Original Paper

Democratic Infractions and the Challenge of Good Governance in Africa: Building Moral Capacity for State Leadership

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Abstract

Politics determines or at least influences the direction of individual and national socio-economic condition. There is an interconnection and some form of dependency between politics and economy. Most of the prosperous industrialized economies of the world have stable and sustainable political systems. Hence, one could argue that the poor economic situation of most African nations cannot be explained outside the issues of political impropriety across the continent. The political process in many of the African states is characterized by abuses of all kinds such as electoral infractions, constitutional violations, human rights abuses and misappropriation of powers. Many traditional political systems in Africa have been eroded meanwhile foreign and imported political ideologies have failed to deliver such dividends of national socio-political and economic gains as is the case in their respective home fronts. This research discovers through exposition and critical analysis of literature and experience that the problem with politics in Africa is not essentially about the political ideologies either traditional or foreign but basically a problem of large-scale moral and ethical failing of people who are political actors of various levels, either as leaders or followers. The paper concludes by viewing this problem as an opportunity for building ethical leadership capacity resulting in a new political paradigm for good governance across Africa.

Keywords

Africa, democracy, governance, state leadership

1. Introduction

As we count down to the last decade of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) deadline of 2030, the bitter reality is that, just like many other economies, many African countries are very far from realising the key targeted development goals. In a decade year from now, the world envisions to celebrate

the achievement of zero poverty; no hunger; health for all; inclusive and quality education for all; eradication of inequalities; availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; access to affordable, reliable and sustainable modern energy for all; sustained, inclusive economic growth; availability of infrastructure, industrialization and innovation; inclusive and safe cities and human settlements; control over climate change; sustainable environment; provision of access to justice for all, effective, accountable and inclusive institutions; and other development goals (United Nations, 2017).

However, the trend data available shows that no country is on track for achieving the SDGs by 2030 because the rate of progress in many areas is far slower than needed to meet the targets by the set year (UN, 2017, p. 2). As a response to this reality, the European Union (EU) has begun to address transformations needed to realise some key components of the SDGs by 2050 (Maddox, 2019); thereby shifting the deadline to a later date. This shift attests to the fact that the SDGs are extremely ambitious and transformational; requiring sustained paradigm shifts in regional and global relations and partnerships as well as strong national domestic institutions. The universal gloomy sustainability outlook notwithstanding, some nations are consistently progressing, and constantly moving up the ladder on the path to ensuring lives of dignity for their people through concerted efforts at eradicating poverty, securing a healthy planet for the present and future generations, building peaceful, inclusive societies and tackling the spillovers that hinder other nations from achieving sustainable development.

On the contrary, the socio-economic and political realities in many African economies leave much to be desired. From the North to the South to the West and to the East of the continent, very few economies and democracies have significantly improved on sustainable development indices and real human freedoms since the launch of the global Sustainable Development Agenda in 2015. The gaps between the global vision and the reality on the African continent in the areas of policy formulation, implementation, funding and political will are disturbing. The increasing level of household poverty, illiteracy, insecurity, human rights violations, environmental degradation and energy deficiency in most parts of Africa is a scary indication that the continent is not yet on the path to achieving sustainable development. This paper assumes that the difference between 'performing' states and the 'non-performing' counterparts lies on the quality of state governance.

In order to replicate the socio-economic development that many North and West nations have recorded, many African countries have adopted the mainstream western political ideology which is liberal democracy as the path to follow. The intent of democratic principle is to provide a platform to aggregate the diverse interests of individuals and groups in such a way that collective interests are guaranteed. But there is a damning challenge of translating the theory of democracy to the praxis of democracy in Africa. Africans' experience of democracy has been largely different from their counterparts in the developed, industrialized democracies both in form and outcomes. By 'form', it means the democratic space, process and instruments that determine the political superstructure of those countries. The 'outcomes' refer to the consequence of democratic choices in terms of the quality of leaders and public officers; development

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paradigms and values. Ideally and ultimately, democratic process is expected to birth good governance because it ought to reflect the common will of the people for better living conditions, proceeding from the choice of leaders to discussing the desired conditions of life within the society. On the contrary, the democratic experiments in Africa have not addressed the problem of good governance and development deficits across the continent. Therefore, this paper attempts to investigate and analyse the basis of the failure of most democracies in Africa in terms of quality of leadership and good governance which are fundamental criteria for transforming the lives of the people and ensuring national prosperity. The following section of the paper is an exposition of the unfolding circumstances and processes of democratization in postcolonial African states.

2. Democracy, Consensus and Governance in Traditional African Politics

The most appropriate means to adequately define the concept of democracy is to refer to its etymology. "Democracy" as a concept in the Greek language is a combination of two words: *demos* and *kratia* which means power or sovereignty in the hands of the people. Democracy from its Greek origin means the government of the people. The concept of democracy, in its classical sense goes beyond a form of government; it is a "way of life". According to Dahl, democracy is not all about a system of government where a variety of organizations and associations that are relatively independent in relation to the government and to one another exist (1987, p. 167). Moreover, it is not necessarily a system where the principal leaders are selected through a competitive electoral process in which the majority of the population has the opportunity to participate. Conceptions of democracy that emphasize - not only elections but also the elitist character of democratic systems - are generally inadequate. The legitimacy of democracy must be thought to result from the free and unconstrained public deliberation of all matters of common concern (Benhabib, 1994. p. 26).

