

Functional Efficiency and the Elements of the Political System: An Evaluation of Nigerian Political Structure and Restructuring Agenda

Samuel O Okafor

Department of Sociology & Anthropology
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Email:

samuelokey200@gmail.com

Abstract

Nigerian political system much as other nations across the globe has been set up on a particular structure, which covertly dictates the rules for the manipulations of powers and the access to available resources. The understanding of this structure has enabled some groups (especially the political elites and ethnic cum religious majorities) to chart their way out of group related challenges while the ignorance of the structure has made other groups (the electorates and minority groups) in the same system vulnerable to the inordinate ambitions of other groups. Hierarchies of governments in Nigeria such as federal, state and local governments reflect in their nature, opportunities and vulnerabilities for different categories of people of which if properly understood and utilised, will be more service oriented than theoretical assumption. This paper examines the ideal political structures of Nigerian political system, considering the roles of the elements in these structures, their pragmatic implications to the hope of the masses in Nigeria and the harmony of the Nigerian political system. This was carried out with the aid of structural functionalism and game theoretical models. Standing on the angle of utilitarian values of structures, the paper recommends the populists' approach to the Nigerian political structure by the common citizens for the reconciliation of the challenges of multi-ethnic cum religious interests and the crises of the political elites in Nigerian political system.

Keywords: : *Nigeria, Restructuring, Games Theory, Structural functionalism, Populism, Political system*

A. Introduction

Nigeria, among other sovereign states across the globe, is an entity solely designed for the administration of human social groups and cultural entities (Aghalino, 2000). This goal is predicated on the importance of relative satisfaction of the needs of the individuals through micro and macro group existence. Hence, the multi-cultural group existence in Nigeria calls for not hostilities but the appreciation and utilisation of the cultural diversities for individual and group developments (Ekundare, 1973).

Similarly, the structural set up in Nigeria, as inherited from her colonialist (Britain) by nature, has made the Nigerian state more of individual participation in the observation and implementation of the decisions affecting the masses (Okafor, Akwaji & Oga, 2018). The structure which allows for input and observation of outputs by the masses has shown, at least, the basic elements of modern democracy in principle (Almond & Powell, 1966). This, of course, appeared to be an open check by the electorates, who are by nature, the givers of legitimacy to the ruling class. By implication, there is a niche of influence by the common man on the political class in their decision making.

Although there are loopholes in the structural development of Nigeria's political system, making it more or less a war of all against all (i.e., Hobson's law of nature), vulnerability of the political structure to individual's anti-group, sub-group and anti-larger group interests, is the function of the activity and passivity of the inheritors of the system (Bertalanfy, 1956). Only God has perfection while man in his nature strives towards perfection via activity and not passivity. In the social

science parlance, perfection (the ideal situation) is an assumption fuelled by social changes, which is almost a daily phenomenon in view of Durkheimian sociological tradition (Durkheim, 1950).

In essence, the developed nations of the West often used to relatively compare the internal political structure of Third World states as Nigeria, were once at the rudimentary stage of political structuring, which allowed some level of vulnerability of the system to individuals and subgroups against the larger political setup (Almond & Powell, 1966). However, the active pursuit of the individual and subgroup rights and obligations as enshrined in the system, following the statutory principle by the citizens, transformed into what we know today as the politically developed and advanced nations (Almond & Powell, 1966; van Kessel, 2014).

Since the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates [what is known today as Nigeria] in 1914, transforming the hitherto small-scale societies' political structure into quasi modern nation-state, the issue of structure and perfect distribution and re-distribution of resources and power at the centre have beclouded the understanding of Nigeria as a sovereign entity objectively established for the common interests of her citizens. Nigeria is one of the externally acknowledged great nations of the world with serious internal controversies due to perceived indices of inequalities on individual and group bases (Nwanunobi, 2001; Arukwe, 2010).

However, scholarship is polarised in the views and explanations on the perceived individual and group inequalities in Nigerian political structure. Whereas, a set of scholarship sees it from explanations bordering on colonial favouritism, bad leadership, ethnic cum political

domination, the present paper sees it from a structural elements' perspective, which emphasises Nigeria's political structures and their functionalities as a sacrosanct to the objective materialisation of the structural setup and the self-actualisation aspirations of the citizens.

This paper indeed is predicated on the latter premise, relying on structural functionalism and game theoretical models of discourse. A dual use of structural functionalism and game theories were combined as tools of socio-political analysis to explain the structural essence of the Nigerian state and the implications to the structural elements (the political elites and the electorates) in actualising political developments and individual cum group legitimate interests and aspirations.

B. Discussion

1. Structural Functionalism, Game Theory and the Essence of Political Structure

Structural functionalism spans beyond the social sciences and has a relative long history among other Meta theories. As it can be traced, structural functionalism was found as part of the work of Charles Darwin in biological sciences though he did not specify his framework of analysis as such. The specifications of the function and relevance of the structural position of the parts to the survival of the whole, simply indicates structural functionalism in principle as a tool of analysis.

