

Desiring Omelette Not Breaking the Egg: Democracy, Elections and Good Governance in Africa

Adebowale Idowu Adeyeye, PhD

Department of Political Sciences, Osun State University, Osogbo, Osun State,
Nigeria

Email: adebowaleadeyeye2610@gmail.com

Abstract

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The quest for good governance, development, and good life for the people which African leaders hoped will be propelled by democracy prompted them to embrace western liberal democracy. However, the objective condition in many African countries reveals fundamental gap between expectations and the realities. In line with these actualities, this paper examines the differences between Africans desire for democracy and the attendant expectations and the present reality and reasons for the chasm. It examines election and electoral issues as factors in democracy and good governance. In doing this, the paper adopts content analysis of data gathered essentially from secondary sources and adopts good governance theory. The paper contends that although African leaders and people are desirous of good governance and has put in place democratic structures expected to achieve good governance, these democratic institutions, and structures; the contents and processes have not vivified good governance. It argues that the challenges of democracy and good governance in many African countries are poor election and electoral system. This is because the democratic structures and the manner of conduct of elections characterized by corruption, violence, lack of adequate ideological depth on the part of political parties and service-oriented approach to politics, personalization of, and under-performing institutions among other factors negate the principles of democracy and cannot produce good leadership and good governance. The paper concludes that though multi-party elections have been held in many countries in Africa since 1990, the quality of these elections for the advancement of democracy and by extension good governance has generated concerns and query the sense of optimism for multi-party elections. It therefore argues that for African countries to achieve the desirous goals and benefits of democracy, good governance and development, elections must be free, fair, and conducted regularly. Also, political parties and democratic institutions and structures must be adequately strengthened to function properly.

Keywords: Election, Democracy, Governance, Political Party, Monocratic and Polycentric models

1. Introduction

In the late 1950s through to the independence decade-1960s, when countries in Sub-Saharan Africa began to witness the end of colonial rule coupled with the democratic whirlwind that swept across the world in the 1990s, the assumption and expectations of most leaders of countries in the continent was that the liberal representative democracy which they accepted hook line and sinker will translate to good governance and by extension development. However, many decades after,

the continent is emblematic of tottering democracy and good governance as current reality shows that there is a gap between the expectations and the objective reality. Affirming the above statement, Falola and Ihonvbere (1985), and Adeyeye (2011), states that at the beginning and through the process of embracing plural democracy, the new African states were ushered into national independence with varieties of constitutions which favoured pluralism and constitutionalism that were thought will transform these countries and usher development through good governance. At the time, Africans nursed the hope that their nationalists who had inherited political power from the departing colonialists through democratic system would impact positively on their well-being, material conditions and collectively direct the course and govern the continent to achieve socio-economic, political, and economic prosperity and greatness (Ake, 2001). However, few years after independence, these expectations were faced with rising frustrations when the countries in the continent were hit by twin damning tragedies. The first of these calamities was the failure of the state-led model of development and collapse of democratic rule arising from poor election management and electoral processes, lack of functional democratic and government institutions, corruption, and poor leadership that have continued to pervade countries in the continent (Osaghae, 2011).

Specifically, at independence, African leaders and their people were of the view that the state would act positively as the chief allocator and distributor of societal resources. This faith in the state-centric model to achieving good governance and by extension development was partly based on the conviction of the leaders of the continent that the state is the primary agent of development. This period which according to Olukoshi (1988) is referred to in the literature as the birth of developmental state was distinguished by heavy public investment on social provisioning which saw the state emerge not only as the largest spender of resources but also the largest employer of labour. However, due to poor leadership and governance has been a fundamental concern in the continent. This governance and leadership concern have been credited to poor election and electoral processes, administrative and bureaucratic corruption in many countries in Africa.