According to Dewey, democracy should not be conceived as "something institutional and external" but should be seen as a "way of personal life" (1988, p. 226) that requires "faith in the capacity of human beings for the intelligent judgement and action if proper conditions are furnished" (Irele, 1998, pp. 14-15; Rockefeller, 1992, p. 175). Dewey's conception of democracy was born out of a pragmatic everyday experience of neighbours, friends and people coming together to converse freely with one another. Humans are essentially dialogical and communicative beings According to him, intolerance, abuses, calling of names because of differences of opinion about religion or politics… as well as because of differences of race, color, wealth or degree of culture are treason to the democratic way of life. He argues that anything that hinders dialogical communication engenders "antagonistic sects and factions and undermines democracy" (Dewey, 1988, p. 230).

Understanding the original meaning of the concept of democracy as stated above, it becomes evident that although African political systems of the past displayed considerable variety, some forms and levels of democracy had existed in many parts of Africa long before contacts with the Europeans and Americans—founders and promoters of liberal democracy. The peoples of Africa developed forms of

democratic governance centuries before Europeans came to the continent (Jost, 1995; Ayittey, 1992; Davidson, 1992). There were those political systems with a centralized authority exercised through the machinery of government and those without such authority in which social life was not regulated at any level by the sort of machinery that might be called a government (Wiredu, 1995a, p. 54). The Zulu (of South Africa), the Bemba (of Zambia), the Banyakole (of Uganda), the Oyo (of Western Nigeria) and the Kede (of Northern Nigeria) practiced the centralized political systems while the Logoli (of Western Kenya), the Tallensi (of Northern Ghana) and the Nuer (of Souther Sudan) were classified under the latter group. (Fortes & Evans-Pritchard, 1940, p. 5).

These traditional African political systems were fairly democratic in the sense that public issues and affairs were subjected to robust discussion and deliberations before critical decisions were made. The ability to engage in rigorous discourse for persuasion, reconciliation, negotiation and even rebuke was developed through daily social interactions. Dialogue to reach consensus, was the language and approach for political and social order in traditional African societies. Consensus—the major approach to decision-making in traditional African life and governance—was not anti-democratic. In the words of Kaunda, a former President of Zambia, "In our original societies we operated consensus. An issue was talked in our solemn conclave until such time as agreement could be achieved" (Kaunda, 1973, p. 476). One may either hurriedly cast aspersion on the idea of 'solemn conclave' as being concealed in secrecy or question the composition and legitimacy of the 'solemn conclave'. The following brief presentation of the structure of political representations among the Ashantis (of Ghana) could help clear doubts about Kaunda's solemn conclave in Africa.

The lineage is the basic political unit among the Ashantis. Because the Ashantis are a matrilineal group, this basic unit consists of all the people in a town or village having a common female ancestor, which is always a very large body of individuals. Every unit has a head, and every such head is automatically a member of the council which is the governing body of the town or village. The qualifications for lineage headship are seniority in age, wisdom, a sense of civic responsibility and logical persuasiveness. All these qualities are often united in the most senior, but not senile, member of the lineage. Therefore, election of the lineage head is almost a routine. However, where these qualities are not available in one person, election could involve more rigorous consultations and discussions in order to reach consensus. For the traditional Ashantis, there is never an act of formal voting. The current expression used for the process of voting (*aba to*) is an obvious modern coinage for a modern cultural import, or shall we say imposition (Wiredu, 1995a, p. 55). The village or town governing council is presided over by the 'natural ruler' of the town called a *chief*. The word 'natural' suggests the hereditary status of the position. Although hereditary, the emergence of the chief from his lineage has to be approved by the council and endorsed by the populace through an organization called, in literal translation, 'the young peoples' association' in order to become final (Wiredu, 1995a, p. 56). The objective of this exposition is to show that the so-called 'solemn conclave' is composed of personalities representing the basic units of the traditional African societies.

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Even in societies with different political organizations from that of the Ashantis, rulers in the forms of chiefs or kings governed and exercised limited powers bound by laws and religious beliefs which were generally respected as binding on all the members of the societies across generations. Although the laws and customs (tradition) might not have been documented, there were traditional institutions that served as custodians of the traditions—personalities and forces whose responsibility was to uphold the sacredness of the tradition. Governance was enshrined within the spiritual atmosphere of African traditional societies. Kingship [governance] was more a sacred office than a political one (Abraham, 1962, p. 77). Therefore, the kings and chiefs [political leaders] just as other members of the societies were subject to the laws and customs and could be removed and sometimes banished when they violated the rules prescribed by the law and customs of the land. These attributes of dialogue, representation, and accountability which have been evidently shown as highlights of major traditional political systems in Africa, to the extent at which they could deliver good though imperfect governance, make it safe to posit that these political systems were fairly democratic.

However, the first prolonged contact with the Arabs and Europeans during the slave trade period weakened the traditional African democratic structures. The resilience of the traditional political systems in many African societies suffered further attacks through colonization of African territories. Traditional African cultures have been distorted through longstanding foreign blandishments, importunities and outright impositions (Wiredu, 1995b, p. 13). In line with the imperialist agenda, colonial masters dismissed the African indigenous political system as undemocratic, authoritarian and primitive. Different colonial powers imposed diverse political structures and governance mechanisms they considered appropriate for the implementation of their colonial policies on the African continent. Governance at this level was not about the interest of the indigenous populations but rather about the political and economic interests of the foreign powers.

