

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES IN CHINA AND NIGERIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

This study compares the political and governance structures of China and Nigeria, highlighting their similarities and differences. China operates under a centralized framework dominated by the Chinese Communist Party, with key institutions such as the National People's Congress, the State Council, and the judiciary playing defined roles. In contrast, Nigeria functions as a federal presidential republic with a clear separation of powers across its executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Despite these differences, both countries share similarities as federal republics with significant influence from dominant political parties. The study concludes that their distinct governance structures reflect divergent developmental paths and underscore the balance between centralized authority and democratic participation. Recommendations include expanding research into other facets of China-Nigeria relations and conducting comparative studies with additional countries to provide broader insights.

Introduction

Politics is the process of making decisions that apply to a community or society. According to Diamond (2021), it is the process of making decisions about how to allocate resources, how to solve problems, and how to live together. Politics is often seen as a struggle for power, but it is also a process of cooperation and negotiation (Osaghae, 2020). The political structure of a government is the way in which the government is organized. It includes the different branches of government (e.g., executive, legislative, and judicial), the different levels of government (e.g., federal, state, and local), and the different relationships between these different branches and levels of government (Adekanye, 2019). The political terrain of a government is linked to its governance structure.

The governance structure of a government is the way in which the government is run. It includes the different processes and procedures that the government uses to make decisions, implement policies, and deliver services (Linz & Stepan, 2016). The governance structure of a government is the way that government functions and carries out its obligations on the people. It comprises the different levels of government, the different agencies and departments of government, and the different policies and procedures that government follows (Huntington, 2014). The political and governance structure of a government is the combination of the political structure and the governance structure. According to Bratton and van de Walle (2018), it is the way in which the government is organized and the way in which it is run. In this view, various countries have their rules and law guiding her political and governance structure. Most especially, the Nigerian and china's perspective is paramount in this study.

Nigeria is a Federal Constitutional Republic. It comprised of Executive, Judicial, and Bi-Cameral Legislative Branches, similar in structure to United States. The Judicial Branch has division between Supreme Court, Appellant Court, and Federal High Court. Supreme Court handles interpretation of laws according to the constitution. The Legislative Branch is a Bi-Cameral legislature. It has the Senate – 109 Members with 3 members from each of the 36 states, and 1 from Federal Capital Territory. They serve 4 year terms. The House of Representatives has 360 members. The representation is determined by population of the federal constituency. They also serve 4 year terms. Their major role is primarily to pass laws for President to approve. Laws must pass through both houses. They exercise powers similar to those of United States Congress. The Major Political Parties are the All Progressive Congress (APC) – currently in power with Bola Ahmed Tinubu as the President. The People's Democratic Party (PDP) – former ruling party and now the main opposition party. They held power for most of 4th Republic. The Labour Party, the New Nigerian People Party (NNPP) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) among others are in the opposition

On the other hand, China's leading political institutions include the Communist Party and its military, the People's Liberation Army; the State, led by the State Council, to which the Party delegates day-to-day administration of the country; and the National People's Congress (NPC), China's unicameral legislature. On paper, the NPC has broad powers. In practice, the legislature is controlled by the Communist Party and is able to exercise little of its constitutionally mandated oversight over the state and the judiciary. Following its 18th Congress in November 2012, the Communist Party ushered in a new Party leadership. New State and NPC leaders took office following the opening session of the 12th NPC in March 2013.

In view of the forgoing, the need to do a comparative study of the political and governance structure in China and Nigeria would be beneficial for a number of reasons. First, it would help us to better understand in detailed, the strengths and weaknesses of each system. Second, it would help us to identify the factors that contribute to effective governance. Third, it would help us to learn from the experiences of other countries in order to improve our own political and governance systems. It is in this view that this study is important to be carried out

Literature Review

Political Structure (Politics)

Many social scientists have no predilection to confuse political structure (systems) with political regimes (Dahl 1995; Alvarez et al. 1996; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006; Kopstein and Lichbach, 2005). Also, the difficulty in distinguishing the multiplicity of political systems or political regimes derived from history and human imagination has prompted political theorists to settle for a continuum ranging from non-democracies (authoritarian and dictatorial regimes) to democracies.

Dahl (1995) considers political structure to be the boundaries (governance rules) that limit opportunities for participation in government processes. The regimes that restrict participatory chances in political processes to relatively few adult members of society are authoritarian or dictatorial, and the ones that open chances to a greater variety of authorized adult members are democracies.

However, political structure and political regimes do not simply regulate the scope for social participation in political processes; they also stipulate the rules and resources for the political game. Political regimes determine not only access but also the "sources" and "resources that actors employ to acquire political positions" and the interactions between political power and non-political power holders (O'Donnell et al., 1986, 73; Fishman, 1990, p. 428). Political structure and regimes thus imply the rules (formal and informal) that limit political power accessibility and modes of relationships (interactions) between actors and roles across the social spectrum (Munck 1996, Bratton and de Walle 1997).

The critique on the 'procedural' concept of participatory regimes such as democracy makes analytical sense, particularly, when formal processes are stressed against 'results' or 'outcomes' in conceiving and analyzing post-colonial or post-authoritarian democracies such as Nigeria. As one political regime analyst noted, 'procedural rules are contrasted, (...) not to informal ways in which political power is sometimes actually accessed and exercised' (Munck, 1996, 6). Instead, Munck emphasized, procedural rules 'are counter-posed to outcomes' (ibid.). O'Donnell's (2004) argument that "contemporary democracy hardly is by the people; but it certainly is of the people and because of this, it should also be for the people" (O'Donnell, 2004: 38) underlines the importance of social ownership of both political institutions and their outcomes.

