

Nigerian Government and Politics: Thematic Research Organization and Critique

Adebayo T. SALAMI Ph.D

Abstract

The subject matter of political science especially in relation to the advancement of its contents and methods requires regular refinement through careful interrogation and systematic critiquing approached from the critical scrutiny of the existing thematic organization and arrangement with respect to the study, examination and analysis of political systems as the reliable basis for the building of generalizations and predictions. Using Nigeria as a case study, the paper/article explores how the methodology of political science and the contained nuances can help in the refinement and reinvention of the inherited legacies of the thematic arrangement of the problems and issues of government and politics so as to be able to enhance sophistication of study, examination and analysis for the overall goal of subject matter prediction. The methods of data collection and analysis are embedded within the framework of qualitative research as espoused in the existing knowledge/thematic organization and arrangement as already accomplished in extant literature on the subject matter of the problems and issues in the body politics of Nigeria. The paper/article finally concludes that the existing themes and their organization have both meaning and relevance only in relation to how time helps in shaping their knowledge consequences.

Keywords: Problems. Issues. Government. Politics. Thematic Arrangement

Introduction

The evolution and relevance of disciplines are embedded in the different academic and intellectual efforts in relation to their foundations, and further in the inherited legacies in relation to the patterns of their scrutinies and interrogations. Disciplines as academic borders delineating and delimiting subject matters of study and the how, why and what in relation to their substances, evince what they are through the establishment and sustenance of distinctions between and among them. Political science as an academic discipline of study has the concern since ages past to both delineate and delimit its contents and methods by regularly redefining and reshaping its focus thereby enhancing its relevance and sophistication among other disciplines. The discipline of political science regularly battles with its subject matter by seeking to sharpen the methods in relation to the advancement of its contents. Its methods, both qualitative and quantitative, are further placed within ideas especially in relation to the formulation and development of issues, problems

*Department of Political Science, Olabisi Onabanjo University, NIGERIA

and topics around the subject matter, and how the issues, problems and topics in turn help in the advancement and knowledge of the subject matter. The latter takes place within a particular approach to research and development in the field. Research and development in political science, it is further noted, are the impetuses that help in the refinement and reshaping of its contents and methods.

The paper/article focuses on Nigeria. And a study of her affairs from the political perspective, the argument is being made, requires critical and systematic determination of the salient features and characteristics that make its politics peculiar to it and therefore useful for comparative research purposes. The attendant interrogation, examination, scrutiny and analysis of the government and politics of Nigeria therefore require asking and probing the question: Why is Nigerian government and politics in broad terms accepted as being peculiar to it? In addition, what modes of academic analysis and investigation best help in the amplification of the peculiarities of Nigerian government and politics? And finally, what items of knowledge best capture and present the peculiarity? The knowledge and understanding of government and politics, it is again being argued, require peculiarities of study and intervention to enable the making of the fundamental distinctions between and among political systems. The emphasis on the understanding of these peculiarities across geographical regions and political systems is critical to the knowledge of the problems and issues that are embedded in the study and methods of comparative research in general terms, and specifically in relation to its global relevance when particularly approached from the argument of adoption and adaptation as political systems try to avail themselves of the opportunities inherent in the study of nation-building experiences.

The understanding of Nigerian government and politics has been arranged alongside important knowledge fundamentals within both critical and liberal genre and perspectives. What are these knowledge fundamentals, and why are they labelled as being very important? They are the ideas in relation to the extent of comprehensiveness and adequacy, intellectual wise, in meeting the overall responsibility of critical study, examination and analysis. This props-up the necessity for an all-encompassing academic frame of disquisition. The frame consequently derives its existence and vitality from the characterization: "problems of, and issues, in Nigerian government and politics". The accompanying sophistication especially in relation to critical study, examination and scrutiny, makes it an advanced course in Political Science in Nigeria. The sophistication and advancement are in turn measured by the extent of rigour of science of examination, scrutiny and analysis. It becomes compelling to therefore provide the necessary analytical frame of scrutiny and interrogation in relation to the amplification of the knowledge and understand

ing of the “problems of, and issues in, Nigerian government and politics” and their critiques. The compelling responsibility is both the focus and objective of the paper/article.

I. Overcoming the Ambiguities: Simplifying the Terms and Terminologies

The argument of the paper/article requires knowledge simplification processes and procedures. And the first in the order of immediate responsibility is to simplify the terms and terminologies. So, what are the embedded terms and terminologies, and within what context of application and utilization? They are: (1) problems, (2) issues, (3) government, (4) politics, and (5) thematic arrangement. Their in-depth conceptualization and specific operationalization require being collapsed into three as: (1) problems and issues, (2) government and politics, and (3) themes and thematic arrangement in relation to subject matter interrogation and scrutiny. The understanding of the terms and terminologies, it is important to specially emphasize, derives better knowledge and simplification from two interrelated approaches. First and foremost, undertaking their individual examination and analysis and second, further situating their individual scrutiny and interrogation within the relationship between and among them. Consequently, their definitions and simplifications, here accomplished, have the very important meaning of conceptualization only within the existence of a relationship between and among them as earlier mentioned. Problems and issues for instance, though possessing peculiarity of technical understanding, for clarity of meaning within the broader context of the paper/article, should be interpreted and explained from the embedded relationship within the government and politics of Nigeria.

