

## **The Behavioural Science in Law Making Process: A Psychological Approach to Understanding Legislative Violence**

Sheriff Ghali Ibrahim, Abdullahi Liman and Iro Iro Uke  
Department of Political Science and International Relations, Faculty of Social Sciences,  
University of Abuja, Abuja, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This study is a behavioral analysis on the causes of violence among people, especially law makers (members of parliament) as they disagree and resort to violence in their legislative chambers. The study also analyses some psychological theories of violence and violent behavior among different houses of parliament. With the aid of both primary and secondary methods of scientific enquiry, findings show that the legislature are prone to violence as a result of narcissistic tendency frustration and by biological or hereditary influence. The study also concludes that violence can be hereditary, it can be based on frustration-aggression dilemma or based on the quest for popularity and failure to get an expected outcome among other things. The study makes the recommendation that any political-office aspirant should undergo a compulsory psychiatric test before getting a ticket to contest for an election, a maximum security be based in chambers and houses of parliaments and strong punitive measures be taken to those legislatures expressing the act of violence in the house of law making.

**Key words:** Behavioural, psychology, legislature, science, law-making and narcissism

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The behavioral science is a science that deals with the scientificity of human behavior which is characterized by human nature what man is capable of doing what he is likely to do in a particular given situation and the implication of such action to man himself to the nearest members of his family and to the larger society. Behaviouralism explains how man executes his actions on every designed condition or situation the way and manner he reacts to the actions or inactions of others and the way he perceives others (as threats, foes or friends) and the manner in which he treats people.

Throughout the history of man and decision making man as an individual could independently make decisions for himself and his family of which he remains the head. While multiple actors in decision making process create a conflicting situation as there must be disagreement emotional attack and sometimes physical combats. It is however, inherent among not only a parliamentary house but also among members who come together to reach into conclusion on a particular societal, organizational, institutional or administrative issues.

The basic hypothesis, however is to look at an individual member of a particular legislative house in a state or different states to see how they respond to each

other's opinion and contribution towards constitution making and vital issues of national interest. Behaviouralism in this respect will focus on how individuals, such as law makers behave in a manner they behave. Why and how violence is becoming intricately rampant in national and states house of assembly?

One observation about the causes that generally seems to be true and supported by the best available research is that violence is caused by multiple factors many of which are strongly related to and even affect each other. The dichotomy of nature vs. nurture in explaining any form of human behavior including violence is outdated (Randy, 2004) and inconsistent with the current state of research in the field. Violence is caused by a complex interaction of biological, social/contextual, cognitive and emotional factors that occur over time. Some causes will be more prominent than others for certain individuals and for certain types of violence and aggression.

Legislative violence is sometimes chosen as a strategy of action. It is purposeful (goal-directed) and intended to achieve some valued outcome for the actor. It is not the product of innate, instinctual drives nor is it the inevitable consequence of predetermining psychological and social forces. It is very clear that many factors influence that decision and the competing options

available but humans typically are not passive vessels for involuntary displays of behavior. Categorically, there are exceptions. One can conceive of circumstances where an individual might have some brain dysfunction that causes general disinhibition and/or emotional instability that may result in aggression or violence (Tedeschi and Felson, 1994).

Albeit in the argument of Psychoanalytic school of behaviouralism, Beck (2002) is of the opinion that this model has weak logical, theoretical and empirical foundations but Freud viewed aggression more generally as an innate and instinctual human trait which most should outgrow in the normal course of human development. A later development in Freud's analysis was that humans had the energy of life force (eros) and death force (thanatos) that sought internal balance (Corrado, 1981). Violence was seen as the displacement of thanatos from self and onto others.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The methodological instrument used in this research is a combination of two hierarchies the first method is the major or primary methodology which underlines the interview technique based on purposive or judgmental sampling. Purposive sampling has to do with the administration of questionnaire or interview on people with relevant knowledge about the exact topic under study. A number of 100 persons both in the national assembly and outside the assembly have been questioned on the topic under study in order to reach a scientific generalization. Similarly, the secondary method has not been ignored. The research has also adopted library research using materials such as text books, journals, periodicals, magazines, news papers and published government reports for consolidative facts and relevant data.