According to Fisher (2010) functionalism's history goes back to Aristotle's study of ultimate causes in nature or of actions in relation to their ends, or utility. By the 17th-century, Baron de Montesquieu has adopted the principle of structural functionalism to explain the

doctrine of separation of powers in governance based on the notion of functions for the certainty of stability and security.

Potts, Vella, Allan and Neil (2014) and Urry (2000) maintain that structural-functionalism is an early form of systems thinking that emerged in the 1800s out of the works of French and British sociological philosophers like Comte, Spencer and Durkheim who explored and developed the application of the biological metaphor to understand society. According to the emphasis of their work, order and stability of social systems, are dependent on the concepts of systemic needs, interdependency and socialisation (Harper, 2011). However, in the early 1900s, British anthropologists Radcliffe-Brown (1935) and Malinowski (1922) further developed and applied the sociological construct of structural-functionalism in anthropology as a means of framing ethnography and overcoming the limitations of diachronic approaches to understanding change. Many other scholars in Sociology such as Robert Merton, Talcott Parsons and others have applied the theory in the analysis and explanation of the existence of the society and its components.

Using structural functionalism interchangeably with the system theory, the theory seems to be one of the Meta theories in explaining political structure (also known as political system). Apart from the earlier work of Montesquieu around 17th century and perhaps Aristotle (though his application was not specifically on political system), other scholars in Political Science discipline have adopted structural functionalism in the understanding and prediction of political system. According to Easton (1957), the functional approach defines government as all those activities that influence "the way in which

authoritative decisions are formulated and executed for a society" (Easton, 1957, p.384). Easton, who preferably used system instead of structural functionalism, is one of the political scientists who maximally used the structural functional perspective to x-ray the power essence in the society with reservation of the political system as an entity in its own right. According to Easton (1953) there are five modes of action which constitute the elements of all political systems such as legislation, administration, adjudication, the development of demands, and the development of support and solidarity. These were grouped as input and output requirements of political systems (Fisher, 2010).

Based on the expansion of Easton's concept of input and output, Almond and Coleman (1960) listed seven functions of all political systems among which are political socialisation, interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication, rulemaking, rule application, and rule adjudication. The first four, according to the above arrangement, belong to the input side of a system's functioning, while the last three are found in its policy outputs.

In their study of political systems, Almond and Powell (in Fisher, 2010, p.76) considered the activities or functions from three points of view: the conversion functions of interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication, rulemaking, rule application, and rule adjudication; the operation and capabilities of the political system in its environments; and the way in which political systems maintain or adapt themselves to pressures for change over the long term. These latter functions, referred to the maintenance and adaptation functions of political recruitment and political socialisation

[a term earlier used by Talcott Parsons, 1951 as AGIL system in explaining the structure and the survival of the society as an entity].

According to Cancian (1968, p.29), the functionalist perspective can be understood as having three approaches such as the concepts and assumptions of sociology; the supposition that social patterns maintain the larger social system; and a model of self-regulating and equilibrating systems. She further distinguished between traditional and formal functional perspectives. While the traditional functional perspective is based on the premise that all social patterns work to maintain the integration and adaptation of the larger system, the formal functional perspective does not include a theoretical orientation or a substantive hypothesis about events but is interested in the relationships between elements.

In the interest of political structure, responsibilities and liabilities [a scholarly puzzle which the present work is out to confront], political system is made up of structures which, are preferably addressed as elements of the system [in the words of David Easton, 1957]. However, these elements/structures are the conventional statutes [non material social fact in Durkheim theoretical orientation] and empirical constructs based on precedents, which are occupied by the members of the society in various capacities. These political scientists such as Easton (1953, 1957), Almond and Coleman (1960, 1966), Smith (1966), Fisher (1991), Susser (1992), Dunn (1981), Jones (1977), Wirr & Mitchell (1982), and others have acknowledged as input and output processes in the web of political system.

According to Easton (1957) inputs consist of demands and support. However, Almond and Coleman (1960) used the terms

political socialisation, recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, and political communication to project the concept of input in the political system. Nonetheless, Easton called the output decisions, while Almond and Coleman describe output as rule making, rule application, and rule adjudication. Mitchell (1962) used the terms expectations and demands, resources, and support for inputs and social goals, values and costs, and controls to express political outputs.

Structural functionalism as a theoretical orientation is focused on the importance of the elements of the structure to the survival of the entire structure. Here, the society is seen as a structure with structural elements (a term which most scholars prefer to use interchangeably with parts of the structure or system), which can only survive by the functionality of the elements that make up the structure itself. According to Potts, et al (2014) structural-functionalism conceptualises society as a system of interacting parts that promote stability or transformation through their interactions.

