

Epistemic Reflection on the Implications of Dysfunctionalism in Governance in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper explores the causes and epistemic implications of the dysfunctionality in governance in Nigeria. It takes the democratic process as a kind of artifice. The assumption here is that the constitutive and regulatory principles enshrined in the Constitution is framework for good governance and functional relations in Nigeria's institutions. But turbulent body polity, and chaotic political processes defy the ideal principles constituted to regulate good governance in Nigeria. The systemic failure accounts for dys-functionality. This has obvious implications on the society. How do we explain that there were no honest administrative efforts or that those put in place by the government failed to transform Nigeria into a desired democratic government that enjoys good governance, good leadership, good citizenship, good democratic process, robust economy? It appears that some of her leaders failed to understand and harness right democratic knowledge required by for the office. The expository, analytic and critical reflective methods are used in the study. The paper underscores the fact that even in the face of a bad constitution, requisite good will on the part of the leadership suffices to fill up any leadership gap and stem up the course of good governance. Though human interests are diverse and conflicts do arise, the philosopher-King tows the part of reason and pursues the common good of the citizens. Thus, Kant's categorical imperative is a necessary command of reason and guides towards a functionally harmonious democratic system of governance.

Key Words: Governance, Dysfunctionalism, Epistemic Reflection, Constitution

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I. Introduction

Nigeria is a democratic State. The democratic system of governance anticipates functional relations attained through her political, social, legal, and economic institutions, among others. The relation of these institutions to her administrative tasks is a framework of structure and political culture as enshrined in her Constitution. Resonate idea referent in the conception of democracy as the 'government of, by, and for the people' implies a rule-governed, function-driven, people-focused governance. By this framework and structure the government extracts social cohesion and attains social and economic growth and infrastructural development. Reference is here being made to the functionalist theory and Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative.

The supposition to functionalism entails that administrative policies and tasks are consciously puts in place to counter conflicting situations that may derail the democratic process. It does not negate the facts of conflicts that may impair the government's efforts to good governance. The *Constitution*, therefore, expresses the ideal functional relations that ought to galvanize towards good democratic governance. This paper sets out to X-ray the factors that mar this envisioned functional relations that ought to lead to good governance and produce counter-functional 'results' instead. What implications do this dysfunctionality hold for Nigeria, how do we understand the phenomenon to addressing it? These epistemological demand for answers to positively turning our democracy around. The perception is imperative because no institution runs itself. The expository and critical reflective methods are used in the study. Of critical significance in the study is that the conception of functional institutions gravitates around the role of a subject who, being rational places everything he or she does on the altar of reason. Governance is no exception. The art of good governance requires good philosophical insight. In this case, it points to the agential role, the political leader whose *goodwill* smooths and fills up governance gaps inherent in the government's policies to enhance social and economic transformation.

II. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The term 'democracy,' though construed as paradigm to translating a set of related ideas into concrete actions, is inherently entangled in conceptual ambivalence. It is this ambivalence that gives further room to distorting the relation of theory (as a set of ideas and principles that are set up as paradigm) to actions. Thus, in Chapter 21 of his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, Joseph Schumpeter observes that 'demos', 'people' and 'kratein', 'to rule' which means the 'rule by the people' was an seventeenth and eighteenth centuries convention. This conception, he argues was aimed to redeeming the eroding confidence in monarchies in Europe. The 'people never actually rule' he argues. They can always be made "to do so by definition." Such phrases as 'the Rule by the People', 'the Will of the People' or 'the Sovereign Power of the People', etc are diffusing appendages on which to drive home the negating political ideology. (Schumpeter, 247). Schumpeter defines democracy in terms of democratic method, namely "that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will." (Schumpeter, 250). By 'people' and 'rule' Schumpeter means that people have "the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them in a 'free competition' in which would-be leaders scout for the votes of the electorate. (Schumpeter, 285). But the 'political will' of the people does not exist anywhere as a political factor and is not entitled to such respect. If this were not, then "everyone would have to know definitely what he wants to stand for." (Schumpeter, 253). This concern raised by Schumpeter above is both an epistemic and ethical question. The political leader in Plato's best estimation is the statesman, the Guardian of the city. He is the philosopher-king, one whose basic orientation is knowledge (not gain or fame) and the truth of things and wisdom to sound judgement to what must be done. (Plato, *The Republic* V11,475c). He is most foresighted in considering what is best for the State, is selfless and is more prone to dedicate himself to achieving such ends.