Another catastrophe that befell democracy in many African states was military dictatorship that struck the continent few years after independence. Many countries in Africa witnessed military incursion into politics and disruption of democracy with excuses that the political class and government failed good governance test. The reincarnation of military coups as evidenced in Chad-2021,

Mali-2020, Sudan-2020, Gabon-2019, Equatorial Guinea-2017, Guinea-2021, Zimbabwe-2017, and Burkina Faso-2021 is a further proof of the problem of democracy in the continent. The first wave of military coups in Africa was the resort of African political leaders who had inherited governance to abuse power. Others include poor and violent elections and electoral processes. The crises within the ruling coalitions and which has not abated bordered on desperate competition for state power, a desperation that was driven by the immensity and profitability of state power (Ake, 2001); as well as the breakdown of the anti-colonial alliance between African nationalists and African people provided the context for the incursion of the military into African politics after independence (Nzongola, 2000; Obodumu, 1992: 237). Against the backdrop of the entry of the military into African politics, the continent was subjected to long years of authoritarianism under varieties of personal rule and authoritarian rule (Diamond, 1999). This reign of authoritarianism brought with it gross and outrageous human rights violation and mismanagement of economies of African states as well as the decimation of democracy and its structures. The consequence of this is that several years after adopting democracy, good governance which Africa and its people desires is still a seeming mirage. It is in line with the above, this paper posits that, though, African countries desire good governance, they have not adequately put in place the requirements and indicators for good governance and where these indicators are seemingly in place, they are not functional due to several negative tales. The condition under which elections are conducted and the management of electoral processes in many countries in the continent is a matter of concern. For instance, the conduct of election-a fundamental requirement for democracy negates promotion of credible and sustainable democracy; produce good leadership and good governance. This is so because the narratives of elections and electoral processes in many countries in Africa are clouded in unhealthy rivalry amongst political parties, ambiguous electoral rule, and manipulation by political leaders. Also, electoral violence as in the cases of Kenya, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, and Zimbabwe have been the character of elections. Equally troubling is the problem of electoral corruption, poor management of election processes, electoral structures, and institutions in many democracies in the continent (Nordic African Institute Policy Note, 2012). In line with the above assertion, the objective of this paper is to examines the reality of election and democracy in Africa with a view to investigating the gap between democratic desire and expectations of Africa and the present reality and reasons for the chasm.

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Issues: Political Party, Election, and Democracy

The discussion of election, democracy, and governance in this paper are interwoven. This is because the links among these concepts are by no means more than a tenuous one. This is because evidence abounds of instances in Sub-Saharan Africa where elections have contributed to the failure and/or the unmaking of democracy and good governance. For example, while elections and democracy have been smooth in some countries such as Botswana, Namibia, Cape Verde, and Mauritius, with presidents abiding to their constitutional provisions of two-term limit-, others have often manipulated legislative houses to stay beyond their terms and in some cases stay in power indefinitely. Countries such as Cameroon, Rwanda, Equatorial Guinea, Angola, Congo, and Uganda suffice. To be sure, elections do not automatically transmit to or guarantee effective and efficient democratic rule and good governance. It is without doubt that the narratives of elections in Zimbabwe, Cote d' Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya have been problematic. While it has engendered good governance and development in some countries, it has failed in many others even at that, election is still seen as important element of democracy. For example, the presence of democracy has made little or no difference to the growth and quality of government in Nigeria (Fukuyama, 2014: 223; Inokoba & Kumokor, 2011:142). Election which has been variously described as consisting of organized group of people with almost same views and opinions is primarily concerned with influencing public policy by essentially seeking for power and by presenting candidates for elections in a democracy. And political party represents a body of individuals who by their desires to promote and pursue their interests and principles, struggle for political power through elections. It is also the mechanism through which governments are formed which carried out governance-democratic governance (Omotola, 2009; Muse & Narsiah, 2014). Therefore, in essence, democracy depends on political parties to survive because the structure of elections beginning from the participation of citizens to the selection of candidates and the presentation of political programmes are carried out by political parties. Therefore, political parties are integral part of the process of institutionalizing democracy. In all versions of democracy-classical elements of democracy enunciated by the liberal-capitalist, consensual, the hard-core Marxist, and the African brand, election represents an important characteristic and a fundamental base for representative governance. This is because, election represents acts of electing candidate to represent the people in parliament, executive and other arms as stipulated in countries' constitution. Election is the instrument for setting policy agenda, forming 'effective' government, and