In the light of the above therefore, what are the problems and issues in relation to the body politics of Nigeria? The question seeks first a conceptual interpretation and interrogation of the idea of problems and issues. The answer should hence seek to engage itself with a conceptual interpretation of the technical understanding of the problems and issues. The idea of problems and issues seeks a critical scrutiny of Nigeria as a system of government and politics. In other words, problems and issues have specific understanding only within the context of government and politics as a systemic operation in Nigeria. Problems and issues therefore constitute the challenges inhibiting the stability of the Nigerian State from the systemic perspective. They are essentially the perennial dysfunctional and constitutive elements of the political system of Nigeria that do inhibit the attainment and sustenance of political stability on permanent basis. Problems and issues hence become conceptual/terminological phrases with which to describe and label the constraints and limitations to the political development of the Nigerian State. With the background now provided, what, it can now be asked, are the problems and

issues of government and politics in Nigeria? They are: (1) religion, (2) corruption, (3) ethnicity, (4) federalism and related matters such as revenue allocation, number of states, local governments, etc., (5) population census especially in relation to political representation, (6) political parties and party systems, (7) the challenges in relation to the enthronement and sustenance of democracy, (8) how well to conduct free, fair and credible elections, (9) military legacies on the political development of Nigeria, (10) the nature and character of the Nigerian State, (11) women and youth matters, (12) economic structure and foundation of the Nigerian State, (13) the intractable consequences of the integration of Nigeria into the international economic system of capitalism, and (14) citizenship and related matters, etc.

A critical understanding of the problems and issues in academic terms and within the idea of thematic research organization and critique requires constructing and formulating for them the relevant analytical frames. The attendant analytical frames, it requires further emphasis, should be such that allow for the formulation and development of the relevant knowledge themes and sub-themes with which to broadly interrogate and scrutinize the government and politics of Nigeria. Rather than developing and amplifying the features and characteristics of the political system of Nigeria as existing in isolation, it serves the purpose of scholarship better, if and when these features and characteristics are in turn embedded into better organized frameworks of analytical disquisitions with the intellectual finesse, capacity and capability of enabling the study, examination and analysis of the government and politics of Nigeria. Problems of, and issues in, the government and politics of Nigeria are what lend themselves so easily to thematic arrangement for thoroughness of examination and analysis. The relationship between the two seeks to measure, determine and gauge the degree and extent to which they cohabitate. The character of the relationship between the two indicates the extent to which they both reinforce and shape each other in the cohabitation.

The answer to the second component of the question as earlier posed, exists in the same thesis as being amplified. The amplification in addition requires our engagement with the features and characteristics of the Nigerian political system. Logically therefore, what are the features and characteristics of the Nigerian political system in specific, clear analytic terms? And to what extent do they enhance the knowledge and understanding of the problems and issues of government and politics in Nigeria? They include: (1) extremely plural and highly competitive politics, (2) state/citizen conflict and antagonism, (3) manipulation of religion for selfish gains, (4) ideological emptiness and bankruptcy, (5) expensive governance architecture and structures, (6) overbearing executive power, (7) political alienation, (8) disobedience to rules and constituted authorities, and (9) poor reward distribution. The final part of the section with particular regard to providing the necessary

pointers to the body and arrangement of the paper/article, will be to engage the question: What best help in the organization and arrangement of themes with which to interrogate and scrutinize the problems of, and issues in, the government and politics of Nigeria? In other words, how have the paper/article attempted the organization and arrangement of themes in relation to the interrogation and scrutiny of the problems and issues in the government and politics of Nigeria? The answers to the questions lead us quickly to the next section of the paper/article.

II. The Question of Approach

Critical to the paper/article is the question of approach especially in relation to answering the above questions. Approach in terms of the formulation and development of important knowledge fundamentals targeted at amplifying the organization and arrangement of the themes and sub-themes with which to interrogate and analyze the government and politics of Nigeria. Again, what formulation that is best and appropriately suited for the organization and arrangement of the themes and sub-themes? Themes and sub-themes, in the existing sense, indicate the wide range of topics appropriate for the scrutiny and interrogation of the problems of, and issues in, the government and politics of Nigeria. The topics, for them to have comprehensiveness of coverage, should be such that are made to reflect the substance of the discipline of political science and its growth and development especially in relation to the examination and analysis of political events. In other words, creating, formulating and developing relevant topics that should in turn enable critical study and interrogation of the problems and issues in Nigerian government and politics, immediately require situating such topics as intellectual ideas within the emerging events of the Nigerian body politics especially in relation to the struggle for power, its consolidation and sustenance by the politicians and political gladiators alike. This is where the reference to the substance of the discipline of political science and the history in relation to its growth and development comes in. The organization and arrangement of the themes with which to capture the knowledge and understanding of the problems and issues in relation to Nigerian government and politics involve the utilization of the established approaches to the study of political phenomena in the discipline and here simplified as:

- 1.) **Nigeria: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow:** The approach presents clearly the historical dimension to the knowledge and understanding of the problems and issues of government and politics in Nigeria. What are its knowledge fundamentals, and how have these helped in the establishment of the option as constituting an approach to study, examination and analysis? The answer to the question urgently requires clear specification and articulation of these knowledge fundamentals. The knowledge fundamentals are the embedded

knowledge elements of the approach. And because it falls within the broader context of the traditional genre in political science scholarship, the elements, here adopted, are in turn rooted in history, philosophy and law.