Another relevant analytical dimension is that while pure political systems are practically inexistent, nuance regime combinations known as 'blended regimes', 'hybrid regimes' or 'regime hybridity' are not impossible. Despite its imprecision, "hybrid regimes" are incomplete types in which "partial regimes within the political regime are democratic, while others are non-democratic, though not necessarily authoritarian" (Zinecker 2009: 302–331). The analytical point is the effects incomplete regime types have on government policies that directly affect the political system

Nigerian Political System

Since colonial incursion and the attainment of political independence, Nigeria like other erstwhile colonial possessions have inculcated the Westminster-styled political system at independence “influenced tremulously by an elite class that projects the political culture which could make or mar democracy as a result of the political parties” (Aristotle, 2007).

This means that the political parties become platforms on which the politicians actualize the authoritative allocation of values, often time the idiosyncrasies of these political elites form values which are inconsistent with the parent political-style copied, thus making the attainment of good governance impossible. Suffice to state that copied western-style political system, have inherent challenges which are managed with a compelling sense of patriotism- a very rare feature in Nigeria and most other Third World countries. In an attempt at distinguishing a state from the political system, Rummel R. J writes:

A political system consists of the formal and informal structures which manifest the states sovereignty over a territory and people. It is the civil aspects of statehood. But a state through its life time may have many different political systems as have China, Russia and France.

By the above, it could be totalitarian/autocratic, libertarian/democratic, constituting a balance among interests, capabilities, wills and status quo in continuous contestation. It can be more simplistically defined as the members of a social organization who are in power within a geographical setting as determined by time, interest (elites/less often except through revolution) and some other prevalent climate of opinion. It involves the following kinds – autocracy, theocracy, republic, diarchy, democracy amongst others (Free English Language Dictionary) among others. Political systems provide the platform on which political parties are formed-thus a precursor to political parties which later makes a political system desirable to guarantee good governance for the masses or socialize and mobilize the masses to yearning for change. Thus the functional definition of political parties which distinguishes them from other social organization/interest groups structure electoral choice and (a) conduct the business of government under a party label or banner (Jinadu 2011:1).

In the Nigerian context therefore, the desirous political system is democracy, which is in the strictest of sense, utopian. Stressing on the functionality of the political system in the allocation of scarce resources, Maurice A. Coker maintains that, the success of this depends on the “quantity and/or quality of the ‘demands’ and ‘supports’ which are generated in the environment and fed into the political system” (Coker, 1999:48). Lending voices too, Gabriel Almond and Coleman (1960) and Almond and Powell (1966) argue that for a political system to persist, there are several functional pre-requisites which must be performed – divided into ‘inputs’ and ‘outputs’ – inputs – (i) political socialization and recruitment (ii) interest aggregation and (iii) interest articulation (iv) pattern maintenance and adaptation (v) rule making (vi) rule application and (vii) rule adjudication (48). Therefore, the political system works for the environment (human and institutional) and determined by same.

Like the United States, Brazil and India, Nigeria as a federation, a colonial heritage necessitated by her multi- culturality has 36 states, a Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) and a 774 Local Government Area structure and adopted the United States presidential system since 1979 which replaced the British parliamentary system of government. It has a three tier of government-legislative, executive and judiciary as provided institutionally working in tandem for the growth and development of the country through the instrumentality of checks and balances and separation of powers. There is a bicameral legislature – the Senate and the Federal House of Representatives (lower house/chamber) both commonly referred to as the National Assembly under the leadership of the Senate President and the Speaker respectively.

While the National Assembly is the legislative arm under the Senate President/and Speaker, the executive is under the President, the judiciary interprets the laws initiated by the executive and made by the legislative arm. This structure is replicated at the state and local government levels. While the

governor/chairman (executive), House of assembly/councillor (speaker/leader) (legislature) centralization and the judiciary. With time, the centre becomes over concentrated with power, while the component units were appendages relying on their share of the “national cake”.

A development which became prevalent from the era when the economy became solely dependent on oil, albeit, conscious that oil politics is not the burden of this chapter, the position of Rotimi Suberu on federalism and ethnic conflict in Nigeria is apt: “a stronger federalist system that reduces the power of the central government would counteract ‘cake sharing’ fixation, in which states scramble for a bigger piece of federal monies rather than expanding the overall country’s output” (Hanson 2007).

This has led to series of litigations by the states for powers and revenue allocation conceded to them, ironically, the same concession they tenaciously deny the local government areas. Ideally, there is the feature of unity in diversity due to the inherent heterogeneity. Ethno-religious tolerance is preached. But unfortunately what is obtainable in the Nigerian context is division. It is thus leery that the old national anthem was changed.

An anthem which recognized the heterogeneity of Nigeria and her growth hinged on brotherhood: “...though tongue may differ, in brotherhood we stand...” The frequency and severity of ethno-religious crisis intensified with time since independence (October 1, 1960). This has undermined the basis of federalism. As it is both a principle and method of handling diversity. It presupposes the existence of differences in history, level of economic development, culture, language and socio-political institution (Mangvwat, 2008:116). While these could also explain why federating units defy the frontier of their parochial allegiance and join others at the center with a purpose of unity (thus unity in diversity).

Chinese political system

According to participants, from the Political Science perspective, there are two methodological challenges in identifying the key features of the Chinese political system. Firstly, outsiders and insiders struggle to grasp all elements of China’s reality, which could hamper the attempt to analyze China objectively. Secondly, Chinese reality is contradictory and complex, which allows one to see partial truths. Despite these there are four key aspects that characterize the contemporary Chinese political system.

The first is the authoritarian aspect, with a concentration of power in a small group of elites, not elected through open and competitive elections. The second is the party-state, which has the Chinese Communist Party as the essential defining feature of the system. This means that the CCP does not only play a leading role in the executive and legislative branches but also controls the entire political system, the economy, media, and all the major social organizations. The third is meritocracy, which continues to be part of the Chinese political traditions today. Most of the Chinese top officials are career bureaucrats, with extensive experience in public service. This allows Ministers and other officials of different public issues to conduct long-term policies using their vast knowledge on each matter. The fourth is democratic features, which include grassroots democracy, intra-party democracy, civilian control of the military, and to some degree, collective leadership.