Cunningham agrees with Aristotle that democratic governance can be ineffective. Being ineffective means that it "does not or cannot take appropriate measures to achieve the goals of the society it governs". It may become *anomic* if it has "lost the ability to formulate and pursue common goals ... and democratic politics had become mainly 'an arena for the assertion of conflicting interests'." (Cunningham 2002, 17).

In Karl H. Marx's dialectical materialism, consciousness is a reflection of a form of the material, the economic. He observes the contradictions in the economic opportunities between the 'political leaders'(bourgeoisie) and the mass of the poorer population (proletarians). This contradiction generates a tensed struggle among the people between the very rich, the *bourgeoisie* and the very poor, the proletariat. The reason for the struggle is the control over the nation's resources for ease of life, and on the other, the dire need to sustain life.(Marx, 200). This determinate "mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual process of life", of consciousness itself. (Marx, 51).

Governance, Constitution and Structure of Functionalism

The government is an administrative process carried out through a well-structured framework of institutions where principles of governance are regulated(Ake, 126f). To govern is to exercise legitimate political power in administration so as to transform the country's human and natural resources, create social values and protect lives and property of the citizens through the country's social, political, moral and economic institutions. Institutions provide structural arrangements for decision-generating processes and implementation of policies. Governance therefore, is an inclusive task of harnessing resources, creating institutions, formulating policies and framework of processes by which to transform the country in accordance to her development plans. In the *Politics* Aristotle defines *constitution* as the "arrangement of magistracies in a state." (Aristotle, *Politics*,1184]. This could be said to be about principles and functional roles. Given the country's Constitution, enabling Acts, and Bills, etc what the country's leadership need do is to galvanize and transform all the country's human, material and non-material resources so that through the social, economic, moral, legal institutions the government promotes the cause of common good, secure lives and property and advance national interests. The constitution, therefore, is the artifice. It is the crafted arrangements and constitutive principles envisioned in the functional relations that are perceived and put in place to guide political leaders in art of the governance of the country. The Constitution states these assumptions thus:

We the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria: HAVING firmly and solemnly resolved: To LIVE in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble Sovereign Nation under God AND TO PROVIDE for a Constitution for the purpose of promoting the good government and welfare of all persons in our country on the principles of freedom, Equality and Justice and for the purpose of consolidating the unity of our people: DO HEREBY MAKE, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES the following Constitution. (The 2011 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, xx-xxi, italics, for emphasis).

It also asserts in Section 14.(1) that the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a State based on the principles of democracy and social justice for which it declares that:

- (a) Sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government through this Constitution derives all its powers and authority;
- (b) the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government; and the participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

The objectives and directive principles are in the main sets of fundamental obligations which she owes to the people. In Chapter Two of the amended 2011 Constitution it is stated that: “It shall be the duty and responsibility of all organs of government, and of all authorities and persons exercising legislative, executive or judicial powers, to conform to, observe and apply the provisions of this Chapter of this Constitution.”(13)

So, the idea in the concept *constitutionalism* is limiting. It implies that the government should be legally limited in the exercise of its powers. Legitimacy is a core value in the idea of constitutionalism. This value goes beyond the idea of legality. The idea in the concept *legality* requires that government officials’ conduct be in accordance to “pre-fixed legal rules”. The envisioned rationale is requisite of the rules. It is constitutive. Compliance with its regulatory principles legitimizes the roles of the political actors. The question of *legitimacy* checks whether the act of a government is legitimate and whether government officials conduct their public duties in accordance to laws already determined in advance. This is the Constitution, that it is drafted in advance to constitute and regulate a framework of governance. (Waluchow, Web). The government is at task to working out appropriate means to a desired end. First, Waluchow defines that “the purposes which governments are required to promote” and then inquired into what form of government that best fulfills the purposes.