The element of history as embedded in the approach requires: (1) elaborate and comprehensive investigation and analysis of the various pre-colonial social formations prior to the contacts with the whites, (2) focusing not only on the histories of these social formations but as well as on their systems of traditional administrations with the view to knowing the fundamental differences that are inherent in them and their shared similarities, (3) undertaking a thorough and comprehensive examination and analysis of the various trading activities especially by the whites prior to the formation of the Nigerian State, (4) undertaking further a comprehensive and careful examination and analysis of the processes and procedures leading to the formation of the Nigerian State, (5) specific and critical discussion and analysis of the various colonial constitutions up to the attainment of independence in 1960 including as well the various constitutional conferences, (6) deep and critical study of the fall of the First Republic and the interrogation of the causes and effects of the first military intervention, (7) elaborate investigation, discussion and analysis of the composition and elements of the Murtala-Obasanjo Transition Programme leading to the Second Republican Constitution, (8) critical explanation, discussion and analysis of the Babangida Administration in particular as a phenomenon of study within the context of body politics of Nigeria and further approached from the interpretation and analysis of the knowledge and understanding of the endemic problems and issues, (9) extant discussion, examination and analysis of the Sani Abacha regime and transition programme up to the transfer of power by Abubakar Abdulsalam, (10) the return to democracy from 1999 till date with particular focus on the activities of the leading political parties, APC and PDP, the tensions between the legislative and executive arms of government, the growing insecurity and armed banditry, violent demonstrations by the youths, etc.

The philosophical and legal components of the approach within the gamut of the traditionalism present themselves as themes in relation to the advancement of the knowledge and understanding of the problems and issues that are inherent in the body politics of Nigeria. Consequently, matters and issues in relation to what ought to be, the moral basis of politics and political life, and the extent to which legal and constitutional provisions are adhered to in the exercise of political power deserve as well clear itemization, examination and discussion as useful themes within the body of the approach. Topics such as: (1) political corruption, (2) the administration of the rule of law, and (3) representation within the context of plurality and political pluralism, among others, become

both embedded in the political process of Nigeria and forming as well the fulcrum of critical and objective examination and analysis—see Olaniyan (Ed.) (2003), Falola et al (Eds.) (1991), Fwatshak (Ed.) (2016), among others.

2.) The Behavioural Dimension: The knowledge and understanding of the problems and issues of government and politics in Nigeria, as earlier articulated, further require a knowledge framework that is imbued with both the capacity and capability for accuracy of description, explanation and prediction. Violence, thuggery, etc., and their effects require knowledge framework with the sufficient capacity and capability of enhanced understanding and prediction. The focus and shift of emphasis on the study of individual and group behaviours of the 1960s enriched both the methods and sophistication of the discipline of political science, no doubt. In relation to the study of Nigerian government and politics, behaviouralism or the behavioural approach has relevance especially in relation to helping in the organization and arrangement of matters and issues that do exert significant effects and consequences on having our research focus on the study of the political process and events in larger terms.

How, it can now be asked, has the behavioural approach been instrumental to the knowledge, understanding and amplification of Nigerian government and politics especially from the perspective of engaging ourselves with the embedded problems and issues? Behaviouralism, it is instructive to note, is critical to the invention and application of the science in relation to ensuring objectivity of conceptually formulated ideas, the rigour in relation to their determination and measurement, the orderly arrangement of the emanated data, the discussion of the findings, and formally ensuring compatibility between the conclusion reached and the embedded procedures of its establishment. Because the principle of 'systematization' is critical to behaviouralism and particularly to the science in relation to the study of human behaviour as politically expressed, its application to the study of Nigerian government and politics especially in relation to orderly and systematic arrangement of the relevant themes, is based unarguably on the existing theories in the discipline of political science. This therefore continues to explain and justify why for example the "frustration-aggression" theory from psychology is important to the study, examination and analysis of violence, thuggery, etc., as embodiments of the problems and issues of government and politics in Nigeria.

Violence, thuggery, etc., as a theme of study, examination and analysis within the context of Nigerian government and politics, therefore require greater methodical and analytical specification around certain important knowledge

fundamentals. Questions such as 'why', 'how', and 'what', further help in the formulation and development of the themes into sub-themes, for both comprehensive and in-depth study, examination and analysis. The work of Anifowose (2011) is remarkably outstanding in this dimension. Theories such as group, elite, power, etc., are further important and relevant to the examination, discussion and analysis of political events especially in relation to maintaining and sustaining stability. The paper/article can hence be approached from the application and utilization of the theories in the discipline to in turn explain and analyze some of the problems of government and politics in Nigeria.