Although there is speculation that Xi Jinping might partially abandon the latter, it is still an important part of the system. In addition, some Western countries, including the US government, see the current world divided into two blocs; one is a democratic coalition led by the United States; the other is an autocratic coalition led by China. This dichotomy leads the US to become more assertive in promoting its democratic values with allies and supposedly contests China’s quest for supremacy.

In China, the gap between ideal and reality resulted in corruption, in which public officials serve themselves or family members instead of the community. Thus, the Chinese ideal system is characterized as a highly imperfect political meritocracy. The Chinese government fully recognizes that political meritocracy is tied to China’s history, culture, and size. For instance, only large countries have the necessity for public officials to have extensive experience at lower levels of government, as well as

a proven record of making good political judgments and having a long-term vision. In the case of China, not taking the right decision could massively impact the entire world negatively, such as the case of climate change.

Governance Structure (Government)

The concept of government is not self-evident and a rather complex phenomenon in reality. Governing means exercising control over a society by means of ordered rule. At the same time, government is a set of institutions and concerns a body of actors, which define how and to what extent the public affairs within society are shaped and directed. Government is considered as the institutionalized process through which the public order is maintained and collective action is organized in order to enhance the welfare of the society.

"Government" is a self-evident concept and as such it appears to be a "natural" phenomenon of contemporary society. Yet, it is not that easy to define what government is and what it entails. Samuel Finer, for instance, attributes at least four different meanings to the term "government." First of all government denotes exercising a measure of control over others. Second, government is a condition of ordered rule. Third, it refers to a body of people charged with the duty of governing. Fourth, government is the method of ruling a particular society.

In short, government can be seen as an epi-phenomenon, which is obvious and obscure at the same time. Jean Blondel puts this point forward most lucidly: the most curious thing about governments is that so little is known about them. Although most authors do not converge on the meaning of what government is (or is supposed to be), they do agree on the fact that the Executive is the irreducible core of government. Its history is the development of political authority: from ancient times up to the era of absolutist monarchy, government was an almost universal phenomenon.

The political executive predates constitutional government and the concomitant emergence of separate legislatures, bureaucracies, judiciaries and other branches of the (semi-)public services. These bodies and branches of government developed as functional aids to the rulers in order to give advice and to carry out measures. Examples of these developments are royal councils, the military and the distribution of offices across the realm. Yet, whatever way government developed as the importance of the (nation-) state grew, the executive body acquired specific powers, which are not lodged elsewhere. This development is a universal one. Every country has an executive body called government, which is thus considered as responsible for running the public affairs within and for a society. Taken in this sense it is the key point of political life.

This remains true, even if one tends to doubt whether or not government and its executive organization is able to direct effectively the course of events (nationally and internationally), let alone to influence the social and economic structure of their country. Yet, on the other hand, government is the sole organization with authority, more than any other body that has an opportunity to shape society: either by public action or by doing nothing else than "minding the shop". This latter option is often overlooked. Yet, it should be noted that not acting implies an act of governance as well.

The structure of government is then defined by means of a number of functions—managing the state; regulating public affairs; decision-making and policy implementation; exerting leadership—which are considered as essential to the role of government as a life sustainable system. First, the impact of value systems (or ideology) on the type of governmental regime is investigated. Value systems appear to influence both the working and structure of government and influence the structuring of government in terms of more or less democratic, more or less authoritarian, and more or less enhancing public welfare. Second, the structure of government is analyzed by means of its formal and informal rules (i.e. institutionalization). The basic distinction made here is between types of representative government and non-representative ones. Obviously the rules of the political game do not only structure government, but also affect its actual working in terms of decision-making and the related performances (i.e. public policy outputs and related outcomes). Third, the structure of government is discussed by means of its

organizational features (hierarchy) and type of government (collective or not). It is observed that these features define the form of government and has implications on its policy-making capabilities and thus on its public policy formation and related performance for society.

Therefore, there is a relationship between the structure of government and its viability as a (stable) system, on the one hand, and between the type of government and its policy performance (or public welfare), on the other. It appears that the structure of government does matter with respect to the quality of a society and its population.

Theoretical Framework

In order to provide a comparative study of political and governance structure in China and Nigeria, a theoretical framework is necessary. The comparative political systems theory will be used as the theoretical base.

Comparative Political Systems Theory

The comparative political systems theory was developed by Arend Lijphart in the 1960s. The comparative political systems theory emerged as political scientists began to study the political systems of different countries in a systematic way. The comparative political systems theory focuses on the similarities and differences between political systems around the world. It seeks to identify the factors that influence the structure, function, and performance of political systems. The aims of the comparative political systems theory are to:

- Develop a general understanding of how political systems work.
- Identify the factors that contribute to the stability or instability of political systems.
- Explain why some countries are more democratic than others.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of different political systems.

The comparative political systems theory is based on several key tenets that Political systems are complex and multifaceted. Political systems are influenced by a variety of factors, including history, culture, and economics. Political systems can be classified into different types, such as democracies, autocracies, and monarchies. The performance of political systems can be evaluated based on various criteria, such as stability, democracy, and economic prosperity.

The comparative political systems theory proposes several prepositions which stated that democratic political systems are more stable than authoritarian political systems. Political systems that are more inclusive and participatory are more likely to be successful. Political systems that are characterized by rule of law and checks and balances are more likely to be stable and democratic. Economic development can lead to the emergence of more democratic political systems.