The peoples' experience of colonial rules in Africa and the perceptions of political thinkers confirm that the colonial systems of government across Africa were intrinsically undemocratic, draconian and imperialistic. Looking down the history of most African nations up to the present circumstance, one would readily agree with Wiredu that Africans belong to nations oppressed in the past by foreign domination and ravaged in the present by indigenous misgovernment (Wiredu, 1995b, p. 13). It could be safely affirmed that the contacts with the foreign powers through the periods of slave trade and colonialism repressed democratic structures and promoted authocratic tendencies in Africa. This situation underscores the series of political instability that bedeviled the various parts of Africa in the wake of independence. The long period of imperial incursions in Africa distorted political and cultural systems, alienated and repressed the people, the "traditional checks and balances" that had discouraged arbitrary rule disappeared and handed down political and economic legacies that were strange to the first generation post-independence political leaders in Africa. This could be the basis for the governance deficiency that most African states had to grapple with for the most part of their

post-independence history. The foregoing provides the background for the post-independence democratic experience in Africa, which shall constitute the discussion in the next section of the paper.

3. Democratization of Post-Independence African Political Space

The idea of democracy in the context of post-independence Africa is different both in content and in practice from the democratic nuances of the traditional political systems that prevailed in Africa before the contacts with foreign influences. Here, democracy is understood as the system of government which has its root in philosophical liberalism, a theoretical paradigm that emanated from Europe (England and Holland) (Russell, 1947, p. 620). Political thinkers of the modern period leveraged on this new paradigm to conceptualize what they regarded as the ideal form of government that would address the excesses of the despotic monarchs and also capture the socio-economic realities of the prevailing civilization. From the perspectives of Locke, Rousseau and other social contract philosophers, democracy implies a pact initiated by the people to establish the mechanism for the running of public affairs within the state. By this covenant, the people choose and voluntarily empower a body of people to execute the collective will of the people.

This democratic exercise by the people provides unlimited opportunities for adult participation in political life (Unah, 1993, p. 4) either directly or indirectly. It involves a whole series of processes and cultural values which relate to the selection of leaders at all levels of society, the behaviour of groups and individuals *vis-à-vis* those who hold different views on issues under consideration as well as the use of power by those the selection process has placed in decision making position. In the context of this section of the paper, democracy is construed as a system of government under which the people exercise their governing power through representatives they periodically elected by themselves. Democratization is conceived as the process of adopting and applying the principle of liberal democracy as the prevailing political paradigm within the state. Liberal democracy is characterized by free, fair and competitive elections between multiple distinct political parties; a separation of powers into different arms of government; the supremacy of the rule of law and the protection of human rights and civil liberties of all persons. Liberal democracy has become a predominant political system in the world. The extent at which the principle is appropriately and meticulously applied in the post-colonial African politics remains a question to be addressed in the latter part of this discussion.

One cannot say too much about the formidable array of political, economic and social challenges that confronted Africa just after the end of colonial period. Scholars and analysts have identified and discussed some of the factors responsible for these challenges bedeviling the newly independent African states. The new states had relatively little time to prepare for self-government; the emerging political elites had inherited authoritarian structure which they exploited for personal gains. The new states were weak and artificial with deep ethnic divisions and animosity with very weak constitutional arrangement for power sharing. The impact of revolutionary ideologies that regarded some form of

political dictatorship (benevolent despot) as necessary to facilitate economic development and social reconstruction was also blamed for the failure of the newly independent African countries.

About three decades (1980s and 1990s) after the decolonization and emergence of self-government in most African countries, the continent has not found solutions to her myriad of political, economic and social crises. Economic conditions in sub-Saharan Africa stagnated or deteriorated in the 1970's and continued to decline through the 1980's (Sparks, 1995, p. 11). Africa's external debt ballooned from $6 billion in 1970 to $90 billion in 1980. By 1992, the debt had more than tripled to $292 billion—making black Africa the only region in the world whose external debt had exceeded its gross domestic product (Jost, 1995). By the year 2000, the condition of most African states has not improved, in some cases, even worsened. The 23 poorest countries in the world in terms of human development are in Africa. Of the 48 African countries, only two have managed to escape falling in the bottom third of the UN Development Programme's human development ratings, and both are small highland states (Mauritius and Cape Verde) (Diamond, 2008, p. 1). Sub-Saharan Africa is the home to hundreds of millions of people who suffer from water scarcity issues (Water.org, 2018). The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that more than 40 percent of the global water-stressed population lives in Sub-Saharan Africa (Greentumble, 2015). In the same region, only an estimated 44 percent of the urban population and 24 percent of the rural population have adequate sanitation (The Water Project, 2020).