The limitations of the approach notwithstanding, it still aids the existing sophistication and scientific attainment of the discipline of political science. This is quite significant and worthy of mentioning. The knowledge and understanding of the political process of Nigeria like the political processes of other national and constitutional systems are greatly affected and limited by the nature of man and the effect of this on his expressed political behaviour. Man has the features of contradictions and inconsistencies to the extent of inhibiting the idea of "discernible uniformity", realistic and objective measurement. Hoping to undertake rigorous study, examination and analysis of the behaviours of Nigerian within the context of political violence and using same to formulate and develop generalizations of both knowledge and public policy consequences are already limited by the likelihood of an average Nigerian being not very reliable. Because every Nigerian citizen is a political animal, there is the likelihood of him to allow his biases to shape and influence his orientation to politics and to the simple question: Have you ever involved yourself in political violence, and why?

Approaching the scrutiny and amplification of the thematic issues and problems in relation to the knowledge and understanding of the political process of Nigeria equally has some embedded difficulties especially in the formulation and establishment of the attendant rigour and scientific patterning. Mathematization and measurability are based on the assumption of a standard process and procedure of determination of the average Nigerian behaviour as politically expressed, and that the behaviour is essentially and technically political. The assumption is fallacious. It is not only because of the issue and problem of reliability and dependability in relation to human conduct, but again because what is considered as political has its roots in economy, society and culture. In other words, measuring/gauging political behaviour rests further on the assumption of a measured result of the propelling forces and factors.

3.) The Perspective of Economic Analysis: The aggregation of the problems and

issues of government and politics in Nigeria around some points earlier highlighted suggests further the need and justification of an attendant framework of intellectual disquisition that is capable of helping to reveal the correlations between and among these points holistically. This brings in the perspective of economic analysis. How, it becomes critical and important to ask: can the perspective of economic analysis help in the thematic organization and arrangement of the problems and issues of Nigerian government and politics? First to be urgently considered is the answer to the question: what is meant by the perspective of economic analysis and examination? This perspective, to be sure, does not fundamentally seek the knowledge and understanding of the problems and issues of government and politics in Nigeria from the perspective of political economy as the integration of politics and economy. It rather utilizes the framework and subject of the science of economics to interrogate the problems and issues. A related question then becomes important to ask: How? Because nearly all the problems and issues of government and politics in Nigeria revolve around the competition for scarce resources between and among the divergent religious ethnic, cultural and political groups, there is therefore the necessity and justification for the subject matter of economics to aid the interrogation and study. "Who gets what, when and how" within the context of the economy of Nigeria requires the equal knowledge of the extent of the knowledge and understanding of the natural distribution of resources between and among the political and administrative regions of Nigeria to the extent of helping to reveal the significance of the emphasis on the substructure and the embedded interactions within it.

In other words, the series of accusations and counter-accusations which are technically inappropriate within the perspective of the federal political spirit, require in-depth and comprehensiveness of study and interrogation only within the viewpoint of economic analysis. Specific arguments and allegations relating to "internal colonialism", "marginalization", "uneven/unequal development", "underdevelopment", "injustice", "inequity", and "lack of fairness", etc., of one region/section of the country over and above the other expressed further as political domination and subjugation of one group by the other or within the political framework of North-South dichotomy, attest to the relevance of the perspective of economic analysis. This perspective helps to in addition illustrate the distribution of developmental projects on the basis of yearly budget planning and implementation. "Who gets what, when and how" within the framework of yearly budget preparation and implementation, and given the existing structure of the Nigerian economy with oil as its mainstay, reveals quite fundamentally the embedded contradictions in relation to the allocation and utilization of the oil resources just as the producing areas contin

ue to suffer soil and environmental degradation and neglect. The perspective of economic analysis gives further indication with respect to “extremely poor” and “abundantly rich” regions of the politics and administration of Nigeria. The ensuing competitions and rivalries between and among the regions/states on the issue of Value Added Tax are indications of the embedded strength in the economic analysis framework of the interrogation and study of the problems and issues of government and politics in Nigeria—see Olayide (Ed.) (1976), Olaloku et al (Eds.) (1987), among others.

Focusing on the economy and using same to situate the knowledge and understanding of the problems and issues that are both embedded and inherent in the body politics of Nigeria has its inadequacies. The economy alone cannot explain the extent of functionality of a system of government. While it remains important to acknowledge how critical resources are to governmental operations and in the achievement and sustenance of the purposes of the state, its organization should unarguably be a matter of critical concern. In fact, it is the lack of proper organization of resources that helps to explain the intractable nature of these problems and issues. Consequently, the lack of comprehensiveness of the perspective of economic analysis indicates a major limitation with respect to the formulation and development of an encompassing intellectual framework with which to integrate the many themes in relation to the organization of the knowledge and understanding of the problems and issues that either constitute or are in turn embedded in the study, examination and analysis of Nigerian government and politics.