The concept *structure* envisages a paradigm that transforms a given state or phenomenon. In this case the democratic governance is our ontological state, the body polity or rather the given political culture or process, a phenomenon. The idea in that which is structured is that of a process which is ordered, constituted of a set of ideas relating to practical consideration. Thus, politics may be expressed as a science of set of rules for process of actions about who, how, and why someone governs in order to attain certain ends. The *Constitution* is a conceptual and theoretical framework to achieve this. As such, it is constitutive and regulative. It represents an instrument from ideas to actions and plays a social role to transform the polity from the domain of the descriptive. In other words, it is a definitive instrument of reality from the conceptual into a social order. It plays a heuristic function. (Ricoeur, 67) in that it fixates and gives patterns to thoughts, consciousness, political attitudes, et c of any reality.

Kant’s philosophy is woven around the imperative of intuited rational principle, namely, the categorical imperative. The concept, *categorical* derives from the Greek “Kategorikos”, meaning “unequal”, absolute or unconditional. In Peter Angeles’ *Dictionary of Philosophy* the categorical imperative is “the necessary and absolute law beloved to be the ultimate rational foundation all moral conduct” and human actions. (Angeles, 35). In other words, William Turner observes, it is “unconditionally authoritative and its command is unconditionally a law of human conduct.” (1929-543). It suffices as objective moral principle insofar as it exerts obligation for a Will is a command (of reason). (Hutchins, 265). The assumption of this in Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* is that it is only human subjects that order their thoughts and consciously apply them into actions. The moral principles are universal, necessary and objectively true. (1998, 678). It does not persuade or advise (hypothetical). (Turner, 542). But does this principle really command absolutely such that a moral subject must align his or her actions according to the moral dictates? Immanuel Kant’s categorical moral imperatives tells us that moral laws conceived *a priori* legislate necessarily. Thus, from the certitude of the intuited *a priori* principles, one attains perceptions and justification of understanding of how things must be done. But does the perception of categorical moral principle ensure strict regulation in the face of adverse economic need? The Marxian principle would argue otherwise. It is the substructure that determines the superstructure. How does a moral agent that internalized the regulative moral principle act when confronted with choices of death or survival situation? Conversely, does material exigency impinge on the perception of legislating moral authority?

Actions of individual citizens reflect or are reflections of the actions of groups of individuals idealized as associated, structured and system-related and interactive social components (Onyeneke, 28-29). The functionalist sociological theories construe the society as organic and as constituent of inter-related parts function for the well-being of the society. The society exists as structured in the economic, educational, correctional, religious, familial, and other structures that all play a particular role in social groups and the community. Robert Merton holds that the manifest or latent functionality that impact positive and/or negative on the society, or dysfunction help the society to run smoothly. (Website).

The functionalist sociological theories construe the society as organic and as constituent of inter-related parts. These function for the well-being of the society. Nigeria is a sovereign state. Her over two hundred ethnic nationalities were carefully hedged together by the 1914 amalgamation policy of then Southern and Northern protectorates. She has struggled to realize the dream of a united and prosperous nation through

credible political system, formulation and actualization of government's policies and developmental plans through numerous constitutional, economic and national development plans.

The basic features of constitutionalism are: (i) Popular sovereignty (ii) Separation of Powers (checks and balances), (iii) Responsible and accountable government, (iv) Rule of law, (v) independent judiciary, (vi) Respect for individual rights, (vii) Respect to self-determination, (viii) Civilian control of the military, and (ix) Police governed by law and judicial control. (Bazezew, Web).