The comparative political systems theory rests on several assumptions:

- Political systems are rational and purposeful entities.
- Political systems can be objectively studied and analyzed.
- The behaviour of political actors can be explained by rational choice theory.
- There are universal principles that apply to all political systems.

The relationship of the theory to the study is positive as the comparative political systems theory can be used to analyze the political and governance structures of China and Nigeria by comparing the two countries' constitutions, political institutions, and political processes. The theory can also be used to identify the factors that have contributed to the different political trajectories of China and Nigeria. The comparative political systems theory has been applied to a wide range of topics, including the causes of democracy, the factors that contribute to the stability of political systems, the relationship between political systems and economic development, and the impact of globalization on political systems.

Empirical Review

Du, Fang and Jin (nd) did a study on Chinese Political and Economic Governance System and the Imbalance between Consumption and Investment. The Chinese government has been pursuing economic growth under the guidance of “growth is a hard principle”. In the context of the Chinese political and economic governance system, local governments have employed the overtaking strategy

(placing primary emphasis on the development of capital and technology-intensive industries) and the real estate development strategy to push for economic growth and fiscal revenue growth. This led to a repressed labor share and an elevated capital and government share in primary and secondary income distribution structure. Using the empirical strategy of Acemoglu et al. (2003), we confirm that the development strategies have shaped an imbalanced consumption-investment structure through primary and secondary income distribution structure as well as other channels. It suggests that the Chinese government will be able to accomplish China's transition from an investment-led growth model to a consumption-based growth model only if it modifies its political and economic governance system and removes the distortions in development strategies

Zhili and Juan (2020) did a study on China's governance model and system in transition. The modernization of China's system and capacity for governance that China has promoted in recent years could be understood as China trying to reform its state governance. This article investigates the characteristics of the basic structure of China's state governance model since the reform and opening up. China's governance model is a dual structure model that can be observed in its organization, decentralization, value and efficiency systems. At the same time, this reform, marked by the reform of Party and state institutions, establishes a party-centered state governance system and structure; that is, the adjustment of the relationship between politics and administration, promotes the construction of the state governance system of party centralism. Based on ongoing reform activities, the essence of China's current governance reform is a more comprehensive revision of China's governance model since the reform and opening up.

Kifordu (2013) did a study on Nigerian political systems since political independence: changes and trajectories. This article accounts for the structural changes in the form of shifts in political systems and economic sources of state revenue in post-colonial Nigeria. As Nigeria and other countries such as Brazil seek mutually to extend and intensify external relations, the need to cast further light on the post-colonial structural changes underscores the article's relevance. Since political independence in 1960, the Nigerian political system has alternated between democratic and authoritarian types with significant increases in government revenue originating from petrodollars. However, elite succession in topmost political executive offices has been marked by confusions and attended by confusions amid intense and recurrent social conflicts. The findings point to incomplete regime change with the persistence of a rigid power structure

Ajagba, Gberevbie and Agbu (2019) evaluated the political process and governance in Nigeria between 1999-2018 with emphasis on the role of the National Assembly and Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The political process comprises the totality of the ways and means of acquiring and exercising governmental authority in a political system. It is the systematic series of actions and guidelines involving relevant institutions that impact on the quest for the exercise of political power in governmental or public affairs of a country or state through periodic elections. The broad objective of the thesis centered on the evaluation of how the role of the National Assembly and Independent National Electoral Commission could enhance good governance in Nigeria. It employed the survey method of research design in which the data required for the study were generated through the instruments of questionnaire, and in-depth interviews. Quota and stratified sampling techniques were mostly used in the selection of respondents. Four hundred and thirty copies of questionnaire were administered and 360 were returned. The data were analyzed using linear regression analysis, as well as inferential statistics, tables, frequencies, percentages and graphs to crystallize and present the results. The findings among other things indicate that both the National Assembly and Independent National Electoral Commission have not satisfactorily performed their constitutionally assigned roles of enhancing the political process and good governance in Nigeria between 1999-2018; that the National Assembly has not been able to represent the collective interest of the masses; that the inability of the National Assembly to enforce the provisions of the 1999 constitution as they relate to cross-carpeting of politicians elected into the National Assembly or any other elective office in Nigeria is because such an amendment and interpretation will adversely affect the National Assembly members who are currently benefiting from the dispensation; and that although the introduction of technology in the

management of elections will help advance the political process in Nigeria, however, due to poor voter education, the huge amount spent for this project would be a colossal national loss except urgent steps are taken by INEC to embark on appropriate voter education to enable the electorates and masses know how the technological equipment are used to facilitate free and fair elections subsequently in Nigeria with a view to advancing democracy in the country

The empirical review section focuses on literature about the comparative study of political and governance structure in China and Nigeria. The study reviewed the Overview of political and governance structure in China, 2.1.2 China's Preeminent Political Institutions, and the Chinese Communist Party which includes the Secretariat, The Political Bureau (Politburo), The Politburo Standing Committee (PSC), The CPC Central Military Commission, The CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) and National Supervisory Commission, The National People's Congress (NPC), The State Council of the PRC, and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). The study further reviewed the Federal government of Nigeria which was discussed under the executive, legislative and the judiciary. There were also reviews on State Executive Council (Nigeria), Local government areas of Nigeria, and the Characteristics of the Nigerian political process. The comparative political systems theory was used for the study as developed by Arend Lijphart in the 1960s. The comparative political systems theory emerged as political scientists began to study the political systems of different countries in a systematic way. Empirical works were reviewed as done by some authors but from the reviews, none of the studies dealt directly on comparative analysis of the political and governance structure in China and Nigeria. This has created a gap, hence the need for this study

Research Methodology

This study will adopt the qualitative research design. This method of qualitative research design will take the shape of a Comparative methodology which involves comparing two or more entities, such as individuals, groups, countries, or cultures. It aims to identify similarities and differences between the entities being compared to gain insights into their characteristics, behaviors, or outcomes. Comparative research is often used in various disciplines, including art and international relation to address a wide range of research questions. This research design will systematically compare the political and governance structure in China and Nigeria