As one of the earliest theories in the scholarly history of man, structural functionalism has found its way into many disciplines such as biological sciences, engineering and more importantly, the social sciences (Woodger, 1948; Merton, 1968; Parsons, 1951; Fisher, 2010; Suasser, 1992). While structural functionalism in social sciences has earlier history in Sociology and Anthropology (Durkheim, 1895; Radcliffe-Brown, 1952; Malinowski, 1944), much as it is utilised, it has appeared as system theory in the discipline of Political Science, making it more or less, a lens for capturing the power equations in human social interactions and the attitude and actions of the human elements

occupying responsibility positions (von Bertalanfy, 1956; Easton, 1965a; Deutsch, 1963; Almond & Powell, 1966).

Contra wise, games theory, according to Turocy & von Stengel (2001, p.2) is, “the formal study of conflict and cooperation...a formal description of a strategic situation, while games theory is the formal study of decision-making where several players must make choices that potentially affect the interests of the other players”. Games theory is the formal study of decision-making where several players must make choices that potentially affect the interests of the other players. Game precisely, as it has to do with conceptualisation of terms, is the situation that involves interdependence of individuals, groups, firms or institutions whose actions and inactions in a given setting translate to opportunities and lost in the interaction.

Game metaphor, in the social scientific discipline, is the ideal creation to understand the ongoing social interactions as the outcome of the activity and not passivity of the individuals in the respective positions within the social web (Dicicco-Bloom & Gibson, 2010). Games theory as one of the tools of analysis in social sciences originated from mathematics and found its way into the social sciences through economics. Game theory has been extensively used in the explanation and prediction of social outcomes such as war in political and strategic analysis, and in sociological explanation of social interactions (Turocy & von Stengel, 2001; Dickey-Bloom & Gibson, 2010; Geertz, 1980; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Slez & Martin, 2007; Goffman 1969; Garfinkel, 1967).

Games theory as a tool of behavioural analysis originated from mathematics following the works of eminent scholars as Cournot

(1838), Borel (1921), Neumann (1928), and Neumann & Morgenstern (1944). The work of Neumann and Morgenstern (1944) was unique in charted a link for the utilisation of the theory in the area of social sciences especially Economics. As a theoretical model, games theory has equally been deployed as an analytical tool in political and war studies since the 1950s and 1960s (Turocy & von Stengel, 2001).

Games theory is an analytic tool that reveals the competitiveness of social life—social life as subject to chances and opportunities, the implication of actions and inactions to the passive and active members of the web of social interactions. Keeping in focus the interest of the present work, game theory is majorly divided into cooperative game theory and non-cooperative game theory. According to Turocy and Stengel (2001) cooperative games theory investigates such coalitional games with respect to the relative amount of power held by various players, or how a successful coalition should divide its proceeds. On the contrary, non-cooperative games theory is concerned with the analysis of strategic choices. Cooperative games theory focuses more on the essence of alliances in pursuing relatively equal satisfaction in a situation involving relatively equal opportunities, power, and access to information, among others. However, the relativity of the power/importance of the two groups or individuals involved in a deal is weighed by the level of vulnerability of the two actors. Meanwhile, a non-cooperative model of bargaining would maintain, a specific process, in which it is pre-specified, who gets to make an offer at a given time. Non-cooperative model includes strategic and extensive form games.

In the context of this paper, and particularly in the complexity of the Nigeria political system, Nash (in Osborne, 2002) model of cooperative games theory is adopted here for the analysis of Nigerian political structure/system and the elements occupying these structures. Nash (in Osborne, 2002) proposed a solution for the division of gains from agreement in a bargaining problem, which depends solely on the relative strengths of the two parties' bargaining position (Turocy & Stengel, 2001). A player chooses his actions according to the model of rational choice, given his belief about the other players' actions. Again, every player's belief about the other players' actions is correct. These two components are embodied in the definition of Nash's Equilibrium – an action profile with the property that no player can do better by choosing an action different from already defined model/pattern of actions and responses, given that every other player adheres to this model/pattern (Osborne, 2002).

In the idealised setting in which the players in any given play of the game are drawn randomly from a collection of populations, a Nash Equilibrium corresponds to a steady state. If, whenever the game is played, the action profile is the same, then no player has a reason to choose any action different from the component of the domineering model; there is no pressure on the action profile to change (Osborne, 2002, p.20). Furthermore, a Nash equilibrium embodies a stable social norm of which if everyone else adheres to it, no individual wishes to deviate from it.

The second component of Nash Equilibrium that is important here is that, the players' beliefs about each other's actions are correct, which implies, in particular, that two players' beliefs about a third player's

action are the same. For this reason, the condition is sometimes said to be that the players' expectations are coordinated (Kagel & Roth, 1997; Osborne, 2002).

