks during elections.
3. Also, adequate and effective intelligence and monitoring team should be assigned to cover all election centers during elections in Nigeria. This team should also monitor the activities of the security personnel at designated election centres to check their excesses.
4. Furthermore, election regulations should be strictly enforced and violators should be arrested and prosecuted.
5. Finally, on the African continent, the African Union should put up modalities and machineries to closely monitor governance and the electoral process in African states so as to sanction states that breach the electoral regulations. These measures would help to mitigate incidences of violence during elections, alienation of voters and encourage participation.

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APPENDIX 1

Research Hypothesis 1

Are you of the opinion that electoral violence is one of the major problems in the Nigerian electoral process?

Political Alienation and Electoral violence by Respondents' Gender

Bad Governance	Male	Female	Total
Yes	580	410	990
No	25	45	70
Total	605	455	1060

Source: Field Survey: 2019"

Research Decision

Calculated $X^2 = 13.95$

Critical $X^2 = 10.83$

df = 1

$\alpha = .001$

Research Hypothesis 2

Do you share the view that majority of the citizens are willing and eager to vote during elections in Nigeria but do not for fear of electoral violence?

Political Alienation and Electoral violence by Respondents' Age

Electoral Violence	18-39 Years	40 Years and above	Total
Yes	681	319	1000
No	19	41	60
Total	780	280	1060

Source: Field Survey: 2019"

Research Decision

Calculated $X^2 = 33.50$

Critical $X^2 = 10.83$

df = 1

$\alpha = .001$

Research Hypothesis 3

If you suspect that during certain election period, there will be violence, will you go out and vote?

Political Alienation and Electoral violence by Respondents' Educational Status

Electoral Malpractice	Secondary and Less	OND/HND/Postgraduate	Total
Yes	265	715	980
No	35	45	80
Total	300	760	1060

Source: Field Survey: 2019

Research Decision

Calculated $X^2 = 10.18$

Critical $X^2 = 6.64$

df = 1

$\alpha = .01$

A Liberal Peace Analysis of the UN Peacekeeping Operations in the DRC

Shifting paradigms and Theoretical Misdiagnosis

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Abstract

Since its inception in May 1948, the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operation has evolved through a series of changes in the international security environment to becoming the world's most formidable multi-national instrument for international security intervention for peace and security. Its operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is one of the largest operations in the history of UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. Yet, it has been one of the most controversial missions given the fact that the DRC remains mired in relative instability despite decades of the blue-helmet intervention in the country, particularly since the start of MONUC in 1999. UN efforts at ending insecurity and restoring political order in the country have seen a succession of peacekeeping mandates and operational orientations thus informing changing theoretical perspective among scholars. Notable, there is what is perceived as a transition from Liberal Peace to Sustaining Peace operational models and the adoption of these as analytical frames. Despite this tendency towards theoretical bifurcation in the body of academic literature purporting transformation in the context and content of the UN DRC operations, the UN systems' operational framing reflects more of a continuum than transformation in the guiding framework of action. This paper is conceived to examine the theoretical and operational frames in the discourse of UN mission in the DRC, and their validity in the analyses of UN peacekeeping missions in the DRC. The paper's adopted qualitative discourse approach finds significant differences in the conceptual parameters for evaluating progress in UN missions and suggests that these gaps be bridged by reconciling theory and practice in contexts such as in the DRC in a changing global security environment.

Keywords: Security, operational framework, Theoretical framework, theory and Practice, UN Peacekeeping.

Introduction

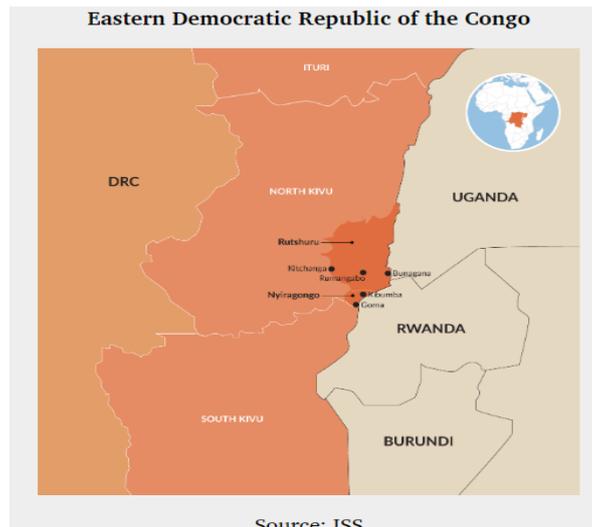
The United Nations peacekeeping mission is the most organized effort at the international level aimed at combating insecurity and restoring political order. It also holds the world's most inclusive and most formidable platform for military operation for security. Following the end of the Cold War, earlier writings on UN peacekeeping missions drew theoretical impetus from Liberal Peace-building,¹ raising high expectations on its prospects to deliver peaceful and prosperous societies. Similarly, attempts at explaining the conflation of factors which have shaped dynamics of peace-building, conditioning the progress of peace missions in conflict prone states of Africa have situated these within the frames of Liberal Peace and Sustaining peace doctrines.²