The poor economic and social circumstances were not unconnected with the quality of governance across many African countries. According to Diamond, "Until recently, Africa has been a desert in terms of democracy and the rule of law, and it remains one of the most corrupt and badly governed regions of the world" (Diamond, Ibid.). At this time, most independent African states performed very poorly in governance ratings which included measures such as voice and accountability; political stability; government effectiveness; quality of government regulation; the rule of law; and control of corruption. Worthy of note is the fact that many African states were at this period trapped in repressive political dictatorship of either the military regime or one-party/one-man rule. Within 10 years of independence, all but a few Africa's fledgling democracies had yielded to civilian or military dictatorships or transformed into one-party governments (Jost, Ibid.).

Democratization in Africa could be regarded as a product of internal and external pressures. The demand by Africans for good governance and the pressures from the United States of America and other Western powers on autocratic regimes to adopt political reforms which favoured Western democracy were significant incentives for African democratization. However, it must be quickly noted that the African people themselves are the main force behind the movement toward democracy in Africa. The common people had to resist the ugly situation of loss of freedom and deepening poverty; they could no longer tolerate dictators who could not deliver social and economic goods. The poor Africans wanted a replication of the Western socio-economic prosperity on the continent, so they desired and supported the process of democratization. But the political elites across Africa wanted the Western endorsement for recognition and legitimacy of their regimes, so they feigned political reforms

in favour of democracy. Because dictatorship and one-party rule were fast becoming unpopular, even autocratic regimes cloaked themselves in the language of democracy. Therefore, despites the daunting obstacles to the process of democratization, especially at the initial stage, the democratic revolution on the continent was gaining ascendancy.

4. Elections, Electoral Infractions and State Failure in Africa

About six decades after most African nations have gained political independence from their colonial masters; many countries on the continent have adopted liberal democracy as the prevailing system of government. As mentioned earlier, liberal democracy embodies certain values and characteristics which are essential to its conceptualization. Among the values, the right of people to choose leaders in free and fair elections remains very significant. This is not to equate liberal democracy with regular elections (UNDP, 2002, p. 54). Wondwosen harped on the importance of distinguishing between "electoral democracy" and "liberal democracy" (Wondwosen, 2008) while discussing democratization process in Africa. Features of electoral democracy include: competitive, regular, free and fair multi-party elections (Diamond, 1997, p. 3). In liberal democracy, those elected in the aforesaid regular, competitive, free and fair multi-party elections are expected to be committed to political transparency, good governance, and adherence to the rule of law and to the principles of keeping human and political rights (Wondwosen, 2008). In the same vein, Kofi Annan noted that "Democracy is not just about one day every four or five years when elections are held, but a system of government that respects the separation of powers, fundamental freedoms like the freedom of thought, religion, expression, association and assembly and the rule of law ... Any regime that rides roughshod on these principles loses its democratic legitimacy, regardless of whether it initially won an election." (Kweifio-Okai & Holder, 2017).

However, that single process of credible, free and fair elections is central and critical to democracy in that it functions as a means for people to elect their representatives, it is a means of choosing governments and it gives legitimacy to political systems. The emergence of the right leaders who would run and improve on other democratic values largely depends it. It has been argued in this paper that leadership determines other factors of governance. By a rough estimation, one could say that political leaders are to states what the entrepreneur is to other factors of production. In the absence of a smart and competent entrepreneur, other resources whether they are abundant or scarce, will be of little or no value.

It should also be noted that there is more to elections of political leaders than casting votes and counting ballot papers. The electioneering process is a composite of people, institutions and infrastructures. Therefore, it may not be correct to regard an election simply as a day event even if voting, counting and declaring of winners happen in one day. The implication of this position is that a seemingly 'free and fair' election could still be discredited with significant democratic deficiencies leading to the emergence of 'unpopular' and less competent leaders. To this extent, electoral infractions

are facilitated and reinforced by people, institutions and infrastructures. In many African democracies, manipulations of electioneering process have been a recurring challenge to the democratization process. As observed, electoral infractions are systemic and institutional.

It is systemic where the conditions that facilitate and exacerbate electoral frauds have been entrenched within the economic and socio-political fabrics of the society. For instance, a society where the prevalent moral disposition is weak and incline towards corrupt tendencies, cases of vote-buying and other forms of inducement would be the 'norm'. It is easier to perpetrate electoral improprieties in societies with high level of poverty and illiteracy. Poverty makes the population more vulnerable to inducements and keeps many people alienated from governance as they are busy struggling to survive. Illiteracy is also a major condition needed to keep people ignorant and uninformed. Therefore, income and education are very important (Barro, 1999; Glaeser et al., 2004; Lipset, 1994) systemic conditions for successful and failed elections. There is widespread acknowledgment that the social impacts of extreme poverty—namely poor education, disease and illiteracy—combine to hinder the process of democratization (Deegan, 2003, p. 2).

It is institutional where the State officials or persons in power are the major sponsors and beneficiaries of unethical electoral practices in any democratic process. This happens when the relevant state institutions are positioned to be used by incumbent rulers for electoral manipulations. Against this backdrop, viable independent institutions (public and private) are necessary and integral to consolidating democracy. In other words, without appropriate state institutions, democracy is not possible (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 14). The flourishing of independent civil societies such as churches, trade unions and free media are necessary for the endurance of democracy (Wondwosen, 2008; Schumpeter, 1947; Linz & Stepan, 1996, pp. 34-51). The institutions and the prevailing socio-economic condition constitute major inevitable determining factors at every stage of democratization. Accordingly, democratic institutions will not endure without a favourable socio-economic condition (Przeworski et al., 1996, pp. 40-41).

