

Frederich Nietzsche's 'Will to Power' and Credible Electioneering in Nigeria: A Philosophical and Historic Rejection of Defection, Imposition and Incompetent Electoral Umpires

¹Moko, Finian Igbede & ²Ugwu, Dave Ude

¹*Department of Philosophy, University of Calabar, Nigeria*

²*Institute of Public Policy and Administration, University of Calabar, Nigeria*

Abstract

In every political electioneering in Nigeria, the wind of defection, the culture of candidate imposition and the fitness of the INEC chairman, have been key issues. Philosophically, Nigeria's style of defection, political imposition and appointment of the INEC Chairperson, are a re-invention of 17th century Machiavellian politics and a historic replacement of what Frederick Nietzsche calls Macht [genuine political power] with what he calls Kraft [acquisition of power through divisive and unconstitutional means] (Small 166). The current paper is a contribution to contemporary debates on credible electioneering. The main thrust of the paper is to attempt a historical and philosophical rejection of illicit defection, Nigeria's-style imposition of candidates and incompetence among electoral umpires, doing so from the perspective of Frederich Nietzsche. The work, being by its nature a theoretical non-empirical work, adopts the method of contextual analysis to achieve its aims. The paper begins by speculating over some of the crisis in Nigeria's style defection, political imposition, functioning of the INEC Chairperson and ineffective election conduct in the country, before giving an overview of Nietzsche's teaching on them. The paper is politically significant in predicting that unless and until the INEC chairman is appointed by the people, no longer by the political class, Nigeria will continue to conduct successful elections without ever experiencing good governance.

Keywords: *Frederich Nietzsche, Will to power, Defection, Imposition, Electoral umpire, Credible electioneering, Nigeria*

Corresponding Author: Moko, Finian Igbede

Background to the Study

Robin Small in his book, *Frederich Nietzsche in Context*, has noted that among Third World countries, politics in general and political electioneering in particular, have historically maintained the [character and magnitude of impunity] which Frederich Nietzsche sees as the replacement of what he calls Macht [genuine accession to power and prominence] with what he calls Kraft [acquisition of power and political prominence through illegalities] (Small 166). This asertion by Robin small does not only describe the Nigerian situation. It corresponds the ambitions of Nigerian politicians to Nietzsche's 'theory of ambition' or what Nietzsche calls the 'will to power'. At least, this is the thinking of Hartlney et al, whom though, never mentioned Nietzsche, spoke of such an unproportional display of ambitionas comparable largely to Frederich Nietzsche's misguided understanding of ambition among Third World politicians. Their flaggerant abuse in itself is to be seen as a conspiracy against good governance, sustainable democracy and credible electioneering (Electoral Governance 73).

Nietzsche himself noted that '*true ambition*' or the '*genuine will to power*' is not any kind of cool-headed conspiracy but that it is an *insane* kind of political conspiracy or a *neurotic attitude* among seekers of power. Hence, it leaves nothing to chance (The Neurotic Constitution XI). Victory and failure are central to Nietzsche's conception of political ambition and to his teachings on the will to power. In Nigeria, local politicians do everything in their power, including acts, such as; anti-constitutional defection, political imposition, rigging of elections and appointment of mischievous electoral umpires, to avoid losing out of power and elections. To make his case strong, Nietzsche even went as far as praising illegalities in politics and elections, including the unproportional display of ambition by persons, as virtuous. There are, therefore, two things that matter in life for Nietzsche-heroism (*virtue*) and mediocrity (*vice*). Seekers of political or other kinds of power in Nietzsche's teaching, those he calls '*Ubermesche*' or '*Supermen*', must be obsessed with power and must hate failure as one hates curses (Zarathustra 68). This striking similarity between Nietzsche's account and Nigeria's gladiators, in a typical political and electoral situation, is something which cannot be denied.

It is, therefore, not surprising that Nietzsche's appreciation of political impunity, self-serving defection, candidate imposition, rigging and electoral fraud, is largely captured in his view that politics as a whole (including political electioneering) is nothing other than a '*conspiracy*' (The Gay Science 349). Nietzsche sees election as a wider concept, which covers all of these; voting, appointment, selection, deputization, election, nomination and partisan politics. He sees all of these as kinds of election (Seidner 1996).