In the DRC, the operational mandate of UN peacekeeping has evolved over the years, responding to changing dynamics as it is confronted with visible changes in the operational contexts, guiding mandate exigencies. These evolving dynamics have informed changing analytical praxis in policy and academic circles, from Liberal Peace to Sustaining Peace, in response to metamorphosing contexts and emerging realities.³ As one of the most extensive and extensively funded peacekeeping operations across the globe, the UN's mission in the DRC represents paradoxes and contradictions from its size of deployment, funding, and its inability to end the cyclical conflict in the DRC. This is so given its inability to deliver lasting peace which has remained elusive after more than two decades of peacekeeping operation thereby earning it scholarly verdicts on its performance as a failed operation.⁴

There is a growing tendency in the corpus of academic studies on the UN mission in the DRC to often analyze its mandates and operations using two theoretical lenses: the Liberal Peace-building frame, and the Sustaining peace frames, as analytical prisms for evaluating what the UN mission offers in terms of long-term peace and stability.⁵ Conceptual harmony is essential between theoretical discourse and operational frames in that, policy priorities are framed and evaluated at the theoretical levels. It is therefore important to understand the frames through which these changing operational issues are captured in theoretical terms. Interrogating the operational utility of the Liberal Peace and Sustaining Peace doctrines in the DRC context thus opens a vista through which we may understand how the UN mission and its transformations in the quest for peace is integrated into the body of academic debates. The aim of this paper is to examine the conceptual relationship between theory and practice and this relationship finds expression in the United Nations peacekeeping operation in the DRC. The paper proceeds with a discussion of the conceptual underpinnings of the paper.

DRC Current Trends and Imperatives for Conceptual Model

The recent failed coups and the string of accusations and counter-accusations about who is responsible for instability in the DRC has been subject of scholastic debate, populist political agenda and international speculation.⁶ As the speculation looms, and the DRC and its neighbours are on the verge of war, none seems to cede to appreciating the lack of consensus about the causes of continued instability; the missed opportunities for stabilization or what could be done to help the DRC live upto to the promise of its resource prosperity while its neighbours enjoy unhinged peace. As such, the DRC's continued failure to appreciate the extent to which its instability spillover to its neighbours remains the critical stake that its neighbours will continue having in the former's internal affairs. On their own, the ungovernable communities in the DRC remain the harbinger of regional instability and the DRC's neighbors remain concerned about the DRC's capacity to address its internal issues which are a threat to regional peace.⁷



In almost the last three decades, the international community has deployed a strong, well-resourced and adaptable peace mission whose mandate has changed with mutations in the conflict dynamics and emerging threats.⁸ However, given the UN's well-resourced and sophisticated operation with sight further than the government's reach, the UN has not only operated in the DRC as a para-state, but have controlled much of the narrative in the Congo especially as it pertains to news emerging from the problematic ungovernable spaces. To date, despite the extensive UN presence, only the African Union and a few regional bodies have explored these ungovernable spaces and dined with 'rebels' and Congolese defected soldiers to understand why rebellion perpetuates and what issues continue to spur their deference from a permanent ceasefire and re-integration into the Congolese national army.⁹ The findings of the African Union revealed just how misinformed many policy conclusions and peer-reviewed articles were from the reality which told partial truths and speculated why instability perpetuates. But with the UN on the ground as *'chef terre'* and as place holder for international organisations, its reporting continues to be what informs policy discourses even though little is done to promote inclusive national dialogue owing to the pre-emptive demonization of some non-state armed groups because they have committed war crimes.¹⁰ Such pre-emptive demonization and non-inclusion into constructive multi-stakeholder national and regional peace talks are the reasons why peace remains elusive in the DRC.

Scholars who have engaged the UN Peace mission have appraised its role in stabilizing the Congo and in particular credited the UN for the 2006 presidential elections which ushered-in a new era of democratization. However, this electoral process and the expected dividends of stability were shortlived because the winner of the elections, President Kabila invested little effort in uniting the country. He sought to consolidate his power, target those opposed to his leadership and in so doing, de-prioritised security sector reforms which remain a critical ingredient for the DRC's stabilization. And at the end of his first term, sought he (Kabila) without control of the territorial integrity of the state, sought the departure of the UN's mission from the DRC. And these efforts which divided the scholarly and policy community forebore the question – What is conceptually unsound about UN Peace Missions?