Political structure/system is more of separation of powers and responsibilities with some levels of liabilities than a dormant vacuum for theoretical arguments (Easton, 1957). Much as the French political philosopher de Montesquieu has identified, the political system from the perspective of duties and responsibilities towards the society in the political capacity, the political activities in the society is unconsciously inevitable part of human life as Aristotle has noted earlier that, man is a political animal. The way this is approached from the simple to the complex societies become the important focus of the members of the society at different levels (Easton, 1957).

Political structure is not only evidenced in the developed societies but can be identified in societies with careful observation of the web of individual and group interactions in the quest for access to the available resources (Almond & Coleman, 1960). Political systems have common properties (Fisher, 2010, p.76). First, all political systems, even the simplest, have political structure. Second, the same functions are performed in all political systems. Third, all political structure is multifunctional, whether in primitive or in modern societies. Finally, all political systems are "mixed" systems in the cultural sense. No society is strictly modern or only primitive.

Political structure/system, having been set up by social precedents as non-material social facts, which appear more like *Su-generi* to the members of the society, are the gears for the members of the society to perform specified functions for the holistic survival of the

society and meeting the needs of the members of the society. Going by the defined components of the system according to David Easton, there are majorly the input and the output components, which by way of elaboration comprise other sets. Easton (1957, 1965) saw inputs as consisting of demands and support, while Almond and Coleman (1960) used the terms political socialisation, recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, and political communication. Easton (1957) called the outputs decisions, and Almond and Coleman (1960) describe output as rule making rule application, and rule adjudication. Mitchell (1962) used the term expectations and demands, resources, and support for inputs and social goals, values and cost, and controls to express political outputs.

In the context of this paper, the input and output are positions occupied by the members of the society such as the political class and the ordinary citizens (the electorates). They all have duties in these input and output functions for the relevance of political system to the entire society and to that of the individual members of the society. Specifically, while the members of the society have their own part of the contribution majorly on the side of the input function, the political class has their own contribution on both sides but with more motivation from the side of the members of the society.

To make the political system more functional and utilitarian in nature, the members of the society ought to be active in their own contribution to the system and by implication make the political class more conscious towards their responsibilities and finally, the political system more service oriented. When the members of the society liable to different responsibilities towards the political system are functional

and active, the political system becomes instrumental to itself as per political development and become empirically viable for human socio-economic development. Invariably, structural functionalism to political structure specifically point to the essence of political structure as the function of the human elements who occupy these structures as political position both on the side of the elected and the general public. To put it squarely, making demand and stirring the political leaders into action in the interest of the masses is the position and responsibilities for the electorates while deliberating the issues concerning the public, development of rules and policies and seeing to their implementation, is the responsibilities and position occupied by the politically elected individuals at different levels.

One or two words needed to be said about game theory before we leave this section. Game theory to political structure/system is better explained with the picture of the soccer game and the soccer pitch. While each player has structurally been positioned even before the beginning of the game based on the numbers on the pitch, there is target for victory, which is realisable with the effort of each of the players in their structural positions. While the political system appears as soccer pitch here, the political elites and the electorates appear to be players in different structural positions with certain roles. Again, in Nash Equilibrium model, no player plays against his interest or become passive against his interest having been aware of the capabilities of his opponent (Osborne, 2002).

2. Nigerian Political Structure and the Game of the Structural Elements

Since the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates by the British colonial rule, the geographical entity known and referred to as Nigeria, been setup at various stages of Nigeria's political development as administrative and latter systematic political arrangements has followed a systematic outline (Okafor, 2019). These systematic outlines, have followed unconsciously, some level of conventional systematic political structure for the convenience of the leaders and the led with open leverage for the leaders and the led to make input and consideration of the interest of the human elements in the entire system. Apart from the domineering character of the colonial elements (Okafor, 2019), which at some point triggered the idea of undermining the poor masses, the system has been ran administratively with pseudo-British political administrative setup which in its essence, empowered the masses to enquire about the activities of the political elites and make their own input for the meaningfulness of political administration.

From 1914 to 2011 Nigeria has been structured and restructured to accommodate some envisaged and empirical challenges to the nation. For instance, after the 1914 amalgamation, the North and the South were setup as administrative structures with the Governor-General as the supreme leader answerable to the Queen of England (Blake, 1937). From the time of amalgamation till date, what has come to stay is the federal-state-local government three-tier arrangement as obtained in a federation which created a structure for political representations at various levels of governance.

Each of these political structural setups were made up of two sets of human elements—the political elites and the electorates at different times and stages. While the leadership or representative position is occupied by the political elites, the structural units are made up of the electorates where their numbers determine the political delineations (Jega, 2007). At each level of these structuring and occupation of human elements in the principle of structural functionalism, is a responsibility, which is expected to enable the survival of the society as a whole and meeting the developmental needs of the groups and individuals in the system.