III. Dysfunctional Factors in Nigeria's Democratic Governance

It is not as if the various governments never put anything to plan nor did they operate in vacuum. Since her independence there have been the: 1962-68, 1970-74, to the current Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), 2017-2020, and the 2021-2025 medium term National Development Plans. The aim of the latter is to harness the country's economic potentials from all sectors for a sustainable, "holistic and inclusive and participatory national development, developed by the different facet of the Private Sector, Sub-national Government, Civil Society Organization (CSO) and facilitated by the Federal Government of Nigeria." (NDP, 2021-2025). But there are several subsisting development challenges that the government faced which stalled the pace of development. These are "low and fragile economic growth, insecurity, weak institutions, insufficient public service delivery, notable infrastructure deficits, climate change and weak social indicators" remained acute and seem to have defied solution.

Hence, the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2025, sought to invest massively in infrastructure, ensure macroeconomic stability, enhance the investment environment, improve on social indicators and living conditions", etc. Specifically, the aims are "to generate 21 million full-time jobs and lift 35 million people out of poverty by 2025; thus setting the stage for achieving the government's commitment of lifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty in 10 years." The medium by which these are to be achieved is through: "high quality economic growth and a more inclusive economy", leverage on its young workforce, and enhancing implementation capacity at national and sub-national levels." Contrary to expectation the country is still in dire needs critical infrastructure such as Power and alternative energy, Rail, Roads, and Housing. There is mass unemployment and the rate is quite high, insecure environment and low economic growth. What can one infer from this scenario?

It amounts to dysfunctionality that given robust framework of institutions, human and natural resources a State fails to perform its statutory functions. It would appear a contradiction to qualify a democratic system of governance as dysfunctional since the government is an ordered functional relations. As such it has enough carriage to transform the country's political, economic, social, and moral institutions. In so doing it would have improved the quality of life, ensured better protect lives and property. By 'dysfunctionality' we mean, therefore, the negative outcomes of government's policies, institutions, and development programmes. In other words, the concept 'dysfunctionalism' refers to an "abnormality or impairment in the function of a specified bodily organ or system" (Web encyclopedia). There are factors that cause dysfunctionality in Nigerian institutions What factors then cause this dysfunction in Nigeria's democratic governance?

Inept Leadership

Most of Nigeria's 'leaders' failed to perform creditably due to confusions and distractions from pursuing personal, ethnocentric and political loyalists' agenda, conflicting and uninformed suggestions from political personal assistants and special advisers, as well as from derailing bills that are passed at the legislative chambers. In most cases there is abuse of the principle of rule of law in determining and according rights and obligations. The leader must possess the insight of the *Philosopher-King*, master the art and principles of governance enshrined in the constitution, and as 'Guardian' of the State, focus on "things purely of the mind" (Plato, 7, 6, 484, d and 585, d) substantially transforms the nation's institutions, advances the course of peaceful coexistence and general well-being of her citizens, and ensured that the State attained commensurable economic and infrastructural development. The exercise of political power is not absolute (Alake, Aderogba and Okwusidi, 2000, 77) but shielded by immunity clauses, some of Nigeria's leaders relapsed into a 'culture' of abuse of political power and breached the principle of the rule of law in and even after being in office. This ugly trend has given vents for much of the deficits experienced in governance in Nigeria. Some of this kind of political office holders may not only have appeared clueless about is most apt for them to do but also allowed themselves to be swayed aside by sycophancy, ethnic and religious sentiments. The eyes of the mind appeared blinded.

Historical Illusion and False Self-Image

A country whose leaders refused to learn from her past experiences often bask in the euphoria of myth, illusion and false self- image. It is ignorance, that lack of knowledge of true self-worth, of the relation between the historical past, through the present to the future. Such state of mental stupor does not allow one to perceive the relation between envisioned theoretical framework and how the principles are translated into concrete

human actions. It is illusion to savour in such phrases as 'the giant of Africa'. 'this great country of ours', etc and hold it that she cannot collapse and the question of her unity is non-negotiable. Achebe describes penchant attitude as 'cargo cult mentality.' It reflects a "flamboyant (and) imaginary self-concept" of oneself. This attitude is characteristic of some Nigeria leaders. These crop of leaders dwell in such a world rather than understanding truly that they are grinding the mill of the nation to a stop. Corruption, insensitivity, ostentatious living, insecurity and non-productive sectors sets Nations back even most institutions are in place.(Achebe 1983, 10-11). It is not for nothing that Socrates advocates that "an unexamined life is not worth living" and Plato appreciates the role of the 'Philosopher-King' in the art of good governance. Good ideas are driving forces.