This study will source its data from the secondary data. Secondary data will include journals and textbooks on political and governance structure in China and Nigeria. Through active engagement in-depth interviews in the government and political network, the researcher will seek an audience with political and government officials, and government representatives, to gain insights into the political and governance structure in China and Nigeria. Furthermore, library and internet information sources will form part of the data for this study. For this study, the data analysis will utilize a comparative analytical approach. This method involves identifying and analyzing recurring variations in the data collected from Chinese and Nigerian political and governance structure, and comparing and contrasting their relationship

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section will provide analysis of the study from the objectives of the study. The objectives were analyzed as follows:

Analysis of Chinese political and governance structure

The main political structure of the PRC is comprised of two vertically integrated, but interlocking institutions: the Chinese Communist Party (CCP, or Party), headed by the Party Politburo and its Standing Committee; and the state government (State, or Government) apparatus, headed by the Premier who presides over the State Council, a de-facto cabinet. Throughout China, Party and Government structures closely parallel one another, with Party committees and representatives present not only in government agencies, but also in most organizations and institutions, including universities and foreign-owned enterprises. The nominal leader of the CCP is the General Secretary, but control of the Party is held collectively by its Standing Committee. China's Government is managed by the State Council, which is headed by its Premier. China's current Party General Secretary is Hu Jin-tao; the

Premier of the State Council is Wen Jia-bao.

Two other major institutions play a role in Chinese politics. One is the National People's Congress (NPC). According to Article 57 of China's constitution, "The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China is the highest organ of state power." Its highest officers are the President and Vice-President of the NPC, which are directly elected by the members of the NPC. Articles 85 and 92 of China's constitution state that the State Council is the executive arm of the government and reports to the NPC. As will be described in more detail below, in reality, for all of the PRC's 60 year history, the NPC has been subordinate to the State Council and the Party Standing Committee.

The Chinese Communist Party

To a certain extent, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has never rid itself of its revolutionary roots (Brandt, et al, 1952). Formally established in Shanghai on July 20, 1921, the CCP began as an underground, Marxist-Leninist party organized into smaller groups (often referred to as "cells") that operated based upon the principle of "democratic centralism." In theory, the CCP's democratic centralism allows for debate and discussion of policy among Party members, but requires unquestioning support of policy once a decision is made. In practice, democratic centralism has created a hierarchal political dynamic where senior Party officials expect disciplined compliance from junior officials, but junior officials are allowed to comment on policy proposals before decisions have been made. The Party's most powerful policy- and decision-making entity is the Politburo and its Standing Committee, comprised of the Party's two dozen or so most powerful senior officials.

The Secretariat

Another important political institution for the Chinese Communist Party is its Secretariat. Officially listed under the Politburo, the Secretariat is described in China's constitution as an administrative rather than a decision-making body. Its role is to oversee the daily operation of the Party and implement the decisions made by the Politburo and its Standing Committee.

The Political Bureau (Politburo)

At the top of the Chinese Communist Party's political structure is its Political Bureau (Politburo), generally regarded as the most important formal political institution in China. The official head of the Politburo is the Party's General Secretary. The size and membership of the Politburo changes with each Party Congress, a major meeting of the Communist Party held approximately every five years. When the last (17th) Party Congress met from October 15-21, 2007, it announced the selection of the current 25-member Politburo, including 9 new members (Jing, 2007)

The Politburo Standing Committee (PSC)

Of more significance than the full Politburo is its Standing Committee, the smaller group of elite Party members that wields much of the political power in China. The Politburo Standing Committee (PSC) that emerged from the 17th Party Congress has nine members, including five returning members and four new members. Two of the latter group—Xi Jin-ping and Li Ke-qiang—have been tipped as frontrunners to be Hu Jin-tao's successor as Party Secretary at the 18th Party Congress in 2012. The two are the only PSC members to have been born in the 1950s, making them the first of the "fifth generation" of China's potential leadership to rise to this level. If the accepted retirement age of 68 holds true, only these two will be young enough to remain in the Politburo after the 18th Party Congress; all others will have to retire.

The CPC Central Military Commission

The Party's **Central Military Commission** (CMC) exercises unified command over the armed forces. They consist of the active and reserve forces of China's military, the People's Liberation Army (PLA); a paramilitary force, the People's Armed Police Force (PAP), which includes the China Coast Guard; and a militia. The PLA, with approximately two million active personnel, is not a national army, sworn first to protecting the nation (Caitlin, 2019). Rather, it is a Party army, loyal first to the Party. The Party constitution states that the CPC "shall uphold its absolute leadership over the People's Liberation Army and other people's armed forces" and "build people's forces that obey

the Party's command, can fight and win.”

The CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI)

The Party's commissions for discipline inspection (CDIs) which operates under the leadership of the Central Committee enforce Party “discipline,” including compliance with Party regulations and loyalty to the Party Central Committee and to Xi. They also root out corruption within the Party's ranks. Only after CDIs finish their investigations do they turn cases involving alleged criminal wrongdoing over to the state judiciary for prosecution and trial. Its current leader, Zhao Leji, serves concurrently as a member of the elite Politburo Standing Committee, though the Party constitution does not require CCDI leaders to be dual-hatted in this way. CDIs exist at every level of government.

The National People's Congress (NPC)

The state constitution confers on the NPC the powers to amend the state constitution; oversee its enforcement; enact and amend “criminal, civil, state institutional and other basic laws”; elect and remove top officials of the state and the judiciary; approve the state budget and plans for national economic and social development; and “decid[e] on issues concerning war and peace.” China's people do not directly elect the NPC's nearly 3,000 delegates. Rather, delegates to provincial-level people's congresses and members of election councils for the People's Liberation Army, Hong Kong, Macao, and “Taiwan compatriots” elect NPC delegates, based on candidate lists drawn up by the Party.