Conceptual Issues in UN Peace Missions

The quest for peace and stability particularly in contexts of prolonged conflict across the globe has led to modifications in both the strategic approaches as well as conceptual frames adopted in the UN peace mission. In the DRC, there are ongoing shifting frameworks of engagement in the policy

as in academic circles.¹¹ These shifts are manifest in the implementation of diverse approaches to peace ostensibly, in response to changing security. As such, the political environments not only tends, to obfuscate the distinctions between the forms of engagement, it also confounds the expectations in respect to goals, methods and outcomes that should be anticipated from such engagements. More importantly, it has blurred the lines between the various mandate statements which guide the UN mission in the country.¹²

It was the evident lack of clarity that prompted some actors and analysts to suggest that such structures as the Force Intervention Brigade be separated from the MONUSCO as an independent structure so as to ensure clarity in the tasks being confronted and the methods that is distinctly fit for each task, whether peacekeeping, peace-building or peace enforcement.¹³ This appears to have been necessitated by widespread concerns about conceptual ambiguity in the UN's engagements. For example, while officials in the Democratic Republic of the Congo refer to MONUC operations as stabilisation missions, there has been no clarity about the point at which peace enforcement terminated to commence the phase of stabilisation. Rather, the word 'stabilisation' has been used broadly to describe military measures in place to bring about a situation (or perhaps a country) under control.

Operationally, the UN has given 'stabilisation' some structure and meaning during the last decade; the UN Principles and Guidelines for Peacekeeping (Capstone doctrine) defines stabilisation as the time during which a UN peacekeeping operation is deployed.¹⁴ What's fascinating is that, in many respects, stabilisation is the polar opposite of what UN peacekeeping missions are supposed to achieve, at least in its more militaristic (and NATO-influenced) forms. Stabilization refers to the use of military forces to stabilise a country, generally using all available means to neutralise possible 'conflict spoilers.' However, as the Brahimi Report points out, one of the main principles of peacekeeping missions is that they should only be deployed when there is a peace to uphold.¹⁵ But in reality, there are several cases of UN peacekeeping operations being sent where there is no sign of peace - Chad, Darfur, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are all noteworthy examples.

One important source of disconnect between conceptual and operational frames can be situated within the context of mandate specification. In this regard, it is noteworthy that some of the missions above were not granted peace-enforcement mandates (with the exception of MONUSCO's new mandate), which defined the enemy and required the mission to 'neutralise' it; instead, they were given a broad mandate that allowed them to defend civilians by whatever means necessary.¹⁶ It should be emphasised, however, that there is no clear parameter of correlation between the degree to which a UN peacekeeping operation could use force and whether or not it is designated as a 'stabilisation' mission. The UN mission in South Sudan, for example, has a Chapter VII mandate that allows it to "take all necessary means...to carry out its protection mandate," and many other UN peacekeeping missions have Chapter VII mandates that allow them to be 'robust.'¹⁷

Following the UN's failures to protect civilians in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Somalia in the 1990s, doctrinal revisions evolved that allowed the UN to be "robust" and use force to defend people when necessary. However, there is a significant difference between authorizing the FIB's use of force to protect civilians for a short period of time and giving the UN peacekeeping mandate -a general authorization to use all necessary means, whether as brigade or not.¹⁸ Other views look critically as United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) decisions that potentially engage the United Nations in 'peace-enforcement' activities". Pointing out that such a move might jeopardise the neutrality and impartiality that are so important in UN peacekeeping.¹⁹ From this point of view, it is believed that, the organization should always be considered as an 'honest broker,' and while

the rationale behind deployments are evident, it was more desirable to have brigades as a stand-alone entity with distinct responsibilities from MONUSCO's other brigades.²⁰

Changes in mission mandate also has implications on the frames of analysis and changes therein. There has for example, been concerns about whether the transition from MONUC to MONUSCO constituted a fresh start or a continuation of the old order in UN participation in the DRC. The UNSC begins its resolution extending MONUSCO's and its FIB's mandate by stating that it is acting "on an extraordinary basis and without setting a precedent or prejudice to the recognised principles of peacekeeping."²¹ This is particularly intriguing because, since the first mission, the UNSC has been steadily refining the notion of peacekeeping. This raised the question of whether the Security Council considered itself bound by its precedents if nothing else is clearly stated.²²

Synthesizing Theories and Literature in the Context of UN mission in the DRC

Perspectives vary in scholarly attempts at understanding and explaining peace and security operations such as those led at the international level by the United Nations through its peace mission in the DRC. According to Gary Grobman, complexity theory examines uncertainty and non-linearity.²³ Like the incertitude of what systems to put in place to attain and maintain peace, complexity theory suggests that systems are unpredictable and constrained by order.²⁴

Similarly, Johan Galtung's peace theory also appeals to the Sustaining Peace agenda and emphasized on relationship, community bonding, and consensus building within one's conflictual self, community, state, religion or civilisation.²⁵ It argues that humans and society are continually pulling in different directions, and this creates conflict. Peace is therefore not the exclusive preserve or property of one party alone, but the property of the relationships between a collective. Galtung's assertions might be a reasonable explanation for intractability in the DRC. In instances such as the DRC, there is value in stakeholders' introspection about what is more gainful to them: instability or peace.²⁶

Deciding on which theory is important to peace comes down to two categories of thought, those who believe that the creation of liberal democratic states guarantees free markets and the rule of law, and those like Galtung who believe conflict is internal, and peace emerges when cooperation steps- in.²⁷ As earlier indicated, twenty years since the UN deployment, peace remains elusive; and with the new sustainable peace agenda, as examination of the lenses through which scholars and practitioners on the field interrogate the issues are essential to the various interventions towards peace. The next section discussed the underlying theoretical assumptions of Liberal Peace and provides new theoretical insights for understanding the role of peacekeeping in sustainable peace.