Rather than making sense of these structural set up for political and human socioeconomic development since the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates, the human elements occupying these structural setups have become dormant or rather politically in passivity (Okafor, Akaji & Oga, 2018). This, of course, has made the political structure since the amalgamation, a liability instead of an asset to the electorates, while it remains an article of commercial value to the political elites who at one time or the other have turned their political positions into meal tickets and certification for squandering public funds. While the electorates on the side of political input, have failed at some points in pressurising the political elites to make favourable policies based on the realities of the poor masses, the political elites have used their positions in the political structural setups, to pursue self-interests such that, most laws and policies since the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates have favoured only the elites and their interests, while the developmental needs of the electorates remained unattained (Mbaveren, 2013; Okafor & Okafor,

2018). To aptly present it, the electorates in Nigeria, unlike other nations of the world, especially, the Europe that introduced the elements of her political structure in the region, has failed to be functional enough to make appropriate input to the political system, while the political elites in their selfish interests have failed to appropriately represent those who they claimed to be representing, making the ideal Nigerian political structure more of imaginary concept than a two-way political tool for the electorates and the elites for mutual and objective development.

The structural elements (political elites and the electorates) in the Nigerian political structure fall in the framework of Nash Equilibrium game model (Osborne, 2002). While the political elites collaborate at the upper echelon in pursuing their interest and betraying their constituencies for self-interest at the elites' meetings, the electorates on individual basis (such as being a mouth piece of selfish politicians in deception of the electorates under their constituency) and sub-group bases (such as religious, ethnic or tribal group supporting erring politicians, who offer them a secrete settlement for support), also betray the entire masses to pursue their own interests living the larger society in state of perpetual exploitation.

In the Nigerian political landscape, there are local government areas (where the councillors represent their council wards); the states (where the elected representatives represent their local constituencies) and at the federal level (where the elected representatives represent their respective federal constituencies at either of the chambers – the Senate or the House of Representatives. Furthermore, whereas the local government area is headed by an executive chairman, the state by an

executive governor, the federal government is headed by an executive president as obtainable presidential democracy.

At the local government level, the councillors collaborate with the chairmen of the local government areas to squander the available funds and deliberate on issues that only concerned them such that, where there are no collaboration complaints about petitions and counter petitions from the members of the legislature (i.e., councillors representing the local wards)¹. Here, the funds squandered are usually the funds for the development of local areas – life changing issues that ought to be deliberated upon in the interest of the poor masses. In this context, an unholy collaboration between the councillors and their respective council chairmen to embezzle funds for developing local areas is necessitated by the wisdom that using available funds for their designated purposes will reduce the available loot-able fund (Achebe, 1983).

Again, deliberating on the issues concerning the poor masses will lead to the empowerment of the masses, an action which remains

^{1 1} A case in point is the leadership tussle in Obowo Local Government area in Imo state where, the councillors collaborated with the chairman of the local government to subvert some enduring public issues to deliberate on entitlement of the councillors and the chairman from the federal and state government between 1999 and 2003 without any tangible proposal on the development of the rural communities and the salaries of the local government workers. This was exposed when there was fallout between the chairman and some of the ward councillors resulting, to the impeachment of the chairman and the emergence of one of the councillors. In reprisal attack, the impeached chairman exposed the emerging chairman to the security agency on the criminal record of the emerging councillor of which had been kept secret between him and the impeached chairman. Equally, in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu state, the game has been all about settling the councillors with seasonal gifts in order to defray them from critical approach to local community development, which the chairman make the fund personal take-home and seasonal dues to the powers above who placed him there. For instance, between 2007 and 2011, deliberations have hovered around the welfare of the councillors and the chairman with minute or no attention to dilapidating rural infrastructures in the local government.

detrimental to the interest of the ruling elites because it requires the proper expenditure of the public funds. An interesting angle to this unholy collaboration is that sometimes the political elites play against themselves especially when public funds are hijacked by the council chairman or councillors. Where such happenstances are routine, the elites work earnestly to cover up their heinous acts. Of course, such unholy actions depict a game of the elites against the electorates (Osborne, 2002).

The above scenario is also played out at the state level, where the governors and the members of the state Houses of Assembly collaborate to squander the public funds meant for development (Dyfan, 2012). At the state level, the governors use the umbrella of domineering political party and bribe/secret lobbying to keep the majority of the members of the House silent so that, there is rarity of attempts at impeachment of the governor. However, when there is disagreement over the loot sharing formula between the governor and members of the state of assembly impeachment proceedings are initiated against the governor or the hitherto sinister 'secret' looting episode is blown open to the public glare (Okafor & Okafor, 2019; Dyfan, 2012).

At the federal level, the same scenario still subsists but with more devastating impacts; while the president holds on the National Assembly (comprising of members of the Senate and House of Representatives) with political party majority, the members of the National Assembly often exhibit desperation for financial and selfish interests that, they are willing to sponsor and support any bill that will secure their political interests and more money into their pockets

irrespective of the negative implications of the bills to the poor masses (Okafor & Okafor, 2019).