### **Theoretical foundation of legislative violence**

**Narcissism:** One of the earliest attempts to understand and explain legislative violence within a psychodynamic framework, focused on the trait of narcissism as a defining and driving factor (Crayton, 1983). It has been observed that legislative violence and narcissism have a great linkage and such linkage has been identified by different scholars: The possible linkage between narcissism and violence was first developed by Morf (1970) and later broadened by Crayton (1983) and McCormick (2003).

The basic postulation of narcissism is that violent behavior is rooted in a personality defect that produces a damaged sense of self. The essence of pathological

narcissism is an overvaluing of self and devaluing of others. It is not difficult to see how one might observe these traits among violent people. This shows how some legislative members become so dogmatic as in seeing their opinion and what they cherish or argue upon as the best by despising the opinion and argument of others which if rejected by the majority they become aggressive and make an aggressive attack on fellow members.

It is in line with the above that political scientist Pearlstein concluded the psychoanalytic concept of narcissism is the most complete and thus most intellectually satisfying theory regarding the personal logic of political (legislative) violence. This however, contradicts the assertion of Ishaya where in his argument designates some of the causes of legislative violence, relying strongly on conflict approach. These causes are differences in background, hostility, scarcity of resources and conflict in values.

Ishaya is of the opinion that the types of conflict that exist among the legislative members are; conflict between political parties in the legislature, conflict between the legislature and executive, conflict between legislators and career officers and conflict between legislators and constituents and intra-conflict among the staff.

Crayton (1983) has highlighted the psychology of narcissism as a framework for understanding violent behavior using Kohut's concepts to guide his argument. According to Crayton (1983), the two key narcissistic dynamics are a grandiose sense of self and idealized parental imago (if I can not be perfect, at least I am in a relationship with something perfect). This shows why some legislative members due to imperfection, they resort to violence. With regards to the effect of groups, the argument is that narcissistically vulnerable persons are drawn to charismatic leaders and that some groups are held together by a shared grandiose sense of self.

However, this narcissistic rage has been posed by more than one observer as the primary psychological precipitant of violent aggression. In developmental context, the way in which this evolves is that as children the nascent violent people are deeply traumatized suffering chronic physical abuse and emotional humiliation. This creates a profound sense of fear and personal vulnerability that becomes central to their self concept. To eliminate this fear and create a more tolerable self-image such individuals feel the need to kill off their view of themselves as victims. They buttress their own self-esteem by devaluing others.

The result of this devaluation of others is what some have termed malignant narcissism-muffles their internal voice of reason and morality. Furthermore, whatever

sense of esteem has developed in that process is extraordinarily fragile. This makes the individual particularly vulnerable to any slights insults or ideas that threaten to shatter the facade of self-worth. Such insults are known as narcissistic injuries and are the triggers of narcissistic rage (Akhtar, 1999).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**The 1962 Nigeria's Western region crisis:** The gravitating factor of the crisis was Akintola's removal in May, 1962 which sparked a bloody riot in the Western region and brought effective government to an end as rival legislators, following the example in the streets, introduced violence to the floor of the regional legislature. The federal government declared a state of emergency, dissolved the legislature and appointed a medical practitioner, Dr. Adekoyejo Majekodunmi as an administrator for the Western region. One of his first acts was to place many AG leaders under house arrest. Later, the police uncovered evidence linking Awolowo with a conspiracy to overthrow the government. With a number of other AG leaders, he was arrested and tried for treason. Authorities claimed that 200 activists had received military training in Ghana and had smuggled arms into Nigeria in preparation for a coup detat. Awolowo was found guilty along with 17 others and was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.