Liberal Peace Theory

The Liberal frame of analysis in the international system gained currency in post-Cold War era as an offshoot of widening ideological body of thought in the emerging world order at the time. Liberal Peace contends that active domestic and international collaboration in pursuit of democracy, an open market-based economic agenda, and functional institutions are architects of peace.²⁸ Although its invocation has often been ambiguous as an analytical frame, its application in conflict and peace situations has dispelled the contemplation that, it has a linear set of assumptions and applicable only to post-conflict interventions. This has been more evident particularly following the end of the Cold-War, and with the inking of "An Agenda for Peace."²⁹

In this regard, it is important to understand Liberal Peace's constituent elements and the underlying assumptions upon which is hinged, including its choice as a suitable theorem to understand peacekeepers' role in restoring and Sustaining Peace. Ghali's post-conflict state-building emerged as a critical component of peace-building. In the aftermath of the Cold-War and even more recently with the war on terror and the cocktail of peace and security challenges in Africa broadly and the world at large, Liberal Peace became a household term used to explain conflict challenges and inspire conflict resolution and peace consolidation efforts

According to Richmond, the key components of the Liberal Peace doctrine are its premiums on democratization, rule of law, human rights, free and globalised markets and neoliberal development.³⁰ The Liberal Peace framework, Richmond asserts, can be understood to have four strands, namely: victor's peace,' "institutional peace,' 'constitutional peace' and 'civil peace.'³¹ Victors peace is premised on the 'winner takes it all' peace architecture where peace rests on hegemonic power like the military, and its success rests on the dominant hold on the hegemony.

On the other hand, institutional peace is idealistically anchored on consensus. It is based on the normative and legal agreement of states on "how to behave and how to enforce or determine their behavior."³² Institutional peace traces its origin from the Treaty of Westphalia, up until the founding of the United Nations, to the modern-day period of the dominance of liberalism as a political and economic framework promoted by the dominant power in a unipolar world order. Constitutional peace is based on the liberal understanding that peace rests upon democracy and free markets founded on the idea that "individuals are ends in themselves, rather than means to an end."³³ Going further, Richmond notes that constitutional peace gained prominence during the European pre-Medieval times to the end of World War One up until the end of the Cold War.

Civil peace according to Richmond is an anomaly from the three other strands because it shifts power from the state, international actors to the individual.³⁴ Civil peace is based on citizen engagement, individual attainment of rights and the ability to defend them, advocacy and vibrant civil societies. Richmond further notes that the four strands of Liberal Peace, at any one particular time, could 'compliment' or 'contradict' each other.³⁵ The contradictions of the strands have been the basis of the critique of the Liberal Peace agenda.

One important observation, however, is the fact that the four strands of the Liberal Peace by nature of their design and implementation, appoint third parties mostly external actors, as drivers of the peace initiative in conflict-ridden societies. Because of the external drivers of peace Liberal Peace "depends upon intervention, and a balance of consent, conditionality, and coercion."³⁶ Other than the four strands, Liberal Peace can be understood from what Richmond (2006) describes as the 'graduations' of Liberal Peace. Graduations of the Liberal Peace framework are founded upon how the actors enter the conflict, how they interact with the local context, and how those interactions have a bearing on how peace is attained and managed. As such, graduation can be based on the conservative, orthodox and emancipatory models of peace.³⁷

A conservative model is typified by top-down initiatives to peace-building. Most of the time the interventions are coercive, determined by the dominant forces, and in many cases than not, apply violence through "conditionality and dependency creation."³⁸ Because this model is based on unilateral hegemony and dominance mostly by state actors, it can be seen through the prism of the victor's understanding of peace. Due to the application of force through external means, peacekeeping within the conservative model is 'militarised as has been the case in Somalia, the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

The orthodox model can be described based on the mantra ‘I will engage you, but you do as I say anyway’. In this model, external actors are aware of the conflict context and because they aim for local ownership of the peace settlements, they are interested in the local culture but still employ their external approaches and norms into the peace framework. Because of how the process is managed, this peace model is based on “consensual negotiation” and which always leads to “balanced and multilateral, and still state-centric peace.”³⁹ This peace model has been advocated by international organisations and has been advanced by UN peacekeeping as a post-cold war model to peace having been implemented in East Timor. This model of peace can be described as bottom-up yet top-down where peace is designed by and with the locals and yet designed and agreed at the state level. Richmond notes that both the conservative and orthodox peace models are hinged on the superiority of the external actors and still modeled on the norms that global values can be applied in local situations to attain and sustain peace.⁴⁰