The State Council of the PRC

The State Council is the cabinet of China's government, the Central People's Government. The state constitution describes the State Council as “the highest organ of State administration.” It is officially responsible for implementing policies formulated by the CPC and laws passed by the National People's Congress, and for overseeing the day-to-day work of the state bureaucracy. The State Council has the power to pass its own regulations and to draft or authorize ministries to draft legislation, which it forwards to the National People's Congress for passage into law.

The Nigerian political and governance structure

Nigeria operates within a federal presidential republic framework, characterized by several key features. The president is elected through universal suffrage which is regarded as more than a privilege extended by the state to its citizenry, and it is rather thought of as an inalienable right that inheres to every adult citizen by virtue of citizenship. In democracies it is the primary means of ensuring that governments are responsible to the governed (www.britannica.com). The president is both the chief of state and head of government, heading the Federal Executive Council, or cabinet. The constitution makes the president the chief executive and commander in chief of the armed forces in Section 130 (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). The constitution of 1999 vests all the executive powers of the federation in the person of the president which can be exercised directly by him or his vice president or members of his cabinet. Section 5(1)(b) provides that the executive powers of the president extends to the maintenance of the provisions of the constitution, acts of the national assembly and on items on which the national assembly has power for the time being to make law (Olamide, 2016). The president is elected to see that the Nigerian Constitution is enacted and that the legislation is applied to the people. The elected president is also in charge of the nation's armed forces and can serve no more than two four-year elected terms (Practical Law UK Signon 2020). The current President of Nigeria is Bola Tinubu, who was elected in 2023 and the current Vice President is Kashim Shettima (Alabi, 2023).

The executive branch is divided into Federal Ministries, each headed by a minister appointed by the president. Federal Ministries are those civil service departments which were made responsible for delivering various types of government service and each ministry is headed by a Permanent Secretary who reports to a Minister in the Federal Cabinet. Nigeria has 24 Federal Ministries as of recent. The president must include at least one member from each of the 36 states in his cabinet. The President's appointments are confirmed by the Senate of Nigeria. In some cases, a federal minister is responsible for more than one ministry (for example, Environment and Housing may be combined), or a minister

may be assisted by one or more ministers of State. Each ministry also has a Permanent Secretary, who is a senior civil servant (Office of the Head of Service of the Federation, 2010).

Legislative branch

The Legislature is said to be the first among the three Arms of Government – the Legislature, Executive, and the Judiciary (Ene, 2021). These Arms are characterized by the principle of separation of power as each is supposed to be independent of the other. The Legislature derives its powers from the 1999 Constitution (as amended) in Sections 4(1) and 4(2). The Legislature is vested with the powers to make laws for the peace, order and good governance of the Federation (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). “It is also vested with investigatory powers, financial powers, confirmation and impeachment powers. It would not be out of place for me to use this occasion to remind us that the Legislature is the symbol of democracy all over the world (Nwafor, 2022). Under Section 4 (1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) (the "Constitution"), the National Assembly of Nigeria often called NASS is vested with the legislative powers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. That is the power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Federation with respect to any matter included in the Exclusive Legislative List and the Concurrent List - a list of 12 items that both NASS and States' house of Assembly can legislate on. This legislative power is typically exercised through Bills passed by the NASS which are assented to by the President (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). Bills generally come in two forms - either a Private Bill which affects private citizens, corporate entities and/or a particular class of people or Public Bills which affect the general public (www.ourcommons.ca). A Bill can be introduced into either chamber of the NASS by members of the respective chambers or the Executive arm of government. The National Assembly of Nigeria has two chambers: the House of Representatives and the Senate. The House of Representatives is the lower chamber of Nigeria's bicameral National Assembly and is presided over by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. It has 360 members each of the Federal Constituencies of the country, who are elected for four-year terms in single-seat constituencies. The Senate, which has 109 members, is presided over by the President of the Senate. 108 members are elected for four-year terms in 36 three-seat constituencies, which correspond to the country's 36 states. One member is selected in the single-seat constituency of the federal capital (Peter & Peterside, 2019).

Judicial branch

The National Judicial Council serves as an independent executive body, separating the judiciary arm of government from the executive arm of government. The judicial branch is made up of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, the Court of Appeals, the High Courts, and other trial courts such as the Magistrates', Customary, Sharia and other specialized courts. The National Judicial Council serves as an independent executive body, insulating the judiciary from the executive arm of government. According to the 1999 constitution, the Supreme Court has both original and appellate jurisdictions (the power to reverse, modify and change a decision or ruling made by a lower court), Appellate jurisdiction exists for both the civil law and criminal law, the supreme court has the sole authority and jurisdiction to entertain appeals from Court of Appeal, having appellate jurisdiction over all lower federal courts and highest state courts (Supreme Court of Nigeria 2022).

Decisions and rulings by the court are binding and absolute on all courts in Nigeria except the Supreme Court itself. The Supreme Court is presided over by the Chief Justice of Nigeria and thirteen associate justices, who are appointed by the President of Nigeria on the recommendation of the National Judicial Council. These justices are subject to confirmation by the Senate (Suberu, 2017).

The judicial branch of the Nigerian government is the only one of the three branches of government in which its members are not elected but are appointed (Practical Law UK Signon 2020). The judiciary and the Supreme Court in particular, are intended to uphold the principles and laws of the nation's constitution that was written in 1999. Its goal is to protect the basic rights of the citizens (Grove, 1963). The current Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is Olukayode Ariwoola (Wildwap.com).