If democracy is the government of the people by the people, then the moral and psycho-social disposition of the individual becomes the basis of his or her relationship with others [the State] at the interpersonal and collective phases of interaction. Consequently, deepening democratization would require the formation of a democratic culture and the habits of democratic practices (Diamond, 1997; Huntington, 1993; Shin, 1994, pp. 135-170) among the people. On the contrary, both the systemic and institutional electoral infractions are perpetrated by people as the actors in any political process. The 'people factor' is primary in every democratization process. Democracy presents the people with the chance and opportunity to participate in the governance of their public affairs, and this opportunity involves the freedom to voice their opinion. In Africa, elections remain the only visible channel of echoing the peoples' voice despite the myriad infractions. However, electoral infractions have become a monster which has consistently silenced the voice and repressed the popular will of Africans in their quest for good representations and people-inclined governance.

At this juncture, it is pertinent to be more specific in order to avoid certain generalizations which may not apply equally across all democracies in Africa. This paper considers Nigeria with a population of about 206, 139,589 and population growth rate of 2.58% (UN, 2019), the largest democracy in Africa as a proper case study for the assessment of democratic (electioneering) process in Africa. The country has been practicing electoral democracy continuously without any major constitutional crisis or military incursion since 1999. The country has witnessed several elections into political positions including five presidential elections, five major elections into the House of Senate and House of Representatives, gubernatorial elections in the 36 states of the federation, elections into the State Houses of Assembly and various elections in the third tier of government (local government executive and legislature). Nigeria is an extremely ethnically diverse State with about 374 culturally diverse ethnic groups with distinct languages and dialects (Hassan, 2011) spread across 774 local governments. Indeed, ethnicity has played a major role in the democratic experiment of the most populous black nation. Politicians and their followers have exploited the rhetorics of 'ethnic supremacy' and 'ethnic marginalization' to gain electoral points though many a times, real governance and development issues receive little or no attention. Due to the population strength and the potential economic strength of Nigeria, African and global leaders have expressed expectations on the political and economic leadership role of the 'giant of Africa'. Unfortunately, Nigeria has not lived up to these expectations in real terms. The political and economic conditions in Nigeria as presented by domestic and international organizations do not position the country as a viable continental and global leader. Let us quickly explore and assess the level of electoral integrity in the Nigerian democratic process and the quality of state governance, which reflects the outcomes of the electoral choices by the people.

The Nigerian political space is highly expensive and excessively monetized. It is certain that money is crucial for political parties and aspirants to implement activities before, during and after elections such as effective campaigning and other logistics. However, whether in established or new democracies, unregulated use of money, private or public, for politics is capable of reversing the ethics, practices and spirit of democracy. It confers undue advantages and improperly alters available choice to electorates (Olorunmola, 2017, p. 1). This is the situation in Nigeria. Although there are constitutional provisions to regulate the funds and expenses of political parties and candidates in elections, parties and candidates have continued to violate these regulations unabated and without sanctions.

> In Nigeria, the 1999 constitution (as amended) of the Federal
> Republic of Nigeria specified in section 225 (1-6) conditions and
> scrutiny of the sources of funds and expenses of political parties.
> Section 225 (3)(a) and (b) as well as 225 (4) forbid political
> parties from foreign funding of any kind. Section 226 (1-3)
> demands annual reports of account from political parties. By
> extension, the Electoral Act (2010) stipulates the ceiling of
> expenses by candidates and political parties for specific elective

positions. The maximum limits are pegged at: N1,000,000,000 (naira) for presidential candidates, N200,000,000 for governorship candidates, and N40,000,000 and N20,000,000 respectively for Senate and House of Representatives candidates. These provisions are necessary to make certain that political parties and candidates are properly (Olorunmola, 2017, p. 1).

In outright disregard for these provisions, fundraising conducted ahead of the 2015 elections were done without regards to legal provisions. Campaign expenses, particularly of the two main presidential candidates, overshot the N1 billion limits. Money was illegally used to buy votes and permanent voters cards. State administrative resources were used by incumbent officials to facilitate party activities. Political party primaries became a cash affair to lead to the possible emergence of the highest bidders. Yet, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the regulatory body, is yet to investigate, prosecute and sanction erring parties and candidates for infringements. This has been the case since the transition to democratic governance in 1999 (Ibid.). The cost of 'expression of interest' and 'nomination' fees, especially within major political parties is extremely out of reach of many Nigerians. As at 2020, the cost of the 'expression of interest' and 'nomination' form for the governorship primary elections of the ruling All Progressive Congress Party (APC) is N2 million and N20 million respectively. Other components of the expenses, some of which are not officially accounted for by aspirants into elective positions include: mobilization of godfathers, incentives for party delegates, and personal security network.

The implications of this extremely monetized polity which directly and adversely impact on state governance include the fact that only few money-bags could have their political ambitions achieved. The political space, formed by the rich political elite and consolidated by the prevailing political culture, does not present a fair-play ground for all Nigerians. The real major political divides in Nigeria are structured along economic and financial status. There are no vibrant ideological alternatives being presented by major political parties from which the electorates could choose. It has almost become normal for people to think that money is the only requirement politics.