Unhealed Wounds of the Past- the Nigeria-Biafra War

For some people the Nigeria-Biafra war is a question that should never be raised, it is better to allow a sleeping dog lye . Yet for some others the question conceals the experience of very deep hurt which remained an open wound because it has never been discussed and nagging questions about it resolved. For others still the war was avoidable but the punitory response had to be there. The Nigeria-Biafra Civil War was a gory conflict which is traceable to irreconcilable political and ideological differences. The wound among those most afflicted remains fresh largely because the causative factors remained largely unresolved and unaddressed. Chinua notes that while 100,000 casualties are estimated to have been suffered on the much larger Nigerian side, that of the Biafra side is over 2,000,000. Most of these are mainly mothers, children and babies, and civilians. This casualty is as the "result of the blatantly callous and unnecessary policies enacted by the leader" of the government at the time. Unfortunately, she employed starvation as a "legitimate weapon of war." (Achebe, 2012, 228, 230-232). Besides, there was "information blockade" concerning the the prosecution of the war which was deliberate "attempts to fool the world about what happened in Biafra." Before the end of the war Pope Paul VI talked about possible "reprisals and massacres against defenseless people worn out by deprivations, by hunger and by the loss of all they possessed." (Achebe, 2012, 230). But seeing the Igbo people as "treasonable felons and wreckers of the nation" the federal government adopted a banking policy that "nullified any bank account" which the Biafrans operated during the war. In 1972 the federal government approved: "A flat sum of twenty pounds was approved for each Igbo depositor of the Nigerian currency regardless of the amount of deposit." (Achebe, 2012, 234).

Yet, the *Indigenization Decree, the Enterprises Promotion Decree* of 1974 while forcing foreign holders of majority shares of companies operating in Nigeria to hand over the "preponderance of stocks, bonds, and shares to local Nigeria business interests" (Achebe,2012, 234) the policy further edged the Igbo people out of the economic scheme of things in Nigeria at a time when they lacked capital to by shares and bonds in the companies. In all, Achebe avers that the Igbo people "were not and continued not to be reintegrated into Nigeria." For him this is one of the main reasons for the country's continued backwardness. This reason is not unconnected with leadership style in Nigeria which continued to enthrone "all sorts of banality, ineptitude, corruption, and debauchery (and)... mediocrity." [Achebe, 2012, 235, 236). He asks why the war "has not been discussed, or taught to the young" at least on the strength of its merit so that further generation is saved from repeating the mistakes of the past if we Nigerians are not "too stubborn" (Achebe, 2012, 228) and perhaps, arrogant to learn from them. But in his opinion discussion of the War is "fundamentally important...to our humanity...in order to better understand ourselves and our neighbors. Where there is justification for further investigation, then I believe justice should be served." (Achebe, 2012, 228). It is therefore, pertinent to further this philosophical interrogation to ensures co-existence and cooperation, peace and unity.

Deficit in Governance

Good governance that sees to positive transformation of the country's institutions, economic and social development, security of lives and property is a credit to democracy. But the score sheet of most of Nigeria's past leaders is abysmally poor in terms of providing good governance. Chinua Achebe in *The Trouble With Nigeria* bemoaned the "failure of leadership...the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership"(1983, 1). Riddled in corruption, embezzlement, inflation of contracts and floating bloated and "over-staffed and unproductive public service" which continued to date in the form of retinue of Personal Assistants, Special Assistants, etc attaching to the office of the chief executives and office of the First Lady, etc. (1983, 4). Jessop asserts that the rationale for State activity is 'substantive' found in the "definition and enforcement of collectively binding decisions" for public interest or common good. The state fails to do so if it is unable to effectively execute its developmental programmes and mapped projects by not obeying constitutional rules. {Jessop, 2000, 11-32)

