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Models of Governance and African Development in the 21 st Century

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Abstract

The issue of governance is a very serious one considering the place of governance in every countrys development. This explains why it is imperative to understand the models of governance. A good understanding of these models would help a country desirous of development to know the right model for itself. It is apt to state that the socioeconomic and political conditions prevalent in a country determine the model or models of governance to be adopted which, in turn, affects these conditions. This study found that many countries in Africa are characterized by high levels of poverty, unemployment, insecurity, electoral malpractices, and general level of underdevelopment; the root cause of all these is bad governance. With bad governance there cannot be development in any country, since it is antithetical to development. This explains why the citizens of every country desire and yearn for good governance. The paper is qualitative in nature. The relevant data were sourced from documented and archival materials, such as textbooks, journals, newspapers, and internet materials. Historical and descriptive methods of data analysis were adopted to analyse the gathered data. Social contract theory was used as the theoretical framework. The study recommends that for good governance and development to be achieved in Africa, those in position of power and authority should try as much as possible to take the welfare and wellbeing of the people into serious consideration and also shun corruption and authoritarian governance style. The governments of African countries and their citizens should ensure that elections are transparent and devoid of manipulations and outright rigging. Citizens should also ensure that they take active part in politics and governance and hold public officers accountable.

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Models of Governance and African Development in the 21st Century

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Abstract

The issue of governance is a very serious one considering the place of governance in every country's development. This explains why it is imperative to understand the models of governance. A good understanding of these models would help a country desirous of development to know the right model for itself. It is apt to state that the socioeconomic and political conditions prevalent in a country determine the model or models of governance to be adopted which, in turn, affects these conditions. This study found that many countries in Africa are characterized by high levels of poverty, unemployment, insecurity, electoral malpractices, and general level of underdevelopment; the root cause of all these is bad governance. With bad governance there cannot be development in any country, since it is antithetical to development. This explains why the citizens of every country desire and yearn for good governance. The paper is qualitative in nature. The relevant data were sourced from documented and archival materials, such as textbooks, journals, newspapers, and internet materials. Historical and descriptive methods of data analysis were adopted to analyse the gathered data. Social contract theory was used as the theoretical framework. The study recommends that for good governance and development to be achieved in Africa, those in position of power and authority should try as much as possible to take the welfare and wellbeing of the people into serious consideration and also shun corruption and authoritarian governance style. The governments of African countries and their citizens should ensure that elections are transparent and devoid of manipulations and outright rigging. Citizens should also ensure that they take active part in politics and governance and hold public officers accountable.

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***Keywords*:** authoritarian regime, citizens' wellbeing, corruption, development, governance

Introduction

Development is the end while governance is the means to achieving it. Development is a desirable state, that is, a state of well-being for both the citizens and the state. This explains why underdeveloped and developing countries are being urged to develop. It is important to state that wishful thinking cannot bring about development; rather; practical efforts through good governance can, to a very large extent, help to bring about development. A nexus exists between good governance and development; without good governance development cannot take place. In this vein, Diamond (2004) stated that bad governance is the major reason for underdevelopment and not necessarily the lack of resources. This view captures succinctly the situation in most African countries. In many countries in Africa, there are abundant human and material resources but the presence of these resources has not resulted in development. This condition depicts a paradoxical situation where the continent is blessed with abundant resources but the inhabitants remain poor. Nigeria is a typical example of countries in Africa blessed with both human and material resources but many of its citizens remain poor. This view was also implicated by Achebe when he opined that bad leadership is the reason for the lack of development in Nigeria.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics cited in Sogolo (2024), about one hundred and thirty-three million people (133,000,000) are suffering from multi-dimensional poverty in Nigeria. Naanen (2015) asserted that poverty is a state of abject want, the absence of the basic needs of life. Manifestation of poverty includes lack of money, hunger and malnutrition, illiteracy and ignorance, lack of decent clothing and housing. This has grave implications for the security and development of the country. The five dimensions and measures of poverty include income, health, education, empowerment, and working conditions (Reinert, 2006). It is obvious that the dimensions highlighted by Reinert are not seriously attended to by African leaders because of bad governance. After over sixty years of independence of many African countries, there are still evidences of bad governance. This made Yahmed (2021) to assert that there is a lack of visionary leaders capable of meeting the increasingly complex challenges facing the continent. Many political leaders in Africa have been