Chief Anthony Enahoro, Awolowo's close ally, who had been abroad at the time of the coup was extradited from Britain and was also convicted of treason and imprisoned. In the meantime, the state of emergency was lifted and Balewa, obtained Akintola's reinstatement as Premier of the Western region at the head of a coalition between the NCNC and the UPP. The AG successfully contested the legality of this action in the courts but a retroactive amendment to the Western region's constitution that validated Akintola's reappointment was quickly enacted. As Tafawa Balewa told parliament, the legality of the case had been overtaken by events.

**The Nasarawa legislative debacle:** A legislative session at the Nasarawa State House of Assembly in Lafia, the state capital, turned into a boxing match on October 28, after Muslim legislators tried to push through a bill that would adopt sharia the Islamic code in the state. The exchange of blows between Muslim and Christian legislators eventually led to the Christians demolishing a mosque built by the muslim legislators on assembly grounds. Christian leaders said Nigeria was a secular state and that no one had the right to impose his religion on

another. Subsequently, the Christian legislators all resigned their positions in protest of the government's attempt to forcefully implement sharia.

**The Nigerian House of Representatives:** The highest level of legislative violence was exhibited in the Nigerian House of Representatives when a fight broke out after 11 legislators were suspended for accusing the House of Representatives Speaker (Dimeji Bankole) of corruption. The legislators called themselves "The Progressives" and demanded an investigation into allegations that Speaker Oladimeji Bankole misappropriated 9 billion Naira equivalent of an 11 billion budget from 2008-2009. The 11 suspended are Dino Melaye, Ehiogie West Idahosa, Independence Ogunewe, Solomon Awhinawi, Austin Nwachukwu and Abbas Anas, Gbenga Odunwaiye, Kayode Amusan, Gbenga Onigbogi, Bitrus Kaze and Doris Uboh.

What triggered the whole violence was Mr. Austin Nwachukwu's inaction by entering into the chambers with tear gas, a move that got him beaten by other members while Mr. Igwe, a supporter of Bankole had his hand dislocated. Mr. Dino too was not free from the beating as his clothes were torn in shreds while a female member Doris Uboh collapsed, Mr. Independence Ogunewe escaped through the back door of the chambers for fear of the violence and not to be beaten by bankole supporters.

**The Cross River legislative intolerance:** Two female law makers from Cross River State House of Assembly were indulged in a public scene confrontation which finally led to physical combat. The lawmakers are Honorable Uduak Akiba representing Calabar Municipality and Hon Pauline Ekuri of Etung state constituency. Their hostility started since in 2003 when the two of them were in the women affairs commission.

The presence of one of them in the same flight stirred up anger which led to sharp exchanges while aboard the Virgin Nigeria flight to Calabar. Finally, Uduak Akiba decided to engage her colleague in a fight when she punched and scratched Ekuri who was her former boss and inflicted severe injuries on her.

**The case of Korea:** On the 28th of June, 2011 as written by Schwartzman, a 44 years old Shin Chang Yong, a member of the Grand National Party and representative in the Dongbu-gu Council of South Korea, struck 62 years old Lee Seok-Gi, also a GNP council representative, inflicting injuries on his eyes and face that required 3 weeks to heal, it has been belatedly revealed. Rep. Shin attacked Rep. Lee for not hiring a person he had recommended.

Consequently, at 10 a.m. on the 5th of July, the Democratic Labor Party, New Progressive Party and People's Participation Party demonstrated in front of the Dong-bu Council to call for Rep. Shin's resignation and expulsion.

**Others:** The Ukrainian legislative violence as most famous. The most famous violence of 2010 occurred in April 27, 2011 in the Ukraine. It broke out when the parliament voted to extend Russia's lease of a Crimean naval port for the Black sea fleet in a chaotic session during which eggs and smoke bombs were thrown as well as several punches. The second notable legislative violence happened in Taiwan. Taiwan, whose politicians seem to have a parliamentary brawl far too often to keep track did not disappoint in 2010. There were at least two major dust-ups among its elected politicians. In Nepal similarly, Maoists disrupted government business rowdily. Indonesia was counted in the legislative violent behavior just like Kyrgyzstan. Italy and Turkey also are never exempted they were also involved in a violent legislative face off.