Perversion of Justice

There is perversion of justice in the land. This comes as result of violation of the provisions of the constitution on rights and privileges, making political appointments. At times sections of the electoral laws and

guidelines among others are circumvented. The idea is usually to disqualify or/and give another some edge over other political opponents and political parties, enthronement of nepotism and mediocrity, inequitable distribution of national resources. In *The Trouble With Nigeria*, Achebe notes that we “cannot extol the virtues(*sic*) of unity without first satisfying ourselves that the end to which the unity is directed is unimpeachable.” (Achebe, 15). Unity as a moral good cannot be sacrificed on the altar of any coercive means; the means does not justify the end. Unity is a function of justice, truth and equity.

Incompatible Religious Ideologies

Ideology is a set of ideas or beliefs shared by a group of people. It is often advanced by one to extract, more or less coercive, a commitment to desired attitude, response or action from the Other. We pitch Christianity against Islam in terms of which utilizes itself into coercive and radical ideological weapon which is dysfunctional in Nigeria. All christian denominations in Nigeria conduct their activity peacefully. They do not make its adherence imperative or as a condition for co-existing with the Other. Christians do not convert members by force of arms nor attempt to fight for their God. Jesus Christ lived by and taught this. An example is when he chided Peter at the garden of Gethsemane. But one may not say the same of Islam. The *Boko Haram* (*Boko* is Hausa and *Haram* is Arabic) means ‘western education or book’ and ‘forbidden’ or sinful’. It is committed to pursuance of propagation Islamic religion, the prophet’s teaching and Jihad (Akinyeye, 2020, 39). The movement broadened into secularism and ideology about how Nigeria should be governed contrary to the non-secular status of the Nigerian State. [Anyanwu and Nwanaju 106-108; Olomjobi,2020, 32). This mainly accounts for the dysfunction experienced in Nigeria inasmuch as it grounds for irreconcilable basis for coexistence in Nigeria and the realization of good governance through institutional reforms.

Nigeria will be a developed State or country if she exercises measures of political control in transforming her social institutions, bolsters economic development, creates and enhances the quality social and moral values, fosters a sense of national identity and unity. and secures lives and property. Otherwise, she may be tagged a failing or failed State. This latter kind of State pays less attention to place of moral values in national development and will toy with the question of equity, truth and justice and faith. Its leaders loose sight that it is truth and justice that brings about peace, unity and faith in the aspirations of the nation. So, in our democratic experience there is this perceived systemic weakening of our political, moral, social, legal and economic institutions.

Insecurity

Security is a primary consideration for a developmental State. It ensures peaceful environment for development and in which investments opportunities abound. Nigeria has continued to face lots of insecurity challenges. The acts of terrorism, insurgencies, ethno-religious conflicts, abductions, and organ harvesting have led to the killings of innocent citizens in the country. While, by all accounts, the security *apparatti* appear helpless, the ugly situation not only has scarred investors from investing in the country, it threatens the corporate existence of Nigeria. People and groups now tend to resort to self-help instead of calling the attention of security personnel. This is an ugly “recipe for anarchy, breakdown of law and order and huge threats to safety of lives and property if left unaddressed for too long.” (Yagboyaju and Akinola, 1-10). Nonetheless, Nigeria parades a robust security *apparati* (the police, Army, Navy, Air Force, National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Department of State Services (DSS), Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Federal Roads Safety Corps (FRSC), Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Nigeria Prisons Service (NPS), Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Federal Fire Service and National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON), etc.). However, the increasing blood bath in the North-East, Middle-Belt, East among others that threaten the corporate existence of Nigeria and which stunts efforts of the security forces is amounts to dysfunctionality. Cases of violation of fundamental human rights of the people extra-judicial killings fingered on. (Nigeria-2018 UN HR Violations Report ,12). Poor remuneration, inadequate number of police and other security personnel as well as non-provision of more sophisticated weapons that matches those used by terrorists and insurgents are constant draw-back on the performance of security personnel in the country.