While the president makes *anti poor masses policies* and implement them for his interest and the interest of his ethnic cum religious group, the chances of impeachment or even calling him to order becomes slimmer due to his overwhelming influence on the ruling political party, while the National Assembly keep alive their inordinate ambitions which intend to achieve through collaboration with the president and their political parties. These political elites collaborate with the president against the masses and even their colleagues, who may likely speak out in the interest of the poor masses (Dyfan, 2012).

The inordinate ambitions of the elites at all these levels go on though they know the implications of their actions to democracy and development for the general society. While this situation constitutes what Cancian (1968) referred to as subversion of the purpose for social structural set up, Turocy and Stengel (2001) maintained that such situations depict cooperative game among the elites against the masses. At the National Assembly, members collaborate to support policies and bills that ensure their interests in lieu of policies and bills that ensure the interest of the poor masses. This is further aggravated when the domineering ethnic group or region under the six geopolitical divisions in Nigeria pursue a given interest through the National Assembly. These domineering groups are willing to pay at any length to influence their colleagues no matter what their interest is likely to cause the entire nation (Achebe, 1983). To this end, the minority groups whose representatives at this level are convinced and lobbied over are easily

sold out by their representatives who are willing to support anti-public policies/bills for pecuniary and political interests; a situation captioned in cooperative game (Osborne, 2002).

3. Restructuring, Spill-over Effect and the Need for Populism

Going by the concept of structure from which restructuring is realised, there is the picture of structure with networks of substructures and supports. By the concept of restructuring itself, there is a need to either reduce the number of networks, substructures/supports of the structure of the existing structure or to increase it.

While the immediate causes for the restructuring agitation can be traced to the 2014 CONFAB (National Conference, 2014) outcome and the emergence of a dictator in a democratic foil, there are still some remote causes, which this paper deems so important to deal with in pursuing the causes of restructuring agitation and the envisaged benefits. While it is not the interest of this paper to technically analyse the contents of the 2014 CONFAB outcome, it is mentioned to acknowledge one of the remote causes for the restructuring agitation and the possible way of escaping the killer bird that degraded the essence of the present structure of Nigerian federal system (Nwanunobi, 2001).

The popular discontent with the fate of the poor masses in the face of selfish political elites has been nurturing the minds of the poor masses against the highhanded political activities in Nigeria, which has displaced the poor masses from their position of influence vis-à-vis the political elites. This discontent was energised by the envisaged hope that further delineation of the federal political structure down to regions, which perhaps will form a confederal structure, will grant the

masses access to the political corridor of power. This by implication is expected to bring government down to the citizens, especially as the current six geopolitical zones in Nigeria run on quasi ethnic lines (Okafor, et al, 2018).

This paper asserts that until there is a deliberate attitudinal change from the elites and the electorates, that will enthrone the masses to regain their ideal position in Nigeria's democratic setting, positive political transformation will continue to elude Nigeria's democratisation process. This position is anchored on the premise that the same set of families and elite class that have been controlling the political affairs of Nigeria since 1960, are the same people who regurgitate and reproduce themselves from the different political parties and ethnic groups and rehearsing the obsolete political strategies and manifestos (Achebe, 1983; 2000). Little surprise, under this condition the same people will still hijack the restructured political system [in event of carrying the proposed restructuring] and put it under the same condition that has undermined the poor masses since political independence in 1960, and causing by implication, spill over effects on the long awaited new national political [administrative] structure.

Adequate political participation among the masses with focus on the collective bargaining against unpopular attitude among the political elites will bring about properly channelled popular discontent among the masses (populism). Populism is a theoretical cum socio-political concept that tries to conceptually capture the outcome of popular discontent among the electorates against the elites in a political setting where the identity and the interest of the poor masses have been

displaced by the approach of the elites to the political and socioeconomic policies and decisions (Kriesi & Pappas, 2015).

In view of the collective force ascribed to populism and what have been achieved through populism as a strategy (Elchardus & Spruyit, 2016; Kriesi&Pappas, 2015), populist approach commandeered by the electorates (the masses) in Nigeria will likely bring about unprecedented transformation in Nigeria's political landscape, especially, in the materialisation of the long anticipated political restructuring.

Populism has attracted the interest of eminent researchers who have tried to give the concept clearer picture among scholars, the layman and policy makers. Among other scholars, Akkerman, Mudde&Zaslove (2014), Stanley (2008), Kriesi&Pappas (2015), Rooduijn (2014), van Kessel (2014), Elchardus&Spruyit (2016), have extensively studied the concept in an attempt to provide a simple and comprehensive definition of the concept. However, from the works of the aforementioned scholars, there is a form of consistency of what constitute populism both in the attitudinal aspect of it and practical realities.