- 4.) **Class Analysis:** How relevant and significant is class analysis as an intellectual framework with which to both anchor and amplify the knowledge and understanding of the problems and issues of government and politics in Nigeria? This urgently entails the specification of its elements and using same to accomplish the task as enunciated above. But the question remains: How appropriate is the classical Marxian analysis to the ongoing exposition? This requires immediate and urgent interrogation. Why? Because of the argument/point in relation to specificity and social circumstance. Again, what is the specific Nigerian situation and circumstance?

According to the Report of the Political Bureau of 1987 (hereafter referred to as the Report), the classical Marxian analysis of class and social stratifications is inarguably vague. In its words: “..., this approach to classification seems superficial” (Ibid:15). According to the Report, the base of the Nigerian social system is characterized by: “...a modernizing, capitalistic system and a largely pre-industrial, i.e., a subsistent economy” (Ibid:15). The Nigerian society, the

Report continues: "... does not divide easily into the capitalist and working classes" (Ibid:5). In therefore addressing the fundamentality of class analysis and its usefulness to the knowledge and understanding of the Nigerian body politics, the Report proposes the following attributes as the parametres for dividing Nigeria into social classes: "(a) possession of property and the form of property; (b) possession of knowledge (scientific, professional, technical); (c) possession of status not necessarily based on knowledge or property; (d) a certain level of general education; and (e) certain types of occupation" (Ibid:15).

Within the context of the formulated attributes, the Report states clearly that: "When we apply the above characteristics, we have the following rough classifications: (a) those with ascribed status (e.g., traditional rulers); (b) the landed gentry; (c) industrial/commercial elite; (d) intellectual and military elites; (e) the quasi-proletariat; and (f) workers, peasants and the unemployed" (Ibid:15). Quite appropriate to now ask: How applicable is class analysis as an intellectual framework of amplification of the knowledge and understanding in relation to the thematic arrangement of the problems and issues of Nigerian government and politics?

Two cases are worth mentioning and within the context of the Report. The Report notes: "Land in most parts of the country originally belonged to families, villages or other collectivities.... Over the years, important changes have occurred in the system of land ownership. The increasingly depressed economic condition of the peasants and urban poor has compelled them to agree to the sale of their residential and even farm lands" (Ibid:16). The Report continues: "In the past 30 years or so, many members of the elite groups have bought up most of the residential lands in the urban centres and rural towns with funds borrowed from governments, companies and financial institutions.... Even multinational companies have joined in a big way in the scramble for extensive farming land" (Ibid:16). The second case, "the industrial and commercial elite", in the words of the Report: "The industrial group has been very active in inducing governments to develop and implement import substitution policies and programmes" (Ibid:16). The challenge, for instance, arising from the two cases and others, in the words of the Report: "This brief survey has underlined the great potentialities of Nigeria in agricultural, mineral and human resources. Our failure to maximally and positively exploit these resources for the fulfilment and wellbeing of the Nigerian people remains one of the loudest indications of failure of our political systems in the past" (Ibid:17). The challenge as mentioned and the interrogation and application of class analysis individually and collectively enable the emanating submissions: (a) that class analysis unarguably represents a variant of the perspective of economic analysis as earlier discussed above, and that (b)

social classes typical of the Nigerian circumstance of history, science and technology in relation to her level of development actually exist.

- 5.) **The Nigerian State as a Conceptual Variable and Analytical Category:** The Nigerian State is no doubt critical to the study, examination, discussion and analysis of its politics. The nature and character of the Nigerian State and its description and characterization as imperial and alien, corrupt and unproductive, dictatorial and authoritarian, primitive and traditional, imperfectly designed, exploitative and predatory, lacking in focus and fundamentally engages itself in the distribution of the national cake rather than having the concern about its baking, among others, and without argument, do reflect and capture the problems and issues that are inherent in the body politics of Nigeria. Understanding the paper/article therefore requires formulations in theory and science that are capable of providing dependable and reliable indices and criteria for the interrogation of the state as a conceptual phenomenon—see Oyovbaire (1984), among others

Using the state as both a conceptual variable and as an analytical category has its many inadequacies and deficiencies. The first exists in the many distortions and mis-labelling of the state and with consequences of knowledge interpretations. The academic pluralism on the subject matter and the popularity of the classical Marxian analysis made possible the embedded deficiencies and inadequacies. The embedded deficiencies and inadequacies give indication of conceptual corruption and ambiguity of interpretations especially in relation to the proper understanding of the Nigerian State which is variously described as: (1) “the power elite”, (2) “the Nigerian national bourgeoisie”, (3) “foreign-dependent pseudo-bourgeoisie”, (4) “the alliance of the indigenous with imperialism for the building of capitalism in Nigeria”, (5) “the triangle of foreign and local business men and state officials”, (6) “the Nigerian bourgeoisie proper and the petty bourgeoisie and their various sections” (7) “the Nigerian capitalist class”, (8) “regional bourgeoisie”, and (9) “federal bourgeoisie” (Ibid:132). The attempt by Osaghae (1998:12) to ensure a rather clear understanding of it around three elements which he identified as: (a) “the colonial nature of the state, (b) its lack of relative autonomy, and (c) the federal system of government” could not still rescue the state from the prevailing conceptual distortions and corruption. The existing ideological implosions on the subject matter of enabling and sustaining a clear knowledge and understanding of the state still remain a profound issue of academic and intellectual debate in the study and analysis of Nigerian government and politics. The implosions and the related knowledge consequences both continue to nurture and sustain critical questions and issues in relation to the appropriateness and suitability of the approach.