Heroism is not only brought into Nietzsche's teachings from Nietzsche's readership of Greek ancient heroes, majority of whom were gods or mythical persons, namely, heroes that could not be conquered. Stumpf has noted that the kind of political heroes whom Nietzsche highlights in his teaching as the '*Ubermesch*' or the '*Supermen*'.(in our own context as Third World Nigerian politician) is a perfect antithesis of the virtue of humility (Stumpf 386-389). Like in the context of the Nigerian scenario, Nietzsche's '*Supermen*' as perfect

examples of *ambitious felons*, here, most Nigerian politician are not mindful of taking actions which respect or disrespect the people or the society, unless by doing so when these actions have something to do with their political ambitions. Experience tends to indicate that, like true incarnates of Nietzsche's '*Supermen*', the only time that most Nigerian politicians sacrifice their aristocracy to put on the go of humility and the simplicity of the ordinary citizens, is when they are in the field persuading voters to vote them and when negotiating political mandates from sitting godfathers or from their respective political parties. The aristocracy of politics and the complexity of the truth that election in Nigeria is a theory of imposition, is a highly sophisticated political development which can only be explained from Nietzsche's 'will' or 'conspiracy' to power' and from a 17th century Machiavellian politics. In Nigeria, politics and elections are highly sophisticated. Despite global reports on political strife and electoral fraud, a few instances of credible elections have been recorded in Nigeria in the country's 1993 election and in the 2015 general election. Thus, the Nature and Character of election in Nigeria is not the only contemporary challenge. Constraints to credible electioneering in Nigeria are numerous. Yet Frederich Nietzsche's will to power in Nigeria is certainly a growing contemporary trend that must be checked if elections must transform the country into a democratic state.

Overview of the Crisis of Political Electioneering in Nigeria

Hughes and May have noted that credible electioneering is central to good governance, to the progress of any nation and to the sustainability of any democracy (The Politics of Succession 20). In Nigeria, Frederich Nietzsche's 'will to power' and his fraudulent conception of 'power' as a kind of 'political conspiracy', duly have a major implication for the country's idea of political electioneering. Perhaps, it is Omotola Shola, who has captured the problem more vividly. He has argued that politics and electioneering in Nigeria, is something which is fast becoming second-rate. Politics in Nigeria and by extension electioneering is a socio-economic and political affair, which is fast decaying. Operating under the guise of good governance, sitting, godfathers now decide the fate of politics and elections instead of the people, while incumbent leaders (like the all-time heroes in Nietzsche's teachings,) insist on sitting in office to conduct elections. In this case leaders now function in the polity and during elections in a dual capacity both as umpires and as contestants. At the same time, the law in Nigeria has perpetually remained silent on this. Victory margins in Nigeria, according to Omotola Shola, are ridiculous and extremely wide that one begins to think of elections as nothing short of a kind of political conspiracy to power that has only been disguised by being named an election (Elections and Democratic 535-553). By a free, credible and democratic elections in contradistinction to the illegalities in Nietzsche, and by extension, in Nigeria's history of political electioneering, Larry Diamond has explained that by this we mean:

when elections are administered by a neutral authority, when electoral umpires are sufficiently competent and resourceful to take precaution against fraud, when the police, the military and the courts treat competing candidates and political parties impartially, when contenders all have access to the public media, when electoral districts and rules do not grossly

handicap the opposition... when the secrets of the ballot is protected ... when virtually all the adults can vote... when procedures for organizing and counting votes are widely known ... and when they are transparent and impartial procedures for resolving electoral complaints and disputes (The Second 25)