Among the attributes of populism is the existence of two homogeneous groups: the people and the established elites; there is antagonistic relationship between the two groups; the people being portrayed as virtuous while the elites as denigrated; the will of the people is considered the ultimate source of legitimacy (Kriesi, 2014).

According to Canovan (1999) populism is a redemptive politics for the manifestation of the sovereignty of the masses. For more application of populism in the understanding of the political realities,

Laurijssen and Spruyt(2014) maintained that populism is the theoretical and empirical option for the hapless masses in the face of ever growing selfish and group induced interests among the elites.

According to them:

the sharp distinction between “the people” and “the established elites” renders populism in western Europe a typical attitude of people who suffer from being overwhelmed and disoriented by societal changes, who have been placed in a weak and vulnerable economic position because of such changes, who feel their voice does not matter in politics, or who face difficulties in finding a positive social identity (Laurijssen & Spruyt, 2014, p.125).

In the view of Canovan (1999) and Mudde (2004), populism can be made possible by attracting the public via the sharp social division of the homogenous people into ordinary people and the established elites in the subconscious minds of the people under stress. And the easiest way to actualise such according to Hogg (2000) is to present their personal situations as part of, or even as a consequence of the opposition between groups in which one group disfavours another group.

Beyond the theoretical application of populism in the explanation and prediction of political outcomes, and popular discontent, populism has been empirically established as embedded in deep feelings of discontent, not only with politics but also with social life in general (a situation, which has overwhelmed the poor masses in Nigeria); it is strongly supported by stigmatised groups who face difficulties in finding a positive social identity; the typical condition of the poor masses in Nigeria before the clueless governments since the political independence of Nigeria in 1960 (Spruyt, Keppens&van

Droogenbroeck, 2016)and especially in the Fourth Republic, 1999 till date.

C. Conclusion

Nigerian political structure has been set up as a vacuum to be filled by the citizens in different capacities such as the elites and the electorates. While the electorates in Easton's (1965) system theoretical perspective is on the side of the demand making in the structure, the elites are in the position of receiving the demands as input and making it materialise as the life transforming policies and political precedents.

In a more advanced appreciation of Easton's (1965) system theory, which is structural functionalism as this paper posited, the structural setting in Nigeria's political landscape is made up of respective levels of structures, which are occupied by the political elites and the electorates, demanding functional activity and not passivity.

Again, the relationships between the electorates and the elites and even among the elites appear as a game in theoretical expression. It is the position of this paper that, the problem with Nigerian government and by extension, democracy is the problem of the elites making policies which favour them at the detriment of the electorates. While the paper is not oblivious of restructuring the Nigerian political landscape in future, it proposes the populist approach with the masses on the driving seat as the panacea to the perpetual exploitation of the masses as there are slim opportunities of populist political reforms on the side of the elites.

Daftar Pustaka

- Achebe, C. (2000). *Home and Exile*. New York: Oxford University press.
- Achebe, C. (1983). *The trouble with Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Aghalino, S.O. (2000). British colonial policies and the oil palm industry in the Niger delta region of Nigeria, 1900-1960. *African Study Monographs*, 21(1): 19-33.
- Akkerman A., Mudde, C & Zaslove, A. (2014). How populist are the people? Measuring populist attitudes in voters. *Comparative Political Studies*, 47, 1324-53.
- Almond, G. A., and Powell, G. B., Jr (1966). *Comparative politics: A developmental approach*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Almond, G., and Coleman, J. S. (1960). *The politics of the developing areas*. Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press.
- Arukwe, N.O. (2010). *Since Equiano: History and challenges of African socio-political thought*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria press.
- Bertalanfy, L. von. (1956). General system theory. *General Systems*, (I), 1-10.
- Blake, J. W. (1937). *European beginnings in West Africa, 1454-1578*. London: Longmans.
- Bourdieu, P. and Loic, W. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cancian, F. M. (1968). Varieties of functional analysis. In D. L. Sills (ed.) *International encyclopaedia of social sciences*, Vol.5 (pp.29-41). New York: MacMillan.
- Canovan, M. (1999). Trust the people! Populism and the two faces of democracy. *Political Studies*, 47, 2-16.
- Deutsch, K. W. (1963). *The nerves of government*. New York: Free Press.
- Dicicco-Bloom, B. and Gibson, D. R. (2010). More than a game: Sociological theory from the theories of games. *Sociological Theory*, 28(3), 247-271.
- Dunn, W. N. (1981). *Public policy analysis: An introduction*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Durkheim, E. (1950). *The Rules of the Sociological Method*. New York: Free Press.
- Dyfan J. [The Inter-Parliamentary Union] (2012). Review of the Institutional Structures and Processes Related to the MDGs in the Parliament of Nigeria. Abuja: The Inter-Parliamentary Union