Having spent huge money in the election process, politicians in Nigeria become so desperate, heating up the polity and exacerbating insecurity. Politicians who currently hold political positions use State structures and powers such as the security agencies to intimidate and suppress opposition parties and candidates, although, not without some violent resistance and reprisals. Most elections in Nigeria since 1999 have been marred with various degrees of violence. The level of insecurity associated with major elections in the country has been largely responsible for voters' apathy in Nigeria. The voters turn-out has been consistently on the decline since 2011 general elections, with a downward trend of 53.7%, 43.65% and 35.66% in 2011, 2015 and 2019 respectively (INEC, 2011, 2015 & 2019). Voters' apathy has also been blamed on the lack of peoples' trust on the results of elections which in many instances they believe have been grossly compromised. Generally, the educated middle economic class in

Nigeria displays the highest level of political apathy with the excuse that the electoral process and the political space do not provide viable alternative political platforms and candidates for good governance. The desperation of politicians is owing to the fact that the loss at the polls means a loss of fortune; sometimes with grievous consequences and victory at the polls provides opportunity for return on investment. Losers at the polls sometimes result to Post-election violence and the courts are always busy with election related cases. The winners are consistently pressurized by their sponsors, allies and personal ambitions; leaving them with doing more of 'politics' than providing good 'governance'. Public offices are managed by political associates to compensate for their efforts during elections without reference to merit and credibility. In this kind of political atmosphere, one could not expect anything less than poor governance as a result of massive financial recklessness, grafts, incompetence and abuse of power. The immediate impact of electoral infractions such as have been mentioned is that incompetent leaders emerge to run the State affairs. The consequence of dysfunctional government which is inherited through compromised elections could be palpable failure of the State to ensure the wellbeing of its people. The essence of the state is to provide basic needs of life for the people as well as enhance the capacity of the people to contribute to the commonwealth.

The Nigerian case study could roughly be regarded as the typical scenario for most part of African continent. A review of reports by renowned international organizations on the state of democracy and development across the world and in Africa would be helpful in leading to some valid inferences. Africa is the second most populous continent in the world with a population of 1.2 billion people (World Population Review, 2020). The ten most populous countries in Africa account for more than 800 million people. Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, DR Congo, Tanzania, South Africa, Kenya, Uganda and Algeria are the leading nations in terms of population in Africa. What is the state of democracy and quality of governance in these major democracies in Africa? The 2019 Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Democracy Index shows that only Mauritius with a population of about 1.4 million is classified as a full democracy regime in Africa. Of the ten most populous democracies in Africa, only South Africa is classified as a flawed democracy regime, ranking in the 40th position of the global rating. Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Algeria are classified as hybrid regimes while Ethiopia, Egypt, DR Congo and Sudan are classified as authoritarian regimes. Out of the fifty African countries evaluated, twenty-five countries are classified as authoritarian regime despite the claims to demracy. (EIU, 2019)

Only one (South Africa) out of the ten largest democracies in Africa is qualified to be listed as 'electoral democracy' according to *Freedom in the World* (Freedom House, 2020). *Freedom in the World* assigns the designation "electoral democracy" to countries that have met certain minimum standards for political rights and civil liberties. The designation is dependent on more than holding elections. An electoral democracy designation requires a score of 7 or better in the Electoral Process subcategory, an overall political rights score of 20 or better, *and* an overall civil liberties score of 30 or better. The implication of these reports is that majority of elections that have held in Africa lack the

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basic and fundamental democratic principles and institutional frameworks which are necessary for the emergence of competent leaders and the birth of good governance.

The reports of collosal underdevelopment and poor human development indices across the continent are indications of the level of State failure in Africa. More than half a century after the onset of decolonization and democratization, Africa is largely mired in poverty, violence, political crises and wanton underdevelopment. More than lack of resources, incompetent leadership and ineffective governance could be a better explaination for the pervasive underdevelopment that is ravaging the continent. Most of the Africa's richest countries in natural resources such as Nigeria, Angola and Congo are among the countries with highest poor population. According to the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita 2019 data provided by the World Bank, only two countries in Africa (Seychelles and Mauritius) present better values than the the world average of 11, 570US dollars (World Bank, 2019). Only about 2million Africans meet the global average in terms of income per capita. None of the ten largest population economies in Africa gets close to the world average. In 2017 ranking, Central African Republic (CAR), despite its wealth of resources such as diamonds, gold and oil was the poorest country in the world as at the time (Stebbins, 2019).

The United Nations human development composite indices capture critical development elements such as life expectancy at birth, expected years of schooling, mean years of schooling and gross national income (GNI) per capita. The scoring of the Human Development Index (HDI) stratifies countries into four categories namely: very high human development, high human development, medium human development and low human development. According to the 2019 ranking, only nine African countries make the list of 'very high' and 'high' human development; with Seychelles having the status of 'very high' human development. More than thirty African countries including Nigeria, Ethiopia, DR Congo, and Tanzania are within the 'low' human development category (UNDP, 2019). As at 2019, South Sudan has about 2.2 million forcibly displaced people (UNDP, 2019), at the same period, the number of internally displaced persons in Nigeria has risen to about 2.6 million out which more than 2.5 million were caused by conflict and violence (IDMC, 2019).