In Nigeria, Nietzsche's illegalities instead of these universal ideas and other democratic ideals, have led most Nigerian politicians into adversity of illegalities based largely on Nietzsche's teachings on the meaning of ambition ('will to power') and its implications for conspiracy of politicians to thrones. In Nigeria, instead of pursuing universal expectations for credible electioneering, local politicians have continued to witch-hunt political electioneering with 'power-retaining' philosophies, such as: poor conduct of elections, late delivery of election materials, unconstitutional pre-election defection, candidates' imposition, appointment of electoral umpires who cannot deliver on high expectation and rubber-stamping of election victory for certain candidates, no matter what? The motive behind all these, is to win at all cost like the unstoppable 'heroes' and 'gladiators' Nietzsche's 'will to power' and in his 'theory of ambition', commonly referred to as the '*Supermen*'. To this, Onwudiwe Ebere, has pointed out that, on the contrary, what matters is not such naked conspiracies since muscling of oneself to the throne sometimes fails. In his view, what matters in politics in general and in election in particular, and what is not likely to fail in a democratic setting is the fact of one's popularity since politics, it is said, is a game of numbers (The Challenges 1-2).

In Nigeria, a major crisis in politics and in political electioneering or in what is to be seen today as the prevalence of Nietzscherian (Machiavellian) politics, reminds one of what Andreas Schedler describes as 'electoral authoritarianism in the politics and elections of Third World nations (Electoral 1). Schedler, while referring to this kind of scenario or in particular, the politics of Third World countries (Nigeria inclusive), as 'politics and elections without democracy', even coined a term, namely, 'mysterious ritual' (in line with Frederick Nietzsche's Brutish and aristocratic view of political elections), to indicate that among Third World countries including Nigeria, politics and elections are merely forms of conspiracies and a process of political imposition. In it, a few political elites and other aristocrats, completely dictate the state of affairs in politics and election while relying on some misleading and self-serving philosophies in a manner which is antithetical to credible electioneering and good governance (Elections without 46).

Specific and General Implications of Nietzsche's Teachings on 'Ambition' or the 'Will to Power' for Credible Electioneering in Nigeria

a) General implications

On the question of finding remedies to Nietzsche's constraints to viable politics and credible electioneering in Nigeria, three things can clearly be identified with general application.

1. Tyranny of the current Presidential Constitution in the Country

Nigeria is a country which, contrary to any right thinking mind, moved historically and politically from a true federalism (from the 1946 Federal Constitution) to the present unitary and oppressive presidential system (or the 1979 now 1999) presidential constitution. Still, there has been no real effort to right the wrongs it brings. A federal system and a federal constitution or alternatively, the de-centralization of the presidential structures through an in-depth restructuring process, would mitigate if not eliminate the impunity here referred to as Nietzsche's factor in Nigeria's political electioneering. Like a typical Nietzscherian constitution, the current 1979/1999 Presidential constitution, permits of two many illegalities through section 308 of its provision, which covers up for elected officers, being in this context, the bulk of persons who are involved in Nigeria's politics and elections.

2. The question of Political Integrity Long Neglected in Nigeria's Political and Electoral Processes

The very concept of credible electioneering is one which clearly calls for political and electoral integrity. Candidates who eventually get voted into public offices should be able to delivery on high expectation by fulfilling their campaign promises. But, they have up till date, only been able to reflect on the contrary, Nietzsche's illegalities in place of political and electoral integrity.

3. Political Debates, Leaders' accessibility to Constituencies and Purpose-Driven Town Hall Meetings Rendered Fruitless

It is vitally important that politicians should be mandated to appear on pre-election debates, to enable the public to scrutinize their so-called political ambitions and manifestoes. There can be no better confidence-building exercise than this. In 1992, the eventual winner of the 1993 presidential election Chief MKO Abiola, showed a deep passion for his political agenda for the country in his presidential debate against Alhaji Tofa. And the entire nation voted him without asking whether he was Christian or Muslim, North or South. He did not have any need for rigging or to engage in other Nietzscherian display of ambition. During the 2015 election's presidential debate, a related scenario played out. The then, incumbent president, Dr. Goodluck Johnathan, made a better presentation. But Nigerians seemed to believe Muhammad Buhari's agenda better. Hence, Nigerians voted him without him having to resort to the divisive activities of Nietzsche's insane seeker of power.

b) Specific Implications

It is to be correctly concluded that it is out of a Nietzsche's-type search for power and the constraints to credible electioneering, such as: ethnicity, religious plurality, underdevelopment, and social stratification, can be identified. From these Nietzscherian factors, what amounts to Nietzsche' elitists' political 'consciousness' of the 'Superman' and a variety of anti-credibility philosophies, including Nietzsche's theory of ambition among Nigerian politicians, have become rife. From Nietzsche's principles of ambition, off-shoot philosophies in question, namely, baseless defection, political imposition, culture of vote-

buying, rigging and poor appointment of electoral umpires, have found their way into the polity. For the most part, these are not only to be rejected for their anti-democratic and ant constitutional contents. More than this, a condemnation of them, has been made in all of the subsequent sub-headings.