Incessant bombings by Boko Haram Herdsmen assaults on farming populations in the North-East and Middle-Belt, and pockets of areas in the East and West have led to increased poverty and hunger among the rural populations. Besides, the problem of sustainability, raw materials that would have been sourced from farm harvests are lost to bandits and killer herdsmen. (Ibegbu, C. 2012). The ‘*EndSaars*’ and ‘*EndBadGovernance*’, protests, among others continued to call government’s attention to the plight of the citizens in the face dire insecurity in the country.

Lack of the Sense of Common Purpose

Faith is one the major articles in Nigeria's national Anthem, fervently learned and sung by school children and often forgotten by the 'politicians'. In national life and polity there is so much distrust and suspicion among Nigerians as there is the North-South, Christians-Muslims, ethnic and political parties divides, etc, not informed by reason but more often than not by ignorance of "ourselves, our history, and culture, or some age-old prejudices that will not go away." (Kukah, 100) . We are on guard and circumspect that nothing good comes the Other's way and would turn around to blame him/her for misfortune that one suffered. Thus, prejudice, disunity, lack of faith in the Other and ignorance of who and what we ought to be as a multi-ethnic nation are like canker worms and virus. These destroy a nation because on this account established protocols and procedures for doing things are nullified or set aside. The book of Hosea decried that nations perish for lack of knowledge (4:6) and Amos asks: "Do two walk together unless they agree" (3:3). Ethnocentrism, political 'God-fatherism', Neo-colonial interest, inconsistent party ideologies, and biases due religious differences preclude true assessment of collective self- image, the drive towards common identity and development. In this regard, Nigeria's robust material and human resources, our cultural diversity and teeming population ought to contribute positively to national development. But these are yet to be in harmonious function in Nigerian politics.

IV. Epistemic Reflection on the Implications of the Dys-functionalism

The adjective *epistemic* refers to and questions the assumption and implications of that which subject-matter relates to knowledge. The subject-matter (in our context) relates to the question of the dysfunctionality experienced in Nigeria democratic experience from before and after military rule in Nigeria. We are not looking at the specific score sheets of the different past democratic governments. The focus rather is an overview in our past political experience. Within this framework, Nigeria's body polity is taken as an ontology. Understanding its life, political system and processes would yield a kind of knowledge. We have examined some factors that make the democratic political process dysfunction. Our reflection thereupon will work on what has been revealed. From *what we know* about the political system, power structure, etc we move to *what we have to do* and hope for in Nigeria.

1. It is pertinent to realize it is human persons, the political actors that run the windmill of the art of politics through a choice of political process. In this instance, the word 'government' is an abstract individual. It stands for all those political agents that consciously canvassed for and took up positions of leadership in the country and who act in line with the provisions of the Constitution. It is the political subjects that run and drive the system, that inject values and sense good purpose in the process of governance. Ignorance, Socrates noted, is the cause evil.
2. Despite this assumption there has been dysfunctional factors inherent in our democratic system of governance. It is sufficient to suppose and hypothetically so, that if the *status quo* remain unchanged it would grind Nigeria to an economic, political and social halt. This is deducible from the fact of deficit in good governance which is orchestrated by hyper inflation, government's heavy dependence on foreign borrowing, high rate of unemployment and hunger in the land, etc in the midst of low productive economy and depleting foreign reserve. Those in government must make visible and concerted efforts to grow, that citizens build faith in local products. The government promotes her local produce, grants local manufacturers incentives, protects local products from foreign competitors, and sets up local price regulatory mechanism .
3. Provision of social security is vital. Many people cannot access good medicare, provide quality education for their children, etc. Most employees earn below a 'living wage'. Monthly wage cannot put food on their tables, pay school fees, and take care of other other house bills. The total costs of the bills are most of the times, twice or thrice of what the worker actually earns. Hence, some people put integrity aside, cut corners in order to make ends meet. What else could they not do in the face of harrowing and dysfunctional social, economic and political system? Meritocracy, reward for honesty, probity, and accountability as well as deterrence for nepotism, corruption, ethnocentrism, etc can add values to our political culture to making it functional.
4. Most government in Nigeria have had to keep borrowing to service bloated cost of governance and to take care of the luxury and ostentatious life-styles of government officials, not for investments in economic and infrastructural development. No country in the world had its economy transformed in like manner. Even when the latter is named it is hardly the case that most of the projects are successfully completed.
5. Core politics and art of governance in Nigeria tend to distance itself from academics. It is as if to say, contra Plato's 'Philosopher -King ideal' that the learned persons are misfits in the art of political games, that politics is determined, not by much of good reason and logic between the political end and the means to achieve it, but by political clout, ruggedness, political aggrandizement. This ugly scenario must be reversed. It is not for theoretical and practical reason that students went to the universities, and some turned professionals in relevant fields.
6. There are usually no evident demonstration of *good will* on the part of political leaders towards the demands of those they governed. Demonstration of a kind of empathy about what he/she does or dispenses to the people is a political lubricant. It is required when interpretations of what is required goes beyond what is stipulated in