An emancipatory peace model deviates from conservative and orthodox graduations of peace because it advocates for local ownership and agreements based on consent. When peace negotiations are based on trust and consent, then there is little or no room for coercion, domination, and violence. Emancipatory model is aligned to civil peace as a product of bottom-up approaches and negotiations to peace. The end game of this model is local ownership; hence the process is participatory, consultative, multiple actors with very minimal state engagement. The different graduation model can be applied all through from the beginning of the conflict to the reconstruction phase shifting from one model to the other depending on the nature of the conflict, the intensity of the conflict, parties involved, and the perceived international community mandate at the time.⁴¹

If Liberal Peace is premised on rule of law, democracy, human rights and free markets, it is important to examine if it can be effectively applied in Africa. According to Ian Taylor the nature of Liberal Peace and what it espouses is not a fit for Africa. Taylor argues that strands and graduations of Liberal Peace rest upon hegemony which is lacking in most if not all post-colonial African states.⁴² This has led to a contradiction “that whilst the Liberal Peace might reflect the impulses for a trans-nationalized neo-liberal hegemony, in Africa the very basic foundations of a domestic hegemonic project are mainly absent.”⁴³ The lack of hegemony characterized by weak unstable states with little or no autonomy impairs the attainment of the liberal democracy doctrine upon which Liberal Peace is predicated on. The following section examines the idea of Liberal Peace in the DRC, it also probes into its relevance to explaining the elusiveness of peace, and the adoption by the UN of the Sustaining Peace in the country.

Operationalizing Liberal Peace in the DRC: The influence of Liberal Peace is visible in different levels of UN peacekeeping efforts. Following the publication of former Secretary General Boutros-Ghali’s “An Agenda for Peace” in 1995, the United Nations began to place a greater emphasis on the promotion of values, norms, and practises which reflect the projection of liberal states, specifically in terms of political (democracy) and socio-economic governance (market economies).⁴⁴

In 2001, the UNSC invoked aspects of Liberal Peace, particularly concerning the link between market economies, natural resource governance, and the attainment of peace. The UN brought this to bear in its engagement with the conflict in the DRC by drawing a link between weak state institutions, illegal resource exploitation of natural resources, and the perpetuation of violent conflict in the country. Through its Resolution (SC/7057), the UNSC condemned “the illegal exploitation of natural resources and wealth by various actors in the conflict, and expressed serious concern at those economic activities fueling the conflict in that country.”

The emphasis in the resolution, on the connection between state capacity, natural resource governance, and the elusiveness of peace in the DRC reinforced the suitability of the UN's standardized notion of Liberal Peace. This notion, in practice, is hinged on the central premise that peace can be attained through strengthened state institutions, a reformed economic model of natural resource governance and trade, as well as a functional political space based on democratic values.⁴⁵ As a result, the UN's involvement was framed as a top-down "remedy" for the causes and effects of armed conflict, in accordance with formulations based on Liberal Peace theorizations.

The impact of Liberal Peace today is evident in the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) post-conflict mandate, and its orientation towards Sustaining Peace. Sustaining Peace attempts to focus greater emphasis on recognizing and reinforcing what is currently working; to accompanying and supporting advocates for peace; and to assure not just a decreased incidence of violent conflict, but to also mobilise resources to abolish it.⁴⁶ As a result, while deciding whether or not to deploy peacekeeping missions, policymakers must consider the best approach for not just ending hostilities but also ensuring that the seeds of peace are sown and peace is maintained.⁴⁷ As a result, this strategy revolves around the concepts of "do no harm" and "do some good."⁴⁸

The "Do no harm" concept is based on the notion that peacekeeping or humanitarian actions in areas of violent conflict or insecure peace should avoid unwittingly increasing the danger or incidence of violence.⁴⁹ While "Do some good" is founded on the idea that, in addition to avoiding worsening violent conflict, humanitarian interventions should also play a role in reducing existing levels of potential violence by carefully studying the environment in which typical development endeavors are implemented.⁵⁰ It can be implied that by extension, this principle requires that peace operations should sustain the peace.