Credible Electioneering in Global Context and Nietzsche's 'Will to Power' or his 'Theory of Ambition'

The term 'credible electioneering' is a derivative of two English words – *credible*, that which is done with the right integrity, and *electioneering*, being the sum total of all the activities undertaken by politicians and their supporters to ensure that one political administration is replaced by another (Collins Dictionary, 9th ed. 2006). A third concept, *election*, has been defined as a formal process of selecting persons into public offices (Gibbins, Webb & Eulau 786). In any case, election in this everyday dictionary and conventional meaning of it, leads irresistibly to the idea that election embodies the idea of voting and balloting. Yet, Nietzsche would rather think of voting and balloting as limitations to ambition. Nietzsche would unfortunately subscribe to such misnomers as contents of his definition of election, such as; rigging, vote-buying, political tuggery, candidate imposition and illicit defection, since these and their likes are, for the most part, what would insure and assure one's ambition. Although, Nietzsche reluctantly admits of balloting and voting in his understanding of election, a true *superman* or seeker of ambition as Nietzsche sees it, has to be able to manipulate and conspire against the system if he must gain power or rise to prominence. Nietzsche's own conception is that of an election as the totality of the processes which take one to his thrones of power (The Gay Science 349).

This makes one to question whether conquest is a kind of election, outside of the Nietzschean and the Nigerian context? Outside of Nietzsche's context, and by this it is meant wherever democratic principles have been observed rather than abused, people genuinely practice politics and contest elections which they win after all and become the political elects of the system. Although this has not been the case with Nigeria and its Third World counterparts, it is to be agreed, however, that modern electioneering is highly sophisticated and technologically laden but not to the point of overcoming Nietzschean and Machiavellian tendencies among politicians through the low technological equipments in Nigeria and its Third World counterparts. One thing to note from all of this is that whenever elections are pure and clean, political electioneering can be fun. Yet in Nigeria, it is riddled with fraud and with other forms of political conspiracies. Despite global reports over electoral violence and political killings, there have also been, side-by-side, some genuine elections in Nigeria. They include the 1993 and the 2015 general elections. Others or the rest of elections conducted in Nigeria including the build up to the current/the fourth-coming 2019 election in the country, have been a sham.

As it is, it is Lucan W. Pue, who has clearly pointed out how to distinguish a credible election from a non-credible election. In particular, an election may be wonderful in 'form' but lacking in 'substance', accordingly, we cannot speak of an election as credible if it is

lacking in substance (Aspects 71). In Nigeria, the substance of election, is what Nietzsche's inordinate ambition of the political class, has come to destroy. Adding to Nietzsche's syndrome local politicians have also invented other philosophies, such as; candidate imposition, ballot snatching and the culture of vote-buying. Both the Nietzschean and the non-Nietzschean elements have been working out side-by-side to upset the substance of election in Nigeria and in other countries. To speak, therefore, of the absence of credible election in Nigeria is to think of many factors. These factors are those of: corruption, underdevelopment, military legacy and international interferences. But Nietzsche's factor cannot be ruled out. It is believed by most people that Nietzsche's factors in Nigeria or the insane drive for power and position among Nigerian and Third World politicians, is a global element among Nigerian politicians which must be overcome if politics and elections in Nigeria must amount to anything of value in the country.

Historical Background to Credible Electioneering and Nietzsche's 'Theory of Ambition' or the 'Will to Power'

Historically, political electioneering is a universal reality which got carried forth from Ancient Greece to Medieval England and to the Holy Roman Empire. Yet, its extension to contemporary society, lies in the gradual emergence of representative governments in Europe, Britain and in America. In Medieval Era, the British Parliament, as a litmus test, ceased to exist as an estate and as a family monarchy, following the introduction of primitive elections into English politics. In the midst of these developments, Kenneth Behring has reminded us that the earliest modern election took place in America and it combined both the balloting system and that of voice voting (Voting and Election 11-64). Option A4 came late, and its development in the world's political history is to be credited as an achievement of contemporary societies of which British and American systems have played a prominent role.