the constitution, The government goes beyond that, justifies it by the exigent need of the time. It is self-interest, ethnocentrism, paying heed to ambivalent religious ideologies that prevents the good leader from significant demonstration of good will in governance.

V. Concluding Remarks

Bad governance leads to dysfunctionality when the leadership is unable to stem the tides of negative forces that tend to derail it from envisioned road plan. It is pertinent that governance is run as in structure functional political system which dynamic relationship is rule-governed. The right institutions may be in place yet suffer dysfunctionality for obvious inherent political lapses which can be put in check. The agential role of the political leader who has good Will to work so as to deliver on his political promise is imperative.

The ripple effects of such a political state are mass poverty, high unemployment rate, low standard of living, generally crippling economy, and increased cost of governance, foreign borrowing, and indebtedness. The future of the country's young population should not be mortgaged for foreign loans. The position of the political class who care less about the poverty and unemployment in the country but who prefers to live in opulence is not right. Honest attempts must be made to overhaul the nation's body politics and bring about institutional change. Good governance must be as sustainable as it promotes social and economic development, inclusive and participatory rather than sectional. It must be transparent, creates values and responsive to the need of the people, and respects the principle of the rule of law. The whole question of dysfunctionality is reducible to lack of knowledge on the part of those in governance. It is human errors that drive wedges on the grinding wheels of democracy. The Constitution provide the principles by which the subject matter is attained with definite objective results.

Unity is a function of justice, equity, freedom and fairness. Unity is not a flag to hoisted and clung unto. It is a relational function and attainment. It is a moral and epistemic function. It is not a relational state to be protected with either guns or by a set of hegemonic slogans. Thus, chants of the 'unity of this country is non-negotiable' does not really make it one. The sense of *common good* is the foundation of the principle of reciprocity in a 'common wealth'. This understands that given diverse human interests there is a common bond around which all personal interests revolve. The principle of *common good* is norm-guiding for all whose interests are at stake to accept on the basis of the values they placed of the perceived goods. (Asouzu, 2003, 86). It is imperative that the leader is deeply informed and understands the nature of the *common goods* which ethnic groups of diverse interest lay claim to. It is this knowledge that informs the rationale for moral question in meeting up with the diverse interests of the people taken as agreeable value-wholes. It requires prudence and good will to translate principles into right actions. It is not in doubt that Nigeria has enormous potential of material, and human resources. Nigeria cannot be regard as 'failed' State since it does not lack "major attributes of sovereignty or cohesion" (Lewis, 83) but on the strength that as a State her political, economic, legal, religious and socio-cultural institutions have failed to transform the country. Again, Nigeria is not poor for lack of the requisite resources or capital necessary for economic and social development. It is rather the inability or unwillingness to put the right measures in place.

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