integrating individuals and groups into democratic process (Omodia & Egwemi, 2011:271; Adeyeye, 2006, 2011; Osinakachukwu & Jawan, 2011; Lamidi & Bello, 2012:168). Although elections have promoted and make possible the development of democratic governments in countries in Africa such as in Senegal, South Africa, Benin, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Cape Verde, among others, but election manipulation has been used as instrument of legitimizing autocratic regimes and dynastic successions. Also, violence still pervades elections and electoral processes in many countries in the continent. Cases in Kenya (2007-2008), Zimbabwe (2000 and 2008), and Cote d'Ivoire (2010-2011) including Nigeria are worth mentioning. However, it is possible to also argue that election has not been the best option to elect and change government and leadership in liberal democracy in the context of Africa. It has equally been argued that election aids accountability in leadership-a requisite for good governance and permits participation and aid power to reside in the citizens. However, the cases in Africa put these positions in doubt due to the many negative issues such as the domination of the political landscape by elites. This is evidenced in the 'long standing men' (sit-tight leaders), for example, leaders who emerged from the liberation movement. These leaders stayed in power for several decades as in the case of Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Rwanda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Central African Republic (CAR), Swaziland (Eswatini), Zimbabwe, Uganda, Equatorial Guinea, among several others, are worthy of mention, including the disenfranchisement of the larger population (Osinakachukwu & Jawan, 2011; Van Wyk, 2007; 1992). Evidence abounds in the continent especially in countries where we have long standing men, elections are either not held or where it is conducted, it is manipulated to suit the 'big man' through constitutional amendment and manipulation.

Conceptually, democracy has several meanings with varying modes of analysis and interpretations. It is perhaps the most flagrantly used concepts that often reflects personal viewpoints, personal and individual orientations, beliefs, environmental influences, history, and cultural attachments (Adeyeye, 2006). In the course of history, the range of the conceptualization of democracy has attracted uninterrupted growth in traditional and modern social and political discourses. The promotion of democracy, its practices, and vicissitudes in different parts of the world and political systems have exposed the concept to some definitional haze and diverse forms of interpretations. In some climes, it is used as another word for political decency and civilization especially from the perspective of those who view it as universal virtue to the extent that some authoritarian and fascist regimes even lay claims to democracy legitimacy.

Notwithstanding the varying perspectives in description, meaning and practice, the thrust and fundamental objective rest on how to govern the society in such a way that power resides in the people and with a view to making life better for the people. Fundamentally, democracy is viewed as a form of government exercised by the whole body of free citizens either directly or indirectly through system of representation as different from aristocracy, monarchy, oligarchy, and other forms of government. It is a form of government in which all people have equal rights in the process of making decision that affect their lives, that is, an institution of government of the people, involving the people in the running of socio-economic, political and their cultural affairs (Agbaje, 1999; Ukaeje, 2011; Ake, 2000; 2001). Essentially, the nature of democracy is that democratic societies are expected to be committed to values of tolerance, cooperation, and compromise. Also, democracy guards against centralized or all-powerful central government-decentralization of government to local and regional levels. Democracy functions to protect the rights of the people-right to equal protection, of speech, association, and religion. In Africa, the trend of democracy sufficiently demonstrates its capability or otherwise of union by growth in complex multi-ethnic societies. On the attainment of political independence, many countries in the continent inherited liberal democracy and its legacies from their colonial lords who, as found in these countries did not put in place strong and lasting institutions capable of serving as solid foundations for the future political, economic, and social development, perhaps, due to the hurried nature of their departure. While the British bequeathed the Westminster system, the centralized French model was received in others. However, many leaders of African countries were convinced that the Westminster model did not suit their circumstances thereby adopting socialist system and the African version of democracy (Osaghae, 2011: 43; Adeyeye, 2006).