Today, political electioneering, voting and their respective philosophies, have developed their complex features. Most constitutions of the world do totally reserve, for political parties and the authoritative state, the constitutional right to organize and conduct elections. But these actors in election, have introduced styles and brought in inventions, doing so under the guise of permitting creativity, thereby, this has led to voters' confusion and also led to the introduction of contestants and the readiness of power or position seekers in elections to impose and conspire themselves to political thrones against the system. This is what has brought some of the of Third World countries into their contemporary Nietzschean and Machiavellian practices. This factor may not be clear to all. But as political parties, the state and other actors in an election, are bound to argue, and they have so continued to argue that their introduction of styles and their continuous contextualization of elections, is merely done to add value to the polity rather than encourage political and electoral conspiracies..

Some Nietzschean Philosophies to be rejected in Nigeria in the country's Search for Credible Electioneering

1) Self-Serving Pre-Election Defection

The problem with defection in Nigeria, is the illegitimacy surrounding the manner in which politicians engage in pre-election defection (Today Nigeria. www.tday.ng/...). When Winston Churchill (1882-1973) introduced defection into contemporary politics, by means of his multiple defections, it was clear to society that, if defection must be other than an illegality or a conspiracy to win at all cost, it must be based on well-founded ideologies and in the wider interest of society. Sources have it that Churchill's own multiple defections, were all based on the need to add value (Churchill, Online). But in Nigeria, this global ideal is far from being the case.

In Nigeria, defection is applied by most politicians as an after-thought. Politicians do so when they are either aggrieved or when in pursuit of their mandates. In Nigeria, affected politicians tend to seek pre-election defection, either because there is a looming uncertainty about their mandate Or that there is an imminent threat of impeachment. Alternatively, defecting politicians in Nigeria tend to seek the option of defection in order to escape corruption investigation by an incumbent party being that they belong to or are of the opposition party. In the midst of all these, in Nigeria defectors of all shades of defection never have never failed to defend their actions. They have constantly defended their actions by painting their actions as expressions of their rights to freedom of association. They quote Section 40 of the 1999 constitution as their justification. But the current study has found Section 68(1)g, as a judgment text and as a grundnorm or the ultimate basis beyond Section 40 of the Constitution, upon which all and sundry must reject all forms of self-serving defections in Nigeria. The argument against self-serving defection in Nigeria is as follows.

Section 40 must be read side-by-side with section 68(1)g. The later section provides conditions for legitimate claims to defection by politicians. This, unfortunately, they only falsely rely on Section 40 of the current 1999 Nigeria's Constitution as amended. The argument of Section 68(1)g of the 1999 Nigeria's Constitution as amended is that, both for the Executive Arm and for the States and Federal Houses of Assemblies, first of all, the affected politician must declare his office or seat as vacant be for they can be justified to exercise their rights to freedom of association in Section 40 of the constitution in respect of defection, and it must not be because of his disagreement with his political party over trivialities. Contrary to these provisions in 68(1)g, most politicians in Nigeria, while seeking their mandates through defection, conspire by criminally avoiding the very section, namely, Section 68(1)g, which alone must be obeyed if their defections must be democratic and in accordance with the constitution which they were voted into power to uphold. Against the section 68(1)g. They do this partly to cover-up the fact that they are robbing the country of the credibility of its elections by smartly appealing to S.40 for their rights to freedom of association, even when the said section cannot be read in isolation.