Similarities in the political and governance structure in China and Nigeria

While China and Nigeria are vastly different countries with distinct historical and cultural contexts, some interesting similarities do exist in their political structures:

1. **One-party dominance:** Both nations operate under systems dominated by single parties – the CCP in China and either the APC or PDP in Nigeria (although Nigeria technically functions as a multi-party democracy). This leads to:

- **Centralized decision-making:** Power concentrates within the dominant party, allowing for swift policy implementation but potentially limiting public participation and diverse perspectives.
- **Control over state institutions:** The party exerts significant influence over government branches, media, and other key institutions, shaping both formal and informal governance processes.
- **Challenges to accountability:** With less pressure from competing parties, transparency and accountability can be weaker, raising concerns about corruption and responsiveness to citizen needs.

2. **Federalism:** Both countries are federal republics, dividing power between central and regional governments. This:

- **Accommodates regional diversity:** Allows for some autonomy in addressing local needs and respecting cultural differences within their diverse populations.
- **Decentralizes administration:** Local governments handle specific functions like education, healthcare, and infrastructure, potentially bringing governance closer to the people.
- **Potential for tensions and imbalances:** Power struggles between central and regional authorities can arise, and resource allocation may be uneven across different regions.

3. **Role of informal institutions:** In both countries, informal networks and relationships play a significant role in influencing political dynamics:

- **Patronage systems:** Individuals or groups may exchange support for favors or resources, potentially bypassing formal rules and procedures.
- **Traditional authorities:** Chiefs, emirs, and other traditional leaders in Nigeria, alongside local party officials in China, can wield significant influence, especially in rural areas, shaping local governance and mediating relationships between citizens and the state

With respect to the governance structures, China and Nigeria reveals some intriguing parallels.

Comparing the both countries, they are similar on the following ways:

- **Centralized decision-making:** Both systems favor centralized decision-making, albeit with varying degrees:
 - **China:** The CCP exercises nearly absolute control over policy formulation and implementation, minimizing dissent and facilitating swift action.
 - **Nigeria:** The dominant party (currently APC) exerts significant influence, though regional and local governments have some autonomy, leading to more complex decision-making processes compared to China.
- **Bureaucracy and inefficiency:** Both grapple with bureaucratic hurdles and sluggishness in implementing policies. Streamlining procedures and enhancing efficiency remains a challenge in both countries.
- **Role of informal institutions:** Patronage networks and informal relationships play a significant role in influencing policy and resource allocation in both contexts. This can bypass formal rules and hinder transparency, raising concerns about fairness and accountability.
- **Challenges to rule of law:** Both face concerns regarding the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, with potential for political influence on legal processes and uneven application of laws. This weakens public trust in the justice system.

Differences in the political and governance structure in Nigeria and China

When comparing the political structures of Nigeria and China, the differences are far more pronounced than the similarities. Here's a breakdown of some key areas of divergence:

1. **Political Framework:**

- China: Single-party state dominated by the Communist Party of China (CCP). All aspects of government and society are under CCP control, with limited to no real multi-party competition or meaningful citizen participation.
- Nigeria: Multi-party democracy with multiple parties competing in elections, although two major parties (APC and PDP) dominate. This allows for some level of political competition and citizen choice, albeit with limitations.

2. Elections and Representation:

- China: Elections are controlled and predetermined by the CCP, offering limited real choice to voters and restricting genuine representation of diverse viewpoints.
- Nigeria: While elections are not flawless and face challenges like fraud and violence, they offer more open competition and the potential for more diverse representation compared to China's controlled system.

3. Freedom of Speech and Assembly:

- China: Tight restrictions on freedom of speech, assembly, and press exist, with censorship and surveillance mechanisms widely used to control dissent and limit access to information.
- Nigeria: While not without limitations, Nigeria enjoys greater freedom of speech, assembly, and press compared to China. These freedoms, though constrained, allow for more open critique of government and public discourse.

4. Rule of Law and Judiciary:

- China: The judiciary lacks full independence and operates under significant influence from the CCP, undermining the rule of law and fair application of justice.
- Nigeria: Despite challenges with corruption and inefficiency, the judiciary enjoys some degree of independence, and efforts are underway to strengthen the rule of law and improve judicial processes.

5. Role of Civil Society:

- China: Civil society organizations face severe restrictions and limited space to operate freely, hindering their ability to hold government accountable and advocate for social change.
- Nigeria: Although not without challenges, Nigeria has a more vibrant and active civil society, with organizations playing a role in promoting human rights, advocating for reform, and holding government accountable.

6. Ideological Basis:

- China: Guided by communist ideology, emphasizing state control and collective well-being over individual freedoms.
- Nigeria: No single dominant ideology; operates within a broader framework of democratic principles and respect for individual rights.

With respect to the governance structures, Nigeria and China have deep differences focusing solely on a deeper exploration of their divergent governance structure which were as follows:

1. Power dynamics:

- China: Absolute power rests with the CCP, controlling all formal and informal institutions (government, media, judiciary). There's limited separation of powers or checks and balances on the party's authority.
- Nigeria: While the dominant party (currently APC) exerts significant influence, a multi-party system allows for some competition and separation of powers between executive, legislative, and judiciary. Local governments also have more autonomy compared to China.

2. Transparency and accountability:

- China: Lack of transparency characterizes the governance system. Information control and limited independent media make it difficult to hold officials accountable for decisions and actions.
- Nigeria: While corruption remains a challenge, there's greater space for public scrutiny and investigative journalism. Civil society organizations and independent media play a role in holding government accountable, despite limitations.

3. Public participation:

- China: Citizen participation is tightly controlled and primarily directed through party-sanctioned channels. Dissent is suppressed, and independent activism faces significant restrictions.
- Nigeria: Despite limitations, citizens have more avenues for participation, including elections, protests, and engagement with civil society organizations. Freedom of speech and assembly, though imperfect, offer more space for public voice compared to China.