- Easton, D. (1953). *The political system: An inquiry into the state of political science*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Easton, D. (1957). An approach to the analysis of political systems. *World Politics*, (9), 383-400.
- Easton, D. (1965). *A framework for political analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Ekundare R.D. (1973). *An Economic History of Nigeria 1860-1960*. London: Methuen & Co Ltd.
- Elchardus, M. and Spruyt, B. (2016). Populism, persistent republicanism and decline: An empirical analysis of populism as a thin ideology. *Government & Opposition*, (51), 111-33.
- Fisher, J. R. (2010). *System theory and structural functionalism*. 21st Century Political Science: A Reference Hand book, Vol.1. ---incomplete referencing
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Geertz, C. (1980). Blurred genres: The refiguration of social thought. *American Scholar*, (49), 165-79.
- Harper, D. (2011). *Structural-functionalism: Grand theory or methodology*. Leicester: University of Leicester.
- Hogg, M. (2000). Subjective uncertainty reduction through self-categorisation: A motivational theory of social identity processes. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 11, 223-55.
- Jega A. M (2007) *Democracy, good governance and development in Nigeria*. Spectrum Books, Ibadan.
- Jones, C. O. (1977). *An introduction to the study of public policy* (2nded.). Boston: Duxbury.
- Kagel, R. (1997). *Handbook of experimental economics*, Princeton Univ. Press.
- Kriesi, H. & Pappas, T. (Eds). (2015). *European populism in the shadow of the great recession*. Colchester: ECPR Studies.
- Kriesi, H. (2014). The populist challenge. *West European Politics*, 37, 361-78.
- Laurijssen, I. & Spruyt, B. (2014). Not for people like us? A six-year panel study of the mutual relationship between feelings of relative deprivation and occupational status among young adults in Flanders. *Social Indicators Research*, 124, 617-35.
- Malinowski, B. (1922). *Argonauts of the western pacific: An account of native enterprise and adventure in the archipelagos of Melanesian new Guinea*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- Mbaveren, D. G. (2013). Political violence and socioeconomic development in Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 4: 41-45.
- Merton, R. K. (1968). *Social theory and social structure*. New York: Free Press.
- Mitchell, W. C. (1962). *The American polity: A social and cultural interpretation*. New York: Free Press.
- Mudde, C. (2004). The populist zeitgeist. *Government & Opposition*, 39, 541-63.
- National Conference (2014). The final report of the national conference on Nigerian political structure since 1914. Abuja: Government press.
- Nwanunobi, C. O. (2001). *African Social Institutions*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria press.
- Okafor S O., Akwaji F. N. & Oga T. (2018). Media, Political Socialization and Participation: The Case of South-South/South-Eastern Nigeria. *Research & Reviews: Journal of Social Sciences JSS* 4 (3), 331-343.
- Okafor S. O. & Okafor J. C (2019). Government Policy Approach to Environmental Conflicts among the Niger Delta Communities: Implication to 2015 and Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals. *Journal of Social and Development Sciences* 10, (2), 1-14
- Okafor, S.O. and Okafor, J. C. (2018). Political violence and the prospect of democracy in Nigeria: A survey of the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. *J Pol Sci Pub Aff* 6, 338.
- Okafor, S.O. (2019). The colonialists and indigenous exchange currency: Tracing the genesis of socioeconomic woes in postcolonial Nigeria. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Policy*, 8(1), 37-50.
- Osborne, M. J. (2002). *Nash equilibrium: Theory*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Parsons, T. (1951). *The social system*. New York: Free Press.
- Potts, R., Vella, K., Allan, D. & Neil, S. (2014). Exploring the usefulness of structural functional approaches to analyse governance of planning systems. *Planning Theory*, 1 -28.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A. (1935). On the concept of function in social science. *American Anthropologist*, 37(3), 394-402.
- Rooduijn, M. (2014). The nucleus of populism: In search of the lowest common denominator. *Government & Opposition*, 49, 573-99.

- Saucer, B. (1992). *Approaches to the study of politics*. New York: Macmillan.
- Slez, A.& John, L. M. (2007). Political action and party formation in the United States constitutional convention. *American Sociological Review*,72, 42–67.
- Smith, M. G. (1966). A structural approach to comparative politics. In D. Easton (ed.) *Varieties of political theory*(pp. 113-128). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Stanley, B. (2008). The thin ideology of populism. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, (13),95-110.
- Susser, B. (1992). *Approaches to the study of politics*. New York: Macmillan.
- Turocy, T.T. and von Stengel, B. (2001). *Game theory: The draft of an introductory survey of game theory*. Prepared for the *Encyclopaedia of Information Systems*. London: Academic Press.
- Urry, J. (2000). *Sociology beyond societies: Mobilities for the twenty-first century*. London: Routledge.
- van Kessel, S. (2014). The populist cat-dog: Applying the concept of populism to contemporary European party systems. *Journal of Political Ideologies*,19, 99-110.
- Wirt, F. M. and Mitchell, D. E. (1982). Social science and educational reform; The political uses of social research. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 18(4), 1-16..