Democratic theory: At the core of the assumption and principle of democratic theory is that democracy should be based on the upward control-power, independence and that authority should be at the base of the levels of government and the people. Also, at the thrust of democratic theory is that it is the rule of the people and that it is their rights to rule. Theoretically, democracy as it is today appreciative in the theoretical conjecture of democratic liberalism as different from the Athenian description and practice of democracy. The conception of democracy is described or used to depict political circumstances or occurrence based on the specific characteristics of equality, freedom, and liberty. Traditionally, the conception includes such terms as democratic political process, democratic rights, democratic method of governance, democratic administration, and democratic rights. The spirit of democracy rests on the coherence of people's

free will and sense of responsibility and when we talk of democratic system, importance is placed on public opinion and state institution-which in the context of Africa can be argued to have been relegated and substituted by personality. Those who conceive democracy from the precinct of representativeness-representative democracy, (the version of democracy that is currently popular, projected and practiced in Africa), such as Dahl, (1998) argues that it promotes a high degree of political equality.

Democracy is regarded as the ideal form of rule because the 'rights and interests of all persons are secured and people can stand up for their rights from being trampled and disregarded, the result of which is growth and general prosperity (Mills, 1991). The demand for inclusion and participation through election of officials, impartial, free, and frequent election, freedom of expression and association and its autonomy, inclusion of persons and alternate information sources (Dahl, 1998; Arenilla, 2010:13). The perspectives of the proponents of representative democracy can be queried when one considers the objective realities of democracy and governance in many African states. This is so in that representative democracy itself has been criticized as creating a government of privileged by the privileged, in favour of the majority in terms of number; those who in practical term own voice in the countries. The privileged political elites who control the political parties are the ruling minority that imposes legal order on the majority in the society. Also, the perception of democracy as encouraging accountability as posited by Ojie (2006) is a subject of debate in a discourse of this nature because evidence abounds to the lack of accountability of political leaders/elites in Africa. In the same vein, opinions, and perspectives on issues regarding free and fair, credible election, inclusiveness and freedom of association also calls for query in cases where election rigging, commodification of votes, clientelism, corruption and conflict, imposition of candidates and elite manipulation are persistent occurrences. Also, depicting democracy as the best form of rule based on its tendency to protect individual interests and rights have been queried. Although democracy covers about half of the world with 45.4% (Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) 2024 Democracy Index Report), more than a third-39.4% of the world are governed by authoritarian regimes. Full democracies cover 7.8%, Flawed democracies-countries in which elections are free and fair and where basic liberties are respected but have problems with freedom of the press and slight political suppression of opponents and oppositions (37.6%), and Hybrid regimes-a combination of autocratic characteristics with democratic features (15.2%). Also, while states categorized as democracies increased in 2023 as presented by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Democracy Index of status

Desiring Omelette Not Breaking the Egg: Democracy, Elections and Good Governance in Africa of the world democracy (2023), the year was not an auspicious year for democracy because the world average index 2023-5.23, was low compared to the previous year 2022 which was 5.29. The hybrid-84% in Africa and flawed democracies are largely in Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Asia (Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) 2024 Democracy Index Report). This is caused by issues relating to the crisis of elections and overall poor electoral process and pluralism, faulty political culture and behaviour, lack of respect for civil liberties, and poor governance.