#### **The psychology of legislative violence**

**Frustration-aggression:** This is a drive theory that explains the driving force of violence. The basic assumption of F-A is that frustration and aggression are opposite sides of the same coin. In other words, the two are intertwined. In the systematic analysis of Randy (2004), the nexus between frustration (being prevented from attaining a goal or engaging in behavior) and aggression has been canvassed in psychology for more than half a century. It is viewed as a master explanation for understanding the cause of human violence. Randy (2004) also itemized the basic premise of the Frustration-Aggression (F-A) hypothesis into two-fold aggression is always produced by frustration which always produces aggression. When subjected to empirical scrutiny however, research has shown that frustration does not inevitably lead to aggression. Sometimes, for example, it results in problem solving or dependent behaviors. And aggression is known to occur even in the absence of frustration (Berkowitz, 1989). The linkage, however is established as violence in the parliament as a result of frustration. It emanates in a situation where by a set of members fail to achieve a designed goal in the process of law making.

**Social learning:** This is a model that explains the behavioral pattern of social learning. According to Randy (2004), the model of social learning makes aggression to

be viewed as learned behavior. Accordingly, it is argued that through observation researchers learn consequences for the behavior, how to do it, to whom it should be directed, what provocation justifies it and when it is appropriate. If aggression is a learned behavior then legislative violence a specific type of aggressive behavior can also be learned (Oots and Thomas, 1985).

**The cognitive postulation:** This scientific instrument sees individual perception and understanding of the society and the environment as the most influential in shaping the behavior of an individual or legislative member. Randy (2004) is of the opinion that the core elements in a cognitive theory of aggression is derived from an area of study called social cognition. The basic notion is that people interact with their environment based on how they perceive and interpret it. That is, people form an internal (cognitive) map of their external (social) environment and these perceptions rather than an objective external reality determine their behavior. The experimental literature clearly suggests that perceptions of intent affect aggression. However according to Randy (2004), there are internal and external factors that can affect one's perceptions of provocation or intent. In the submission of Dodge and Schwartz (1997), there are two common cognitive/processing deficits found among people who are highly aggressive: An inability to generate non-aggressive solutions to conflicts (and lack of confidence in their ability to use them successfully) and a perceptual hypersensitivity to hostile/aggressive cues in the environment, particularly interpersonal cues.

From the generalization of the cognitive school however, it is austere to look at the tendency of environment, social perception of honorable members and how such perception determines their exposure to peace or violence. Members of the legislature come from different backgrounds, share different values and perceptions; this however, could serve as a driving force to violence in the house of parliament.

**Data presentation and analysis:** Based on the responses obtained from the questionnaire administered the result can be seen in Fig. 1. In order to represent each gender group and to get more scientific data, both male and female populations have been selected in the samples for better administration of the questionnaire.

Figure 2 shows that the age brackets used as samples in this research included people from the ages of 20-30, 30-35, 35-40 and 40 years and above, respectively.

It can be seen from the Fig. 3 that 60% of the population sampled in this research are first degree

