

Sociological perspectives

Society



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I have been observing the political events of many countries as they unfold. Among the most fascinating of all was that in Kenya, a country in Africa which drew attention of the whole world after being highlighted as a result of the post election violence. I watched the campaign rallies as they were captured by the TV stations that were mainly dominated by three political parties; the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), the Party of National Unity (PNU) and Orange Democratic Movement of Kenya (ODM - K).

I then focused on the whole country as a social system and finally narrowed down my observation to the close competitors who eyed for the presidential seat (<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-8434875422533573659>) This paper examines all my observations as pertaining to the above highlighted situation through 'a sociologist eyes'. As I watched the campaign rallies, I noticed that among the major political parties, there were common agenda. This were poverty reduction, job creation, fight against tribalism and inequality.

In my quest to know more about the reason behind having common agendas, I realized that this country was stratified into different groups based on tribes, religious background and economic status. Economically, there were two major groups, the poor and the rich. The poor blamed the rich for accumulating large amounts of wealth through corrupt deals. They pointed out some major scandals that led to poor economic growth which resulted to increased poverty in the country. Examples of such corruption scandal include the "golden berg" and the "Anglo leasing".

The poor claimed that they were exploited by the rich, a situation that they said led to marginalization of some people and widened the gap between rich and the poor. The rich were supporting the political regime that existed at that time and they supported President Mwai Kibaki whom they said was the best president that people should support if they intend to achieve a high economic growth rate. Of course these were the owners of means of production and they intended to maximize on increasing their wealth. The poor were supporting Mr.

Odinga who unveiled his plan to reduce poverty and inequality - something that the wealthy class in the country termed as a threat to investment(<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-4385739074127652954>) These two groups divided the country's population into two antagonistic groups and initiated conflict between themselves. The campaign took a different dimension when two tribes in this country came out to out do each other and muscle out their way to compete for the prestigious political position, the presidency.

These tribes included Kikuyu and the Luo(<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=6778777698786778125>) As a result a debate for introduction of " Majimbo system" what can be referred to a Federal government came up. The two groups were once in another conflict since those behind PNU did not support a Majimbo government while those behind ODM and ODM -Kenya did(<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-5553237563976614777&q=kenya+politics+on+tv-+kibaki+and+raila&total=22&start=10&vm=10&so=2&type=>

<https://assignbuster.com/sociological-perspectives-research-paper-samples/>

search&plindex= 5&hl= en . As the election neared, another conflict came up.

This time round, it was the Muslim community versus the Christian community where the Muslims wanted to get freedom to exercise their Sharia Laws. They claimed that they were never given freedom like the Christians who are the majority in the country. The Muslims therefore chose to support the ODM leader, Raila who had promised to address their grievances. The Christians rejected Mr. Raila 's proposal and threatened to demand their Christian laws to be enacted into state laws if the Muslims were given that “ Special treatment” (<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-1185250696841707886> This reminded me of the social conflict theory which holds that no society can exist without conflict (http://www.allfreeessays.com/student/Consensus_Conflict_Perspectives_in_social_theory.html) As I

watched the political campaigns, it was clear that these political leaders wanted to create a positive image of themselves in order to win many votes. In the “ Front stage” as Erving Goffman calls it in his theory of impression management or dramatical approach to social interaction, they gave all sorts of good promises.

They promised to create jobs, reduce poverty, fight tribalism and inequality. In the “ backstage” they would go to their tribes and call for their support, promise their tribes how they would benefit more than the other Kenyans and how they will appoint people from their tribes in government offices, something which was contrary to what they were promising the citizens in general. Challenging each other in political arenas and their respective <https://assignbuster.com/sociological-perspectives-research-paper-samples/>

credentials further worsened the relationship between the “actors” When chaos erupted in the country and things seemed to run out of control, the former UN Secretary General, MR.

Koffi Annan together with Graca Machele and Benjamin Mkapa led Mediation talks. The two political leaders, Mr. Odinga and President Kibaki appeared in Televisions as a way to inform the Kenyans that they were not enemies and were working together to put things in place. This was just a “front stage” since later on they both accused each other for what was happening in the country and clearly brought out a good picture of the 'back stage'. These kind of actions by Mr. Odinga and President Kibaki is what Goffman said was analogously equated to theoretical drama. In this case, Mr.

Odinga and President Kibaki together with their close supporters were the actors while Kenyans became the audience. This is the theory of symbolic interactionism (Herman N, Reynolds L, pp. 76) Kenya is a society that is made up of individuals and groups of people who interact with each other and espouse a sense of 'we feeling'. They share many things in common including laws, the presidency among others and they all work together to improve their welfare and the country as a whole. Within the system there are sub systems which include political system, religious system, education and economic system among others.

All these have a function to perform in order to ensure the social system functions properly. It is important to note that all societies consist of social structures which play different roles but must depend on one another. In the case for Kenya, the disputed election results led to chaos. This paralyzed all

sectors of the economy. Many families were forced to break especially where the Luo intermarried with the Kikuyu. This was a state of anarchy and anomie that led to high levels of insecurity and deaths of thousands of innocent Kenyans.

All learning institutions were closed down churches were burnt down and in general there was social disorganization in the country. All structures that bond Kenya as a society were weakened and if it were not for the mediation talks led by the international society Kenya would have been torn apart. I observed it and the theory of structural functionalism crossed my mind. According to the structural functionalism school of thought, any society comprises of social structures. These social structures play specialized and important functions that bind the members of the society together.

(Robinson W, pp 314)