Governance and Good Governance

Governance as a concept is not strange to political discourse used to describe in a generic sense the business of running a government or any other relevant entity, however, its conceptualization has recently received significance in the African developmental discourse. This is particularly so because of the crisis of governance in the continent which in the context of the World Bank (1998) refers to occurrences of personalization of power, repudiation of fundamental human rights, expansive and endemic corruption and of course election of governments that are not accountable to the people. Simply put, governance can be described as a set of values, policies and institutions through which societies manage their political, economic, and social processes at various levels, based on interaction among government, the private sector, and civil societies (Afegbua & Adejuwon, 2012). Hyden (1992) conceives governance as deliberate administration or management of government structures with the purpose of enhancing legitimacy of the public domain. It rests on the capacity to not only establish but maintaining practicable relationships between individual actors, with a view to promoting collective goals and the quality of relationship between the government and the people whom it is expected to protect and serve (Chazan, 1992). Therefore, governance can be described as a situation in which concerned authority exercises power, exercises influence and manages state economic and social resources in a way that will lead to the development of the country. In a positive sense, governance can only be legitimate when government is put in place by the people (as in democracy), through institutional mechanisms and arrangements established by the people and when leaders' performances are perceived, determined, and proclaim to be satisfactory and acceptable, and in situations where citizens processes power to remove rulers whenever it commits grievous offence. The government in such countries can be described as democratic. Over the years, different models have been used in the study of governance. The monocratic and polycentric governance models are prominent. The monocratic model as used by the Hobbesian analysis posits that the sovereign authority to

govern rest essentially in the Leviathan. This implies a centralized system in which power rests in the center, with other units merely existing to strengthen the center as a coordinate. Military regime and one-party state or in systems where a party dominates are examples of this model. The polycentric model on its part acknowledges multiplicity of authority. It is made up of various independent units that are independent and operates in a way that acknowledges the independence of and function of other units. Polycentric model has been described as democratic and encourages popular participation. It allows for myriad of decisions and authorities (Afegbua & Adejuwon, 2012)

The notion of the good governance theory which has received wide acceptability and has been prescribed for the measurement of development across the world particularly in measuring, description and analysis of Africa is a product of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). However, the ordinary conception and usage of good governance is rooted in the word 'governance'. But the concept of governance is cryptic and indefinite with regards to a generally accepted meaning. Nevertheless, governance according to The New Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus in One Volume (1987: 433) is described as the action, manner, or system of governing. The concepts governance and government as a derivative of the word 'to govern,' are sometimes used to indicate exercise of authority over a given territory, they have different nuances or emphases in different contexts. For example, while governance seems to be an-inclusive concept comprising of the apparatus (which basically is what government is all about); the leadership (with its approach, vision, and ideology) and it is systematic, government on the other hand is concerned about the exercise of political authority (Yaqub, 2006: 22; Adeyeye, 2006:267; 2011:196).

The views of IFIs on what constitute good governance has however not gone unchallenged, especially based on the argument that the indices, features, and characteristics of good governance model are not different from that of the previous theory of economic development. Several questions that are raised to situate the problem in the theoretical explanation of good centers on whether good governance automatically results in the performance of the state economically, socially, and politically by extension in development (Adejumo-Ayibiowu, 2015:1; Chang, 2011: 483-484; Gilsselquist, 2012: 1-2). This question is important when considering Africa in the application and execution of the reforms of good governance-democracy, decentralization and liberalism introduced by the IFIs, not much can be said to have been achieved in terms of democracy,

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development and improved wellbeing and welfare of the African people. In fact, some have argued that good governance reforms as prescribed by the western world representatives IFIs have further impoverished countries in the continent since it further tied the continent to the apron of these international donors and the IFIs and makes African political leaders even more corrupt. To situate the above position, it can be averred that the economic liberalization used as basis for the measurement of good governance has resulted in the privatization policy, monetary austerity and subsidy removal which has further deepened poverty rate in many African countries.

3. Elections, Democracy and Good Governance in Africa: Expectations and Trajectory

The third wave of democratization that hit the African region in the early 1990s started with Benin Republic and led to resurgence of hopes of democratic rule, good governance, and its developmental promises. From this significant event of the 1990s, the continent of Africa has witnessed astonishing increase in the frequency of elections in the post-third wave period. This achievement was seen as deserving of celebration; given that, when the wave of democratic revolution surged in the early 1990s, Sub-Saharan African countries were mostly personal authoritarianisms, military dictatorships, and one-party states (Huntington, 1991). However, this democratic gain has been blighted by negative tales in African elections (Kovacs, 2018). To be sure, the popular expectations among the citizens were that the ‘second independence’ would lead to “the defeat of personal, autocratic rule-military within the framework of a system of political monopoly either by a single party or by the military” and by extension usher good governance (Olukoshi, 1998). Evidence today across Africa shows that the continent is still struggling to consolidate democratic rule, good governance and attain sustainable development-an evidence of gap between expectation and reality. While the argument of some analysts that the first decade of democratic wave in Sub-Saharan Africa “produced mixed results” (Basedau, 2007) may be valid, the reality of post-wave democratization across the continent is that prospects of consolidation have considerably waned and hopes of the people are increasingly fading.