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engrossed in massive looting of the treasury of their respective countries which, no doubt, has affected negatively their countries' development. Incidences of authoritarian rule and sit-tight syndrome exhibited by many Heads of States in Africa abound. Examples of Heads of States who stayed long in office include Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe (in office for 37years), Jose Eduardo dos Santos of Angola (in office for 38 years), Omar al-Bashir of Sudan (in office for 30 years), Mobutu Sese Seko of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (in office for 31 years), and President Pieire Nkurunziza of Burundi (in office for almost 15 years). Gross corruption, embezzlement, violation of human rights, disregard to the principle of the rule of law, as well as the authoritarian style of governance characterizes many regimes in Africa, which is also reflected in their level of development. This view was also corroborated by the Economic Intelligence Unit's 2020 Democracy Index, cited in Klobucista and Ferragamo (2023), which indicates that many countries in Africa have authoritarian government with human rights abuses. There is no way development can take place in such an environment.

Literature Review

This section aims to clarify the major concepts that go a long way in aiding the readers to understand the subject matter of the research, including concepts such as governance, good governance, and development.

Governance is not only multifaceted and multidimensional but also multidisciplinary. This explains why it is difficult, if not impossible, to have a strait jacket definition of the concept of governance. It also explains why Asaduzzaman and Virtanen (2016) described governance as a growing phenomenon. The literature on governance is considerable and expanding.

Landell and Seregaldin (1991) pointed out that governance is the way the affairs of the state are carried out in accordance with the requirements of public administration and law. Further, one cannot divorce public administration from law, particularly because it is law that guides public administration. Hence, public administration cannot be carried out in the absence of law. Asaduzzaman and Virtanen (2016) saw governance as "interaction among structures, processes, and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken, and

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how citizens and other stakeholders have their say" (p. 3). Governance has to do with the nitty-gritty of carrying out the functions of government, as well as private and non-governmental organizations.

The next concept to be clarified is good governance. Good governance, as a topic, has dominated development discourse over the years. This is because of its centrality to the wellbeing of people as well as for the development of countries. This explains why good governance has been defined in various ways by various scholars and world governance institutions. Vartola et al. (2010) asserted that good governance is not restricted to a specific definition. Asaduzzaman and Virtanen (2016) were of the view that good governance has to do with the efficient and effective use of state power in a truly democratic setting. The World Bank (1992) stated that good governance is central in creating and sustaining the environment, which fosters strong and equitable development which remains essential to sound economic policies. Aspects of good governance, which can be referred to also as elements of good governance, identified by the World Bank include political accountability, freedom of speech and participation, rule of law and independence of the judiciary, bureaucratic accountability, freedom of information, a sound administrative system, and partnership between the government and the civil society organizations (Blunt, 1995). The above identified factors are perquisite to good governance in any country. Good governance is manifested by a governance system that is implemented with respect to the rule of law and which allows for popular participation in the political and governance process. It is directed towards ensuring the wellbeing of people and the development of the country. Governance entails public administration as well as the institutions, methods, and instruments of governing. Furthermore, it also incorporates the relationship between the government and citizens (including business and other citizen groupings) and the role of the state.

According to Dwivedi (2002, p. 38), the scope of governance includes

1) *Political Governance:* This has to do with setting policies, harnessing resources, and creating structure for decision-making, creating avenues for the mass participation of citizens in governance, respect for fundamental human rights, and respect for the principle of the rule of law.

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2) *Economic Governance:* This entails economic and financial issues that are to be taken into consideration in governance, as well as the private sector, globalization, and international trade. This is to examine their role and place in governance.

3) *Social Governance:* This has to do with the issues of norms, values, and standards that are meant to serve as a guide in the governance process and system. Issues such as culture, religion, and civil society should also be considered in governance.

4) *Green Governance:* This includes environmental democracy, sustainable development, environmental bill of rights, and green justice.

5) *Spiritual/Morality-inspired Governance:* This covers the domain of moral leadership which is a major requirement for a government that can be considered as good. The issue of morality is central in governance because it forms the basis to determine whether governance is good or not.

The scope of governance enunciated by Dwivedi (2002) is crucial because when applied in the governance systems of countries, it would bring about good governance that can satisfy the yearnings and aspirations of