4. Legal and judicial systems:

- China: The judiciary lacks full independence and operates under the CCP's influence, raising concerns about the rule of law and fair application of justice. Legal decisions can be politically motivated, and access to justice for ordinary citizens can be limited.
- Nigeria: While the judiciary faces challenges with corruption and inefficiency, efforts are underway to strengthen its independence and impartiality. There's greater space for legal recourse and challenge to government actions compared to China.

5. Regional governance:

- China: Local governments have limited autonomy and operate under tight central control, restricting regional diversity and responsiveness to local needs. Economic resources and decision-making power are concentrated in the hands of the central government.
- Nigeria: Federalism grants more autonomy to states and Local Government Areas (LGAs), allowing for diverse approaches to governance based on regional contexts and needs. This can lead to variations in service delivery and policy implementation across the country.

Findings

The study is on political and governance structure in China and Nigeria. Based on the review of literature and the content analysis, the study summaries were as follows:

Chinese political and governance structure is a complex and multifaceted task, as it operates on different levels the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is the sole legal political party and holds ultimate power. The National People's Congress (NPC) is the legislature, but its functions are largely seen as consultative. The State Council is the executive branch, led by the Premier. The judiciary holds limited power and operates under party influence. A parallel party-state system exists, where the CCP leads at all levels, influencing government decisions and overseeing personnel choices.

Nigerian political and governance structure operates within a federal presidential republic framework, characterized by three distinct branches of government which are the

Executive: Headed by the President, who serves as both head of state and head of government. The president, elected for a maximum of two four-year terms, appoints a cabinet responsible for implementing policies.

Legislative: Bicameral National Assembly comprised of the Senate (109 members, 3 from each state and 1 from the Federal Capital Territory) and the House of Representatives (360 members, allocated by population). Legislators make laws, approve budgets, and oversee the executive.

Judiciary: Supreme Court is the highest court, with lower courts operating at federal and state levels. The judiciary interprets laws and determines their constitutionality.

On the similarities that do exist in China and Nigeria based on their political structures, it is found that both nations operate under systems dominated by single parties – the CCP in China and either the APC or PDP in Nigeria (although Nigeria technically functions as a multi-party democracy). This makes power concentrates within the dominant party, allowing for swift policy implementation but potentially limiting public participation and diverse perspectives. The party exerts significant influence over government branches, media, and other key institutions, shaping both formal and informal governance processes. Both countries are federal republics, dividing power between central and regional governments. In both countries, informal networks and relationships play a significant role in influencing political dynamics

On the differences that do exist between China and Nigeria based on their political structures, it was found that China's system is far more centralized than Nigeria's, with the CCP tightly controlling all aspects of life. Nigeria's party system is dominated by two major parties, limiting genuine competition, while China has no real multi-party system at all. China's communist ideology and single-party system differ significantly from Nigeria's post-colonial history and multi-party framework. China's federal system grants relatively limited autonomy to local governments compared to Nigeria. This results in more control from the central government in China, whereas Nigerian states and LGAs have greater scope for independent action. China faces significant challenges in ensuring transparency and accountability, with the CCP controlling information and limiting public scrutiny. Nigeria, despite its imperfections, offers more space for public engagement and investigative journalism, albeit with limitations. Both countries struggle with corruption, though they take different approaches. China's anti-corruption campaigns are often top-down and focused on internal party discipline, while Nigeria's efforts involve independent anti-graft agencies and civil society involvement.

Conclusion

Based on the summary of the analyzed data and results from the study, it can be concluded that the political and governance structures of China and Nigeria represent strikingly different paths to development, showcasing the tension between centralized control and democratic participation. While China's rapid economic growth under an authoritarian system might tempt some, Nigeria's struggles with democratic institutions highlight the challenges of balancing individual freedoms with efficient governance. Ultimately, the study's conclusion could ponder which path holds greater promise for future stability and sustainable progress. Comparing these vastly different systems can offer valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. China's centralized decision-making may offer advantages in tackling urgent issues like poverty and infrastructure development, but its lack of political competition and transparency can stifle innovation and dissent. Conversely, Nigeria's multi-party system, despite its inefficiencies, fosters a more open and diverse society, even if it struggles with effective policy implementation. The conclusion could draw lessons from both models to suggest potential reforms and optimizations for both nations.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were provided for the study:

1. Both countries could benefit from finding ways to enhance the efficiency of their administrations while also increasing transparency and accountability. This could involve:
 - China: Implementing mechanisms for independent oversight of government activities and promoting greater access to information for citizens.
 - Nigeria: Streamlining bureaucratic procedures, investing in technology solutions, and cracking down on corruption to improve service delivery and resource allocation.
2. Both countries need to work towards establishing a truly independent judiciary that upholds the rule of law and guarantees fair access to justice for all citizens. This could involve:
 - China: Separating the judiciary from the influence of the Communist Party and ensuring judges operate with impartiality and integrity.
 - Nigeria: Strengthening the capacity and resources of the judiciary, reducing political interference, and combating corruption within the legal system.
3. China and Nigeria can provide avenues for enhancing public participation and civil society engagement of her citizens
4. China and Nigeria can also create avenues for meaningful public participation and enabling a vibrant civil society which can contribute to improved governance and address issues of citizen disillusionment. This could involve:
 - China: Allowing for greater freedom of speech and assembly, encouraging diverse viewpoints in policy discussions, and empowering NGOs to operate freely.
 - Nigeria: Strengthening democratic institutions, protecting the rights of civil society organizations, and promoting voter education and participation in political processes.

5. China and Nigeria could learn from the other's approach to balancing centralized control with regional autonomy.
6. China could empower localities to better respond to local needs, while Nigeria could benefit from more efficient central coordination for addressing national challenges.

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