III. Special Issues in Nigerian Politics

The knowledge and understanding of the problems of, and issues in, Nigerian government and politics require further placement within the context of commissioned reports such as the Report of 1987. Why? Beyond the perspective of individual researchers as already found in extant literature on the subject matter, there is, the paper/article argues, the necessity for the understanding and review of the Nigerian State perception/understanding of what these problems and issues really are from the perspective of its study panels and commissioned reports. This consequently brings into the fore our study and review of the Report under reference. The Report of 1987 in Chapter Ten titled: "Special Issues in Nigerian Politics" consequently seeks to succinctly describe what these issues and problems are, and have then coagulated around a Six Point Thematic Arrangement. These are: (1) National Census, (2) Revenue Allocation, (3) Creation of States, (4) National Languages, (5) State and Religion, and (6) the Federal Capital Territory.

- 1) **National Census:** According to the Report: "An overview of the Nigerian political experience since independence in 1960 shows clearly that among the many issues that have created great anxiety and brought the country to the brink of collapse has been the attempt at obtaining an accurate count of the country's population" (Ibid:161). The Report continues: "The potency of the issue as a source of confusion and national discord is underscored by the fact that attempts made by civilians (1962-1963) and the military (1973) were greeted with the same degree of cynicism, suspicion, and controversies, and had to be cancelled (Ibid:161). Like the Report noted, the conduct of national census in Nigeria revolves around two important and critical ideas and these are: (1) timing, and (2) modalities. Timing and modalities in relation to appropriateness and suitability, and legal, administrative and political frameworks of implementation. Apart from noting that: "...this generated a lot of interest and concern among contributors from all sections and majority groups in the country" and further that: "...why we have been unable to conduct an acceptable census is the linkage between it, revenue allocation, and political representation", the Report, going by its recommendations, still fails to address the essential purposes of census without having to compromise same on the ground of politics (Ibid:163).
- 2) **Revenue Allocation:** The Report equally notes that: "Revenue allocation...has been one of the most contentions and controversial issues in the nation's political life" (Ibid:164). The Report continues: "We are, however, convinced that the basis of this malaise is the fickleness that has characterized inter-regional fiscal and political relations since the amalgamation of 1914" (Ibid:164). Revenue

allocation is consequently a political rather than economic and technical problem especially in relation to the distribution and allocation of revenues between and among the constituents of Nigeria. This makes it a difficult problem to solve especially against the further background that the federal government takes a larger chunk of it going by the existing allocation criteria.

- 3) **Creation of State:** In the opinion of the Report: "The agitation for the creation of states has been one of the most persistent problems in Nigerian politics" (Ibid:168). It continues: "In the dying day of colonialism, the agitation which was motivated mainly by the need to allay the fears of the ethnic minorities throughout the federation by the majority Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani groups led to the setting up of the Willink Commission of 1957" (Ibid:168). It goes further: "This, apart from the obvious fact that the 1967 state creation exercise was part of the strategy to crush the secession of "Biafra", its major justification was that the 12-state structure then established broke up the old regions. However, events immediately after the civil war in 1970 when from virtually every corner of Nigeria came strident cries and demands for the creation of more states and boundary adjustments showed clearly that the issue was far from solved properly" (Ibid:168).
- 4) **National Languages:** Nigeria, according to the Report, "...appears to be passing through a national language impasse" (Ibid:181). It further notes: "...the mutually competitive political relationship that developed among the major ethnic trio was also naturally reflected in the languages factor. The Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba languages such became popularized as indigenous lingua-franca almost exclusively within their areas of ethnic dominance. In consequence, by independence, no single indigenous language was able to emerge and cut across the entire country as a lingua-franca, let alone being accepted as an official language. This has led to the continued use of English (a foreign European language introduced at the advent of colonialism) to-date as Nigeria's official language..." (Ibid:181).
- 5) **The State and Religion:** The fundamentality of religion in Nigeria considering the level of her social sophistication makes it an issue of politics. The lack of agreement on the subject matter of state and religion results to the recommendation by the Report that, the Nigerian State, from viewpoint of Christians, "...should not be involved in religious matters; should not be a member of the OIC and should withdraw from it; missionary schools...should be returned to their proprietors; and government should disengage itself from pilgrimage exercises" (Ibid:183). The Muslims on the other hand, and according to the Report: "...there can be no real separation of state and religion; to deny the

country admission into the OIC would mean denying the Muslims of Nigeria their constitutional rights; Sharia Courts of law should be established where there is a demand for them by Muslims; Nigeria's diplomatic representation at the Vatican should be terminated as Nigeria has ambassador already accredited to Italy residing in Rome; Muslim holidays should be observed side-by-side with Christian holidays; and the school calendar and curriculum should be organized to reflect the various beliefs of our people" (Ibid:184).