2. Candidates Imposition and Political Godfatherism

The problem of political imposition as a whole is something which independence leaders ought to have decisively taken care of. David Aworawo, has pointed out that candidate's imposition and political godfatherism, still linger on because independence leaders in Nigeria, were only preoccupied with power and with ethnic self-realization (Nigeria 195). It is Michael M. Ogbeyi, who has pointed out the wider problem which imposition and godfatherism brings to the polity. In his view, if politics and elections in Nigeria must be free from violence and instability, then, the manner in which political parties and sitting godfathers impose their choices on the people, has to be addressed (A Culture 43-56). To this day, it has still not been in the consciousness of Political parties and of the Nigerian state, to address this colonial and post colonial heritage. Kelvin Shillington, has therefore, cautioned the misnomer of political imposition and the current question of godfatherism as a colonial and independence heritage, which successive military rule, eventually turned into an accepted norm (African History, 140). Today, even the greatest leadership misfit in the country is able to buy any political office, if he has the backing of a political godfather or the so-called National party leader of an incumbent political party. Franz Fanon has indicated that this is how Europe and America keeps imposing lackeys on Africa, hence the genesis of Africa's underdevelopment. Although, one may not completely agree with Fanon, the indisputable fact is that candidate imposition and political godfatherism is part of the reason for the gross underdevelopment of the Nigeria state and its political institutions.

3 Credibility of the INEC Chairman and his Appointment Variables in Nigeria

The country's electoral governing body, namely, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), holds the first charge over elections in Nigeria. But over the years, elections have been marred in fraud and have been poorly manufactured, compared to what should be the case. Sufuyan Ojeifor, has noted that what is more surprising, is how local politicians, despite mass rigging and electoral violence, are able to ambush foreign observers to report free and fair elections among Third World Countries like Nigeria (Yar' Adua Wins 01). Apart from the 1993 and the 2015 elections the country has been attributed with a culture of failed elections (Ogbeyi44). In the thinking of Eghosa Osaghae, this is an extension of the wider question of democratization among sub-Saharan Africa (4-25).

The credibility and integrity of electoral governing body, as Omotola Shola has noted, is not something which exclusively resides in electoral umpires. Their integrity to deliver on credible elections is inseparably tied to the respective variables which appointed them to power. The word used by Omotola is that it is always the case that 'he who plays the piper detates the tone' (Elections and democratic 547-549). Concurring with the piper player theory the president in Nigeria, appoints the INEC chairman as a piper player for the National Assembly to ratify. This makes the INEC chairman, an employee of the Federal Government. Yet, the proper player is not alone as the INEC Chairpersons are, first of all, a problem before being made into a problem by their employers. If this were not the case in Nigeria, there would have been records in the history of Nigeria's elections indicating this or that INEC Chairperson who either resigned or refused appointment for reasons of

political and electoral integrity. It is shocking to note that some of these INEC chairmen are even cart-carrying members of the ruling political party. To make matters worse, the country's electoral body does not have an independent budget. This makes the appointment of INEC chairmen in Nigeria, a fraudulent process, which, apart from personal lack of integrity in them as persons, the hands that have been bringing them to power have also diminished the integrity of the INEC chairperson and the credibility of elections, wherever these have taken place in the country. The need to appoint the INEC chairman in Nigeria, no longer by the political class but by the people, has therefore, become a paramount demand by Nigerians.

Conclusion

It must have become clear by now, that the respective challenges discussed in the current paper, are already a diversity of Nietzsche's philosophies playing out in their different forms in the Nigerian state. Yet, the position of the current paper is that as soon as Nigeria appoints a genuine and credible team of electoral umpires, other Nietzschean conspiracies constraining the move to credible elections, are bound to be moderated. One can speak of an INEC Chairman with integrity as one who is both willing and is also sufficiently empowered to punish electoral offenders and even cancel elections not conducted according to the provisions of the electoral act, using his powers under the law. This in the view of the current paper, can only be possible if the people, no longer the political class, are allowed to appoint or elect the country's electoral umpires. This, in itself, requires political independence. Hence, this paper speculates about a new scenario in the country, where the INEC Chairman is now to be appointed, no longer by the political class but by the people. This in the view of this paper is the only way in which the country can empower or sponsor a new political path which would moderate, if not completely put an end, to the question of good governance and credible electioneering in the country. One must be reminded that the credibility of the process or the installation or appointment of the INEC Leadership as a platform that holds the constitutional responsibility of bringing leaders to power, must be seen as the first pot of call, if the inordinate ambitions of politicians as a major albatross in the polity, must be shelved.

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