The sum of these data and reports on the state of affairs in most part of Africa is that the continent is extremely deficient on all parameters of individual and national development. Decades of democratization on the continent has left millions of Africans with little or no hope for democracy as the sure path to sustainable development. However, the position of this paper is premised on the assumption that good governance and development outcomes are derivatives of the dominant value system within the society. Where the moral underpinning is strong and resilient, the society survives and thrives, but where it is weak and fragile, the society's capacity for social progress becomes impaired (Oladipo, 2000, p. 65). The absence or lack of operation of some core social values such as trust, cooperation, compassion, justice, and tolerance among the different interests and segments in the society ensured that the country would achieve little or no sustainable development and that the various

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levels of national government could not effectively manage the nation's resources for the overall security, peace, prosperity, and well-being of all (Ujomu, 2002, p. 205).

The level of citizens' contribution (active and passive) to electoral frauds and infractions in Africa confirms to a large extent that there is some sense in the maxim that "A people deserves the government it gets." Injustice is more complex than the people simply getting cheated, robbed, exploited, and oppressed by others [and] persists because the people cooperate in their own exploitation (Diamond, 1989, p. 440). Therefore, the basic target of any meaningful reversal of the unfortunate electoral improprieties trending across the continent should commence with the individuals regardless of the level of political involvement.

5. Ethical Leadership: Building Capacity for Political Participation and Leadership for Good Governance in Africa

Ethical leadership is a construct which has been so predominant in Management and Corporate Governance studies and practice for some decades. Managers and researchers in relevant fields raise concern for ethical consciousness at the time when leadership legitimacy is questioned and when the public's trust in corporate governance is extremely low (fulmer, 2005). Still in the context of corporate organizations, it is maintained that "leaders ought to be a crucial source of ethical guidance for employees and should at the same time be responsible for moral development in an organization" (Mihelič, Lipičnik, & Tekavčič, 2010). However, the idea of ethical leadership could be more impactful on the larger society as a form of political organization. It could be asserted that corporate organizations are entities which are susceptible to the dearth of ethical leadership within the society. This position informs the adoption of the construct of ethical leadership in this paper; although with emphasis on state governance as against corporate governance.

Ethics is a philosophical concept which originated from the Greek word 'ethos' meaning custom or character. It is both descriptive and prescriptive. Ethics determines which actions are right and wrong by probing into what should or should not be done (Adeyeye & Adekeye, 2016, p. 15). It is the code of values amd moral principles that guide individual or group behaviour with respect to what is right or wrong (Mihelič, Lipičnik, & Tekavčič, 2010). Ethical behaviour is defined as behaviour which is morally accepted as "good" and "right" as opposed to "bad" or "wrong" in a given situation (Sims, 1992). Although ethical dilemmas are present in uncertain situations in which different values, interests and beliefs are in conflict, ethical behaviour is legally and morally acceptable to the larger community (Trevino, 1986). Social values such as transparency, accountability, justice, tolerance, truth, trust, cooperation, compassion, and patriotism among others are considered as ethical behaviours which must be embraced by every member of the society.

Leadership is the capacity to establish direction, and to influence and to align others towards a common goal, motivating and committing them to action and making them responsible for their performance (BNET Online Business Dictionary). The role of leaders is in the process of directing the individual's

behaviour towards a desired goal. Rost defines leadership as a power- and value-laden relationship between leaders and followers/constituents who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes and goals (1991). It is in this form of relationship between the leader and follower that the concept of 'influence' becomes both meaningful and possible. The true measure of leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less (Maxwell, 2007, p. 11). The mark of a leader is how many people are willing, without any form of coersion, to follow him or her.

Generally, leadership in the context of a people's socio-political life would be described as the ability of the individual to model others within his/her circle of influence to think, act or behave in a specific manner for the purpose of realizing the common good of the society. Leadership, in this wise, is a process that begins with the self and by influence, impacts on the other. Technically, political leaders are described as i) democratically elected ii) representatives who iii) are vulnerable to deselection, and iv) operate within, as well as influence a constitutional and legal framework. Their source of authority is v) a mandate. Membership of the electorate is vi) set out in law, and broader than organizational or union forms of membership, since it extends to all citizens with voting rights, in a defined constituency (Morrell & Hartley, 2006, p. 484). This description illustrates how political leadership differs from other forms of leadership. It underscores the unique relevance and importance of ethical consideration in political leadership.

Ethical behaviours such as have been mentioned above, and attributes of a good leader do combine to form the substance of ethical leadership in the political domain. Some of the attributes of a good leader include: competence and intelligence; vision and inspiration; compassion, courage, broad mindedness; imagination; integrity; and honesty. Ethical leadership in politics is crucial and vital in providing direction that enables the society to fulfill its mandate and achieve shared goals. More than preventing people from doing the wrong thing, ethical political leadership is better construed as enabling them to do the right thing. Therefore, ethical leaders focus on providing the kind of socio-political environment that enhances the ethical disposition and behaviours of the people. Ethics reflects in three aspects of leadership namely: personal conduct of the leader (Guy, 1990); decisions made by the leader; and the quality of influence on others' conduct (Hitt, 1990). Hence, ethical leadership has been defined as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision-making" (Brown et al., 2005, p. 120).