- 6) **The Federal Capital Territory:** While Nigerians, given the many problems of ethnic and political pluralism in the country, accepted to the idea of a new Federal Capital Territory, the idea, in turn, had with it, some other problems and issues which the Report described as "constitutional, administrative and physical" (Ibid:194). What, among others, should be its status in relation to the existing federating units of Nigeria? Again, what should be its proper framework of administration? In addition, who are or should be the real owners of the area? And finally, what funding arrangement best guarantee its existence as one of the administrative units of the Nigerian State?

Again, what is the academic significance of the section of the paper/article to the body of knowledge on the subject matter? The academic significance of the section of the paper/article compels its further detailed scrutiny especially in relation to: (1) the extent of its contribution to the understanding and knowledge of the problems and issues of government in Nigeria and their embeddedness in the accompanying technicalities of examination and interrogation, (2) the extent to which the impact of time and the embedded dynamics of the country's political development have contributed to the shaping of their contents especially within the notion of competitive politics, and finally, (3) the extent to which the problems and issues can be said to have either given birth to, or considered related to the contemporary problems and issues of government and politics in Nigeria. From the rather six points as given by the Report of 1987, the contemporary problems of, and issues in, the government and politics of Nigeria revolve around three main pillars. These are: "(a) insecurity (armed banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, ritual killings, assassination, farmers/herders clashes, cultism and gangsterism, political violence, insurgency, etc.), (b) economy (economic downturn, galloping inflation, joblessness, acute poverty, etc.), and (c) political corruption (embezzlement of public funds, leadership failures, bad governance, poor institutions, etc.) In other words, what, in clear analytical terms, best explain the relationships between the Six Point Thematic Arrangement and the contemporary problems and issues as articulated in the above Three Points Thematic Arrangement? Again, to what extent has the former further contributed to the aggravation of the latter? Finally, and arising from the embedded critique, what framework of knowledge and understanding best provide the very

important mechanism with which to solidly and systematically arrange into carefully organized themes the examination, study and analysis of the problems and issues of government and politics in Nigeria most comprehensively and robustly? There is, unarguably, the existence of a relationship between the two categories in relation to the task of ensuring comprehensive and detailed thematic arrangement of the problems and issues of government and politics in Nigeria. To the extent that the problems and issues within the Six Point Thematic Arrangement still remain critical and embedded within the body politics of Nigeria from both macro and micro perspectives, so long therefore that distinct compartmentalization cannot be made between and among them. This no doubt has further attendant implication. And this exists in further elaboration of the themes of study and analysis beyond the Six Point Thematic Arrangement. Again, all aspects of the problems and issues deserve being labelled and considered as “special”. The justification exists in the fact that they all demand/require immediate public policy attention.

IV. Methodology

The methodology of the paper/article is organized around data sources and the accompanying attendant analyses. This requires asking important questions in relation to the above accomplishment. Because the research is qualitative, it has further embedded into it the related requirements and characteristics and therefore definingly dependent upon the utilization of secondary information sources as found in books, journals and official reports. The justification exists in the fact the paper/article focuses on the existing interrogation of the problems and issues of government and politics and their organization and arrangement into themes. Because it has the related responsibility of undertaking a critique of the organization and arrangement with the view to using same to both assess and evaluate the potentialities and limitations as embedded in the various themes, the attendant mode of analysis and of the discussions of the results and findings become as well embedded in the ultimate role of critique in the amplification of scholarship especially in relation to the subject matter of study i.e., issues and problems of government and politics in Nigeria.

The methodology hence revolves around important procedures and processes of data collection which include:

- (1.) Undertaking a survey of literature broadly on Nigerian affairs with particular emphasis on the structure and process of government and politics;
- (2.) Arrangement, categorization and labelling of the outcome of the careful survey;
- (3.) Further situating the arrangement, categorization and labelling within a system of thematic formulation;

- (4.) Clear-cut formulation and development of the themes and relating same to the existing bodies of explanations and analyses; and
- (5.) Placing the existing bodies of explanations and analyses within the body of knowledge on the subject as already amplified in the popularized theories, approaches and perspectives.

Results and Findings

The thematic arrangement and organization of the problems and issues of government and politics in Nigeria follow the order as listed below:

- (a.) Ethnicity, Ethnic Pluralism and Ethno-politics;
- (b.) Institutional, Structural and Process of Politics Perspective;
- (c.) The Economy and the many embedded Contradictions and Struggles in relation to the Allocation of Scarce Political Resources;
- (d.) The Contest between the State and Society i.e., State/Civil Society Relations;
- (e.) Military Intervention and Involvement in Politics; and
- (f.) Political Culture and the many ills of Politics and Political Organization.