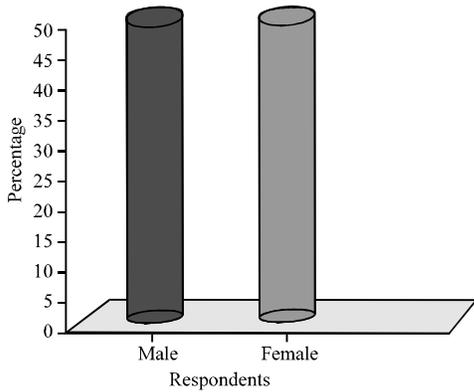


Fig. 1: Respondents bio-data

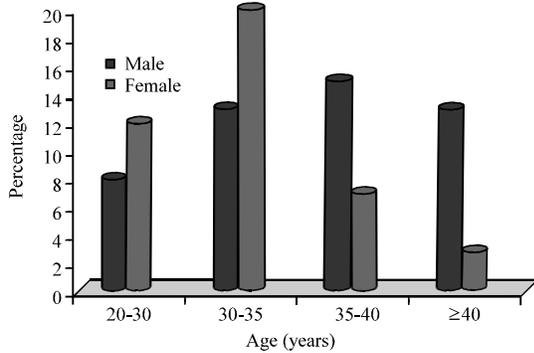


Fig. 2: Age group of the respondents

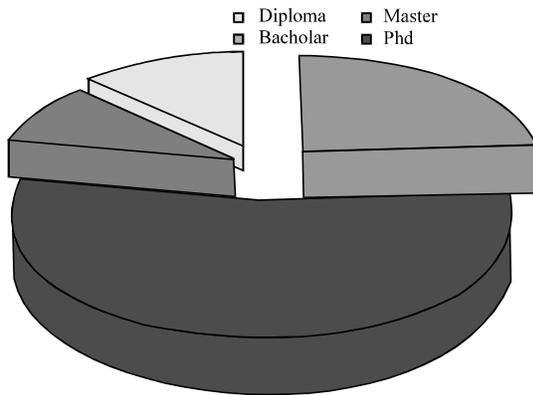


Fig. 3: Educational qualification (Field survey, 2012)

holders while 30% are diploma holders. It is also clear that 18% of the population belong to Ph.D level and only 12% are holders of master degree.

**Occupation:** It can be seen from Fig. 4 that the highest number of the population belongs to the teaching class while the lowest number belong to the farming occupation. Students' number is moderate while the population of law makers is relatively low.

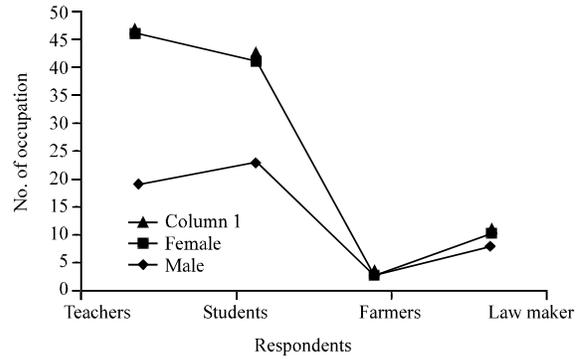


Fig. 4: Occupations bio-data

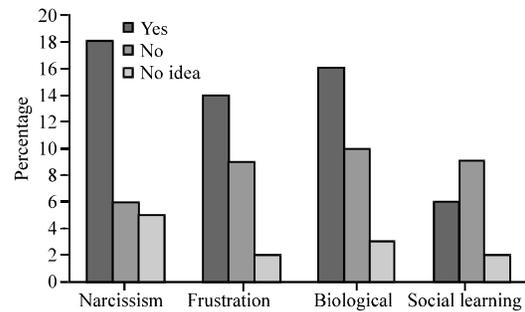


Fig. 5: Causes of violence

**Causes of violence:** It can be seen from Fig. 5 that many members of the population believe that narcissism, frustration and biological factors are the main causes of violence among members of legislature or parliament. Many disagree with the fact that social learning is also a factor that contributes to legislative violence.

## CONCLUSION

With the widespread of violence in parliamentary houses and chambers around the world, this study has made this scientific research and concludes that legislative violence is motivated by frustration and aggression narcissism and inheritance. People become violence due to the nature of the esteem, they want to build around them but in the long run the self-esteem is not realizable. Secondly, people are violent due to genetics or inheritance and finally, poverty, inequality or lack of social justice.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to curtail the level and spread of violence among members of legislature or parliament, the following recommendations are adoptable:

- A psychiatric test be carried on each and every political office aspirant

- Maximum level of security be provided whenever the members of parliament are in session
- Members of legislature should be undergoing training on peace and tolerance
- Drastic punitive measures on those erring or violent members who resort to violence as the only means of solving a legislative dilemma
- The contest for legislative seats should only be allowed for people that are learned and intellectual

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