As stated earlier, while democratization on the continent is still punctuated by pockets of military coup as witnessed in Mali, Sudan, Guinea, Burkina Faso and most recently Niger, today the continent is largely under the charge of elected civilian leaders. But does the frequency and regularity of elections suggest democratic development and good governance in Africa? Scholars such as

Omotola (2010) and Ayee (2005) argue that despite frequent and periodic elections, the quality of democratic rule and good governance is still abysmally low across the continent as democracy has not engendered the emergence of truly popular democratic leaders, and by extension have not enhance good governance particularly that it has also failed in delivering real dividends of democratic rule to the people of Africa. Therefore, much of what pervades in Africa today is what Ake (2000) calls 'choice-less democracy' where people are voting but are not making any choice among electoral candidates on offer in any practical sense. Therefore, Africa today contends with what Egwu (2013) calls 'electoral dictatorship' wherein all procedures and processes of elections are superficially present but the outcome of those processes and procedures can hardly produce popular or credible electoral change. What then is the objective conditions of democracies and governance in Africa?

4. The present reality: Good Governance and its Failure in Africa

The usual usage of good governance simply implies the practice of running government according to the prescribed rules of a society to achieve the well-being and security of the citizens. Among the popular pillars of good governance that have been identified in the literature are transparency, accountability, equity, social justice, peace, fairness, unity, economic empowerment, rural development, and security. In the pre-colonial African society, Africa practiced indigenous governance system in which traditional governance structures were under the charge of traditional rulers. In the present-day Africa, there is a sense in which it could be argued that modern governance structures have colonial foundation (Adeyeye, 2011; 2006). As a point of history, this is because of the deep influence that the former colonial masters of Africa had on their former colonies (Basheka, 2015). Two major areas in which this influence showed was the retention of the governance systems inherited from colonial masters in many African countries; and the adoption of the kind of civil service system used in the countries of their colonial masters. While we can say some of this influence is reducing in the Anglo-phone countries, it has not been the same experience in the Franco-phone countries where France still wields strong influence in African countries colonized by France, however, recent political development in the Sahel region- Niger, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali, which have seen military take-over from democratically elected governments has seen French influence queried by governments these countries.

The reality across Africa today is that good governance is still far from being firmly rooted on the continent. While African countries do not occupy the same

spot on the good governance spectrum, it is a fact that good governance is a virtue that African leaders profess but which they have not shown enough commitment towards achieving it. Whereas good governance is given prominence in many regional instruments/documents including the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), many African countries have not done enough to ensure the achievement of good governance on the continent. Transparency and accountability are two attributes of good governance that African leaders have failed to entrench into the management of public affairs. Although many African regimes have introduced reforms that seek to promote transparency and accountability; while others have created institutions with massive oversight powers, these institutions are not conferred with the requisite institutional autonomy needed to achieve their social mandate. Also, while several African countries are signatories to international treaties that promote inclusivity and protection of human rights, they have not shown serious commitment to achieve these principles. One major inclusive policy that readily comes to mind is the affirmative action of the Beijing Plan of Action of 1995. This policy seeks to enhance women participation in public governance through 30% representation of women in governance. Over two decades after the treaty was signed, most African countries have failed to effectively domesticate the treaty. The consequence of this is the continuing marginalization of women in Africa's public sphere. The chasm between expectations and realities in African countries result essentially due to several domestic and exogenous negative tales such as corruption, poverty, personalization of, and underperforming institutions. Also, electoral violence, lack of adequate ideological depth on the part of political parties and service-oriented approach to politics, among other factors acting as negative tales are challenges to the expected gains of democracy and good governance.