Discussion of Results and Findings

- (a.) **Ethnicity, Ethnic Pluralism and Ethno-politics:** As a theme of arrangement and organization of study and examination, it seeks the amplification of the knowledge and understanding of the problems and issues of government and politics within the context and circumstance of Nigeria from the ethnic perspective/analytical framework. Specifically, it approached political competitions from the perspective of struggles between and among the different ethnic and cultural groups constituting the Nigerian State – see Nnoli (1978), Diamond (1988), Osaghae (1986) and Otite (1990), among others.
- (b.) **Institutional, Structural and Process of Politics Perspective:** As a theme of study, examination analysis, it interrogates and views the problems and issues of government and politics in Nigeria from the perspective of both the structures and institutions in relation to organization of the Nigerian State. It focuses particularly on the critical issues of governance, democratic consolidation and sustenance especially in relation to federal parameters and nuances – see Awa (1964), Oyediran (1979), Oyovbaire (1985), Jinadu (1985), Ayeni and Soremekun (1988), among others.
- (c.) **The Economy:** Its thematic focus targets the many embedded contradictions of pseudo-capitalism and the peripheral location of Nigeria within the scope and context of international capitalism. It analyzes the Nigerian State in particular its character and the competitions between and among its predators for survival.

al and existence and further within the framework of primitive accumulation of capital – see Panter-Brick (1978), Nnoli (1981), Ake (1985), Onimode (1982), among others.

- (d.) **State/Civil Society Relations:** This theme explores state/civil society relations in Nigeria within the context of the perennial struggle and resistance to capture from both sides especially in relation to the exercise of the authority of the state and the fundamental rights of the citizens. – see Bratton (1994), Fatton (1995), Okome (2013), Olukotun (2002), Olutayo, (2009), Oso and Pate (2011), among others
- (e.) **Military Intervention and Involvement in Politics:** Approached from the perspective of: “inevitability of instability”, the theme seeks the interrogation of the military phenomenon in politics from the perspective of critical study of the reasons for interventions and the effects, consequences and legacies of such especially in relation to the political development of Nigeria – see Luckham (1971), Adekanye (1981), Dudley (1973, 1982), among others.
- (f.) **Political Culture:** The theme is organized around important subject matters of both the process of government and politics with particular focus on clientelistic and patronage politics, prebendal conception/ notion and understanding of public office (prebendalism), battles and conflict of interests in relation to the organization of state and society from public/civic versus primordial perspectives, the pattern and trends of voting along ethnic and regional dimensions, etc. – see Joseph (1987, 1996), Lewis (1996), Oyovbaire (1987) and Williams (1980), among others.

V. Conclusion

This section of the paper/article is divided into two. The first encapsulates a summary of the entire paper/article, and second, engages itself with the emanating challenges for scholarship especially within the context of the ongoing dynamics in relation to the preparations for 2023.

Against the backdrop of the objective of the paper/article, it engages itself with the study examination, discussion and analysis of the thematic arrangement and organization of the problems and issues of government and politics in Nigeria as found in extant in literature. It goes further to undertake a critique of the arrangement which it in addition amplified within the existing approaches and theories in the discipline of political science. What these problems and issues are within the context of the Nigerian political system are no doubt generally diverse but still revolving around the substance of politics as the competition for scarce political resources. The peculiar notion of the knowledge and understanding of the problems and issues has meaning of relevance only in relation to their manipulations within

the context of politics in Nigeria. The problems and issues of government and politics are further strong enough to the extent of constituting themselves as the “bases of Nigerian” politics. Bases in terms of providing the relevant conceptualization framework necessary for the understanding of the problems and issues from the academic perspective. The further interrogation and scrutiny of which in turn necessitate their thematic arrangement and organization.

The paper/article, it is important to emphasize, further places the problems and issues within the two dominant approaches in relation to their understanding and knowledge. From the general, all-encompassing approach to the scrutiny and interrogation of these problems and issues in what the Report of 1987 described as “Special Issues”, the paper/article undertakes the discussions, examinations and analyses in such a manner as to reveal the impact of time in relation to their assessment and evaluation. Because time exerts great potency of influence on the forces, factors and processes of change within the context of the political development of every political system, the proper understanding of what indeed actually constitutes and determines the problems and issues need further be situated in the enveloping dynamics created by time itself. What the Report of 1987 considered as “Special Issues” of government and politics now have on them a modification. Between 2015 and now which happens to fall within the democratic regime and administration of President Mohammed Buhari, and as his second term/tenure winds up leading to the campaigns and preparations for a successor government come May 2023, the issues and problems of government seem to now revolve around the following pillars: (1) security, (2) economy, (3) political corruption, (4) the crisis in the educational sector especially in relation to how critical the sector is to the reinvention of the present and future of Nigeria, and (5) the extent of continuity of the Nigerian State. The conclusion of the paper/article is therefore that the problems and issues of government and politics in Nigeria come seriously under the influence of time and their thematic arrangement and organization for study and examination should be done with the consciousness of same.

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