In democratic systems such as are obtainable in many parts of Africa, political leaders should share and demonstrate some of the values that pertain to living in a democratic society, such as accepting diversity, and seeking to respect the interests of all constituents and future generations, not just those who share one's political allegiances. They should also be people of integrity and probity since they are responsible for administering public monies and making decisions that have an impact on economic and social well-being (Morrell & Hartley, 2006, p. 488). Moreover, political leaders are expected to display high level competence and knowledge in managing issues, people and institutions for the

purpose of creating stable, viable and peaceful societies. Therefore, political leadership in Africa would require persons with requisite knowledge of the path to sustainable development as well as impeccable moral disposition and respect for democratic principles.

But ethical political leadership does not occur without systematically building the moral capacity of the people for political participation and governance. That is, ethical leadership could either be learnt or perfected through conscious effort of training or education of members of the society—beginning from childhood. African societies would begin to have good leaders who will conduct state affairs (governance) with respect and regard for ethical values and advance people's dignity only when those values become a common place within each society—a time when the leaders and followers are guided by and are committed to shared moral values and political ideals. Although the society's moral health could be a function of the standards and the examples of its leaders, the role of the followers in entrenching the standards set by the leaders cannot be over emphasized either.

The journey towards the desired political experience would begin with building individual capacity through quality value education. Education is construed as an activity or process that consists of cultivating certain dispositions which include skills, abilities, knowledge, attitude, beliefs, values and character (Frankena et al., 2002). In the same vein, Bowan and Peter (1974) define education as "acquired virtue which is the direct resultant effect of individual encounter with a given experience." According to these scholars, the experience may be of skills, elements of knowledge, influence of others, or the total atmosphere of a social environment (Adeyeye & Adekeye, 2016, p. 119). The import of this assertion is that the expected outcome of any educational experience is the acquisition and display of virtue by the recipient or learner. It must be noted that although education may be social in orientation, it is personal and individualistic in practice. It is personal in the sense that it is a process where the individual is developed up to a point where he becomes socially becoming (Adeyeye & Adekeye, 2016, p. 118). That is, it is expected that the virtue which the individual had acquired through education be translated into personality capital for the pursuit of societal goals. In other words, education is an instrument of managing (socio-political) change (Essien, 1975). It is important therefore, for every African nation to review its philosophy of education to reflect the urgent need to raise awareness for political participation as well as entrenching democratic and moral values in politics for the purpose of raising a generation of individuals with requisite moral disposition for political leadership.

In view of the above, value teaching should be embraced in all institutions of learning to eradicate the different forms of vices especially those that relate to the individual political experience such as fanatism, banditry, dishonesty, vandalism, bigotry tribalism, divisive tendencies and unpatriotic attitudes. Some of the African traditional world-views could provide the needed content for the moral capacity building that is urgently needed for African political experience. In his essay: The Yoruba traditional ideals of life such as truthfulness, trustworthiness, humility, compassion, charity, respect for elders, diligence, etc. (Oladipo, 2001, p. 4) are universal human ideals that are perpetually relevant to

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the promotion of social harmony in human societies because they constitute "morally admirable traits of character" (Gyekye, 1996, p. 66) which any human society should cherish.

A far richer contribution of Oladipo is his concern on how the traditional ideals could be made to be part of the social conventions of contemporary societies. He argued that:

> [t]raditional ways of developing in individuals the capacity for good judgement and a sense of responsibility toward others are still very relevant. Of particular significance are the ways in which children were brought up to recognise that they have obligations to others and society. Some of these ways which were considered very important in traditional Yoruba society includes, among others: *a peere iwa* (leadership by example, particularly by parents); *Itonisona* (moral guidance); *Imoran* (advice); *itan ati alo* (short stories and tales); and *eewo* (taboos) (Oladipo, 2001, p. 10)

One of the challenges for the contemporary formal educational practice therefore, is to link up with the traditional moral education content as well as some of the elements of its *modus operandi* which include among others, mentorship, leadership by example; moral guidance and advice in such a way that it reflect the current social realities. It is necessary that the efforts of the educational systems in building capacity for ethical leadership in politics and state governance across Africa be complemented by other agencies of socialization such as the family, religious groups, media as well as advocacy groups in such a way that such values could only be reinforced across societies rather than being eroded.

6. Conclusion

The various manifestations of democratic and electoral infractions in Africa discussed in the preceding sections of this paper provide the continent an ample opportunity for developing ethical leadership capacity which will result in a new political paradigm. Democracy and good governance are reflections of political ideals and the public virtues which are prevalent among the people. The political system in countries where democracy has led to good governance is such that subjects all political leaders and public officers to different levels of accountability. Institutions adequately represent the public voice that keeps resonating the State's covenant with the people. It is a political system where both the leaders and the led are unanimous in the vision and aspiration for good governance and national development.

Therefore, Africans must be resolute in the struggle against electoral manipulations and other democratic infractions in order to curb the incessant leadership deficit that is widespread across the continent. Drawing from the reports and data that have been reviewed in this paper, it is evident that most Africans are victims of poor governance. The development challenges in most part of Africa are not necessarily due to lack of resources but for lack of ethical political leaders who could translate

democratic ideals to good governance. Every opportunity to sensitize, inform, orientate and build peoples' capacity for democratic experience must be maximally utilized. At the same time elections into public offices must be approached as peoples loudest avenue to get the best representations for them.

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