Democracies and governance in Africa suffer from legitimacy deficit. The basis of this problem is traceable to the fact that the system of governance bestowed on these countries by the colonial masters was alien to the people of the continent. Essentially, the nuance was befuddling, wrapped, and embellished in subterfuge and smokescreen. And politicians that inherited the system are office holders like other democracies, but for whatever reason, their search for prestige, power and more importantly, the perquisite and spoils of office is often done in negative aggressive manner through manipulation of all kinds of methods unnatural in other democratic climes and principle of democracy. For example, in the bid to winning election, politicians in many countries in the continent manipulate religious divides, ethnic and tribal cleavages. For instance, this has been the case

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of elections and democracy in Nigeria and a troubling to democracy and governance in the country (Amutabi & Ogwora, 2018; Yagboyaju, 2012).

Another very important issue in the discourse of politics and democracy in Africa is the personalisation of rule. Essentially, politics and democracy in many countries in the continent are personalized and this has impacted negatively on governance. The resultant effect of personalisation of institutions is that there is high uncertainty in terms of governance for the people and high risk for those who engage in politics which has the potential for and basis for political violence. This is so because personalization of rule often makes politicians assume the feeling of being above the laws of the state. This is why the issue of holding leaders accountable for their actions and inactions has been problematic and this negates the essence of democracy and good governance (Adeyeye, 2006, 2011; Hyden, 2006; Price, 1974; 1975 and Jackson & Rosberg, 1982). Unfortunately, the people and political leaders who Van Wyk (2007) asked if they are presidents, patrons, and profiteers, jointly create what Joseph, (1991; 1987) aptly described as prebendalism and neopatrimonialism. While African political leaders see themselves and behaves like traditional kings adopting the ‘rights of kings’ perspective seeing themselves as unquestionable, the people on their part due to the conditions of uncertainty and insecurity seek attachment to the ‘big men’ politicians for security and other socio-economic benefits. The resultant effect of this is the increasing political corruption and the assumption of autocratic and princely rule by African leaders such as Leopold Sengor (Senegal), Hastings Kasumu Banda of Malawi, Arap Moi of Kenya, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, and Paul Biya of Cameroon. Asserting the above, Obasanjo, (2023) delivering a keynote address at a consultation on “Rethinking Western Liberal Democracy for Africa”, in Abeokuta argued that Western Liberal Democracy has failed in the continent of Africa and that democracy as practiced in Africa is a ‘government of a few people over all the people/population and these few people are representatives of only some of the people and not representatives of all the people’.

Ambiguous electoral rule manipulated by corruptible political leaders, election rigging, electoral violence, elite manipulation, Godfatherism and imposition of candidates are constant phenomenon in elections and democracy in many African countries. Cases in Nigeria has left governance difficult in many instances. Elections which ideally should serve as social pact between people and their leaders have largely been marred by situations where corrupted persons are forced on the people through manipulated elections such as rigging. This is particularly

so in the case of elections in Nigeria since the beginning of the fourth republic. For example, rigging of election through illegal possession of ballot boxes and illegal printing of voters' cards by politicians and political parties, falsification of election results-sometimes in connivance of the electoral body, box snatching on the day of election, harassment of electorates, underage voting during election, compilation of fictitious names on voter's card, deliberate and intentional refusal to supply election material to areas where ruling political parties feel are opposition, among others are prominent in elections in Nigeria. And elections in African often marred by violence even in the claim to multi-party democracy, such as in Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia.