An understanding of these enablers and inhibitors is a critical step towards explaining why peace remains elusive in the DRC, and how changes in analytical and operational frameworks guide UN peacekeeping operations today. The missing link that remains unsolved in the workings of a top-bottom approach is what Stein Sundstøl Eriksen sums up as four encumbrances to the success of Liberal Peace mandate. These include: the inability of foreign drivers of such peace initiatives to ensure the provision of insufficient resources; the application by donors, of a standardized approach to conflict management which often does not adequately take the local context into account; the disconnect between the interest of local power elites and objectives of the pre-designed pattern of state-building; and lastly, the challenge of policy rigidity which arises from the UN's adoption of a standardized and non-negotiable notion of the ideal state.⁵¹

The DRC context of the operationalisation of Liberal Peace, and its inability to deliver lasting peace also highlight the failure of the UN to factors in the array of variables both domestic and external, which exert significant deterministic influences on the mandate deliverables. A brief analytical appraisal of Van der Lijn, (2009), Lise Howard (2008) and Bayo (2012) reveals that there is plethora of such enabling variables which contribute to peacekeeping's success.⁵² Some of these include; local ownership of the peace process; presence of well-equipped peacekeepers providing impartial security to all disputants and stakeholders especially women, children and other minority groups; the willingness and sincerity of disputants and stakeholders to observe and enforce ceasefires; a peacekeeping force that has adequate knowledge and familiar with the conflict drivers; clear timelines in operations' deployment; and broad and long-term vision of the peace operation among other.⁵³

The Limits of the Liberal Peace in the DRC: Following from the foregoing, it is imperative to understand the necessity for the transition from Liberal Peace to Sustaining Peace. From an operational level, David Chandler takes issues with Liberal Peace's top-down approach. He argues

that, by its conception, Liberal Peace is externally driven and thus solutions etched-out elsewhere foment the elusiveness of peace and pose a challenge to attaining peace in climes where they are applied.⁵⁴ This view is supported by Susanna Campbell, David Chandler, and Meera Sabaratnam who opine that in peace-building Liberal Peace suffers a setback because of its lack of inclusivity and its external driven-solution.⁵⁵

Gerard Hagg and Peter Kagwanja argue that the Liberal Peace model, originally designed for the management of inter-state conflicts had gained increased patronage in the attempt to resolve intra-state wars which were driven essentially by identity politics.⁵⁶ The implication of its focus by design is the fact that it often fails to address civilian angles to the injustices including the animosities, memories and images which inflame conflict and perpetuate it. Rather, it produces counterproductive outcomes by downplaying actual peace-building and embracing power sharing initiatives which have come with many hidden costs.⁵⁷ Critical to its inability to deliver sustained peace is the fact that Liberal Peace breeds a cartel-like structure through its process of seeking peace through agreements and negotiations with merchants of war.

The above position echoes Denis M. Tull and Andreas Mehler who argue that Liberal Peace constitutes an incentive structure which merchants of violence can evaluate in terms of accruable gains from their violence, they may as such become even more motivated to engage in violence in order to secure further concessions from negotiations.⁵⁸ As a consequence, regardless of its potential as a conflict management approach, Liberal Peace option of negotiation with armed groups for power is a potential contributing factor to the “reproduction of insurgent violence” as it accredits armed groups as owners of the state rather than addressing the root causes of the conflict.⁵⁹ As the critique of Liberal Peace has grown, international actors have shifted their operational focus to understanding the local contexts, advancing local-led and locally-owned peace initiatives, and by implication, shifting from top-down to bottom-up approach in what is summed up as the sustaining peace framework. The next section examines Sustaining Peace and its imports using the DRC context.

The Sustaining Peace Framework

Youssef Mahmoud and Delphine Mechoulan describe Sustaining Peace as entailing efforts at revisiting the starting point of the process of building peace by adopting a new approach that recognizes the imperative of a broad-based and proactive peace agenda.⁶⁰ The transition from the Liberal Peace focal priorities to one aimed at Sustaining Peace marks a critical point in UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC. This is because it also symbolizes a shift in its underlying ideology. This is possibly according to Sarah Huddleston in recognition of the limits of Liberal Peace which focuses on a top-down approach to peace-building by de-emphasizing the underlying factors and leaving the local population disempowered throughout the peace-building process.⁶¹ A shift in orientation towards Sustaining Peace, it would seem therefore, is an attempt to incorporate the local population as the fulcrum for peace-building within the UN peacekeeping operational framework.

United Nations’ peacekeepers have succeeded in addressing most of the symptoms which manifest as violent conflicts in the country but have not achieved much in addressing the underlying causes such as the control of, and the management of natural resources. As a result of this, conflicts among contending groups remain a source of insecurity, and constitute a threat to peace-building efforts in the country. State capacity for resource management and law enforcement also remains fragile. As Nkongolo-Bakenda, et.al (2016) observed, state institutions are weak, under-resourced, and thus incapable of mitigating these challenges. Preliminary observation of the security climate across the DRC suggest that the some of the failings of the UN peacekeeping

operation may stem from its focus on Liberal Peace which fails to prioritize some of the base issues underlying conflict—a situation which may explain the tenuous nature of peace in the country.

To help maintain peace and stability in the DRC regional and international players have mediated ceasefire agreements that have, at best, been partially respected by the very belligerents who signed them. Consequently, the peace agreements have failed to end violence among the various groups or to re-establish a central government authority throughout the DRC.⁶² Today, amid the rise to power of Félix Tshisekedi in January 2019, the Council on Foreign Relations in its Global Conflict Tracker opines that “poor governance, [an undisciplined military force] and the proliferation of many armed groups have causally subjected Congolese civilians to widespread abuse, sexual harassment, and major abuses of human rights.”⁶³ These factors are responsible for extreme poverty in the country.

In restive areas of the DRC, the African Union (AU), the UN, and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have struggled to restore and sustain peace, while insecurity and conflict have continued with major impact on human security and peace prospects. Even with assistance, it seems apparent that the UN has not adequately delivered on its core mission, which is *to re-establish and preserve global peace and security* in the DRC.⁶⁴ As Paul William notes, while peacekeeping is the most visible aspect of the UN in Africa and has been transformed with evolving circumstances, in the case of the DRC, it has failed in its efforts to achieve and sustain peace.⁶⁵ The difficulty in the task of creating lasting peace in the DRC not only questions the Liberal Peace-building approach to UN efforts there, but also raises questions as to why its application has been contrary to the anticipated outcome. Fernando Cavalcante postulates that the UN operational policy, often based on the Liberal Peace-building thesis and defined by the top-down approach, constitutes a part of the limitations to achieving lasting peace.⁶⁶

From Liberal to Sustaining Peace in the DRC

Since the end of the Cold war, the Liberal Peace approach to conflict management has no doubt maintained its dominance on the international conflict management arena. However, despite this dominance, its operationalisation has been marked by problems in terms of its approach to peace and the outcomes in terms of sustainability. Its use as the common operational frame in the management of peacekeeping missions has provided one of the common planks on which the approach is often examined and criticized. To understand the significance of the frames—Liberal and Sustainable Peace principles and their implication for practice, the UN mechanisms of operations in the DRC are instructive. Of particular significance is the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) as a structure of mission execution in the contexts of the DRC. The contextual peculiarities of the DRC mission and the framing of these in the DPKO are lenses for understanding the linkage between theory and practice within the UN system.

Rationalizing the Transition from Liberal Peace to Sustaining Peace

In its broader application, the idea of Liberal Peace, holds as its selling point the globalized assumption that, institution building, political democratization and market liberalisation provide a reliable pathway towards enduring and self-Sustaining Peace are.⁶⁷ Yet it faces significant challenges, not from rival opposing ideas, but from within. According to John Ikenberry, in a critique of the Liberal international order, the author noted that the global liberal order was in crisis, not arising from the contestation of its dominance from among its co-contending approaches or even an attempt to overturn it, but arising from its inability to govern itself.⁶⁸ As a guiding principle in an international institution such as the United Nations however, it has been to even more criticism.⁶⁹

The United Nations peacekeeping mission has evolved over the years, into a complex, global undertaking guided mostly by the exigencies of crisis which inspired it, but leashed little by any rigid rules. Its operations continue to be directed more by a largely non-codified set of principles that are mostly shaped by the perception of the field officers—men and women who constitute its force across different theatres of operations launched around the globe since its inception in 1948.⁷⁰ The predominant tendency in academic analyses on the United Nations' peacekeeping missions is to rely on policy frameworks, statements and declarations made in line with globally accepted ideals of global governance, and weighed against preferred deliverables vis-a-vis the performance of the UN's institutional mandates guiding such interventions.⁷¹

Apostles of sovereignty draw attention to the intrusive strategies of Liberal Peace in highlighting its instrumentality in an unequal international political arena. Pol Bargaés argue that Liberal Peace foists an invasive system of top-down order of peace agenda that is advanced through a forced re-interpretation of established practice that guide the conduct of international interventions in countries affected by conflict.⁷² This is unlike Sustaining Peace approach towards peace-building—an approach which advances a longer-term goal, promotes a bottom-up approach, and assigns secondary roles to external practitioners, and recognizes and accepts risks that may arise from its failure.

When viewed against specific operation contexts over time however, deeper patterns may emerge suggesting that there are more complex undercurrents and more contingency underpinnings between declared ideals and realistic deliverables. While the short term objective of the UN mission in the DRC has oscillated between peacekeeping and peace enforcement, the evaluation of the mission's long term goals have focused on issues of democratization, institutional development and an enabling environment for unhindered trade and economic development see for example.⁷³

As Richard Gowan noted, the United Nations has peacekeeping mission has been confronted with series of paradigmatic crisis in recent years.⁷⁴ These have stemmed majorly from some of the fundamental assumptions which drive its mandates for conflict management through peace missions, particularly about how best to drive a transitions from the state of war to one of peace. Its experience, from engagements in Afghanistan, to elusive peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo, after over two decades, all combine to cast doubt on its efficiency, and the credibility of its core values and principles of engagement. It is important to examine the changing tenor and temperaments of Liberal Peace principle in the operation context of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Changing Mission Mandate and Sustaining Peace

Debates regarding the successes of the UN mission to the DRC, or the arguable lack of it (often captioned as 'elusive peace' is one that must be situated within the frames of proper understanding of the mandate of the mission to the DRC as well as the operation and institutional contexts of the mission. This is important to ensure that expectations and the associated assessment of performance are weighed against the proper frames of institutional mandates, capacities and possibilities. For one thing, domestic government occupies a strategic position in the execution of UN mandates, particularly through its consent validation requirement.

One important angle is to understand the role of the Congolese government in the drive to ensure sustained peace in the country. One of the structures that had been developed to ensure that the UN operation functions in synergy with the aims of the host government was the STAREC program. This program was also and piloted by Kinshasa, because it was a national program with a view to work in the east and that was necessary. But as the year moved by, we realized that if you

really want peace to be sustainable, you need both the community level and the national level. I don't believe, you know, as some people think that if you have the community engagement only, that peace would be sustainable, because the community engagement is critical but it cannot be sustainable if the people in power in Kinshasa are not also associated with the process, and vice versa.

A lot of progress has been made in that regards, and this stabilization which was initially the ISSSS program, grew into ensuring that the community were being engaged, notably, in peace processes. The ongoing FRPI process in Ituri was the work of two years of engagement with the local population, civil society, and community leadership, in search to find champions of the peace process to sustain. There was also the issue of NGO who were mostly unreliable as tools for Sustaining Peace as they focused on inter-community dialogue and had other more important interest in accessing funding after which they often fizzled out with time for lack of funding. So they proved unreliable as tools for Sustaining Peace-building.

The FRPI was designed to assist community engagement including women leaders, council of wise men, those who can talk to the youth. It sought to work with local associations who had the means and skills. It sought to ensure the national governments acknowledgement of what was happening at the local level and to enable it act promptly towards achieving an end to impunity, ensuring that the demobilized were re-integrated into their communities, and to ensure that national policies took the peculiarities of local processes into account for sustainability. The coordinator of the National Implementation, the regional Agreement for Peace Security and Cooperation for the Great Lakes region, with a National oversight mechanism which was led by someone who had the president's ears, Regional oversight mechanism also led by emissaries linking the DDR program. For MONUSCO, Sustaining Peace is all about getting all sectors of the society to accept responsibility for peace.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, attempt has been made to examine the issue of harmony between theory and practice by examining the frames used in academic and operational circles in the United Nations peacekeeping missions, using the DRC as reference case. In order to do this, attempts were made to synthesizing the two key frames through which the two constituencies have explored their analysis in literature—the Liberal Peace and the Sustaining Peace Frameworks. With insight from the mission in the Congo, the transition in the orientation of peacekeeping and the understanding of this in scholarly debate were highlighted as well as the notable changes which define and reflect the dynamism of the mission's mandate.

Instructively, the foregoing highlights the significance of synergy link between theoretical frames and operational doctrines which guide practice. Given the effect that conceptual gaps may have in our understanding and communication of the social world, the importance of clarity at this level of theorizing practice cannot be overemphasized. One important observation in the comparative appraisal of the theoretical frames and operational approaches in UN peacekeeping operations is their ad-hoc, context-defined orientations. The need to define strategies to context often hampers the attempt to create a fixture for the otherwise fluid operational experience of peacekeeping into the neatly framed theoretical fences that conform with the ordered and defined tradition of academic theorizing. This is so, in that while operational frames are designed to be goal specific, theoretical frames are designed for epistemic validity, scientific utility and wider analytical relevance.

The different discursive outlook, despite being saddled with complementary commitments, in these two constituencies underpins the missing link between the theory (academia) and the operations (practice) in the adaptation of frameworks in the UN peacekeeping mission. In most cases, the lack of theoretical harmony might obstruct the much-needed synergy between actors at the policy level and evaluators at theory level.⁷⁵ It is in recognition of the above connection that the need for scholars to reconcile theory with practice is emphasized. At the pinnacle of this reconciliation is the imperative not just to analyse and shed light on the complexity of challenges of dispense recommendations on who should bring about peace in contexts such as the DRC, but by working with other stakeholders to design non-theoretical, but practical and operations solutions to conflict prevention and sustaining peace. This meta-theoretical analysis concurs with this call for an integrated outlook between the academic and policy communities as a way to ensure more coordinated, and therefore more impactful effort in the quest for peace and security. The study goes further to opine that, until this is done, practitioners especially in peacekeeping missions and the DRC more specifically will continually think they are doing a sterling job in a complex environment and academic, scholars and other analysts of such orientations would continue to spell doom on UN efforts. As such, wherever one stands, this theory and practice reconciliation needs to be undertaken much sooner than later as the lack of harmony and the imperative to have a common understanding of how to protect civilians and bring about much needed peace is the sacrificial lamb on the altar of this continued meta-theoretical confusion.

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