In some African countries, democracy has not succeeded in erasing authoritarian regimes. These authoritarian regimes are still found in countries where though their presidents were elected through elections but become authoritarian by overstaying in power. For example, cases of Yoweri Museveni (Uganda) Jose Eduardo dos Santos (Former Angolan president) Denis Sassou (Republic of Congo), Isaias Afwerki (Eritrea), Paul Biya (Cameroon), and Teodore Obiang (Equatorial Guinea) suffice. Sometimes election leads to violence largely due to lack of respect for opposition opinion and dissension from those who disagree with manner of leadership. Many countries in African continent end up in civil war, rebellion, and banditry. For example, cases in Sierra Leone, DRC, Ethiopia, Angola, Rwanda, Liberia, and CAR, readily come to mind. Poor election management has often led to conflicts and violence. When situations like these occur such as in Kenya's 2007 election, peace is threatened. In an environment of insecurity and lack of peace, governance is threatened because no meaningful management and governance can be achieved in the absence of peace. It is in the recognition of the crisis of elections and democracy that the scheduled elections in Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Congo, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Sudan (delayed to 2024), and Zimbabwe 2023 are likely to face humanitarian crisis in the shadow of conflicts and violence (Odinkalu, 2023).

5. Deepening Democracy and Achieving Good Governance in Africa: What needs to be done

Even though the people of Africa desire omelette but have not broken the egg-they desire good governance through democracy but have not put in place workable and effective processes to achieving their aspiration for sustainable democracy that they expect will lead to good governance. This however does not mean that the desire for good governance through democracy is not attainable. While steps have been taken in this direction in some of countries in the

continent, there is still a large gap between expectation and realities in many. However, it can be deduced that democracy in Africa is weak because as it is practised emanates from history, content and context and its practice that has seemingly failed to work for the people of Africa. The fundamental questions in finding solutions to the problem is: what are these possible solutions? First, it is important to reiterate that more than three decades after the third wave of democratization swept through Africa, democracy in many countries in the continent is still in transition. Whereas the frequency of elections has increased across the continent even as some countries like Ghana and Nigeria have witnessed alternation of party in power, democracy is far from being consolidated on the continent. To answer these questions, this paper having highlighted some of the challenges to elections, democracy, and good governance in Africa, it proposes some solutions capable of strengthening democracy and enhancing good governance in the continent.

First, African countries must look inwards and outward to examine its individual peculiarities in terms of tradition, culture, values and practice and living in line with the principle of African solution to African problems, with a view to reviewing democracy and make appropriate changes where necessary. This is with the view to interrogating whether or not democracy presently embraced actually foster good governance centered on the welfare and well-being of the people and all the people.

There is the need for value-re-orientation of political elites in a way that would make them not to see political offices as an avenue for public service rather than for primitive accumulation. This value re-orientation will not only transform Africa's political economy, but will also mediate the bestial struggle for political power by the elite. Also, there is a need for strong and autonomous institutions including legislatures, judiciary and election management bodies (EMBs). These institutions are crucial to democratic advancement and sustenance. One major explanation for the democratic deficit across the continent of Africa is the weakness of core democratic institutions without which democracy cannot thrive.

Also, strong, and vibrant civil society is a missing link in the democratization process in Africa. Whereas civil society organizations have a defined role or mission in the democratization process particularly in the areas of serving as a counterweight to the state and keeping oversight over state activities, evidence across the continent suggests that for various reasons including limited funding and overbearing tendencies of the state, civil society has not been able to

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effectively discharge its roles. Furthermore, there is a need for strong and well-resourced political parties. Political parties are at the heart of representative democracy as they constitute the primary vehicle through which politicians access elective offices. Across the continent, most political parties are faced with resource constraints which negatively impact on their electoral prospects. Except for incumbent or ruling parties which largely depend on state resources for their sustenance, out-of-office political parties in Africa are challenged by resources which they need to be competitive.

Equally, there is need for an independent and activist media capable of holding political leadership accountable to the voting public. The role of the media in electoral democracy cannot be over-emphasized. African media need to be alive to their social responsibility of promoting transparency and accountability in public governance. In the same vein regional and continental organisations need to do more in the promotion of electoral and democratic and good governance values. This is with the view to realizing the long-sought desire that is capable of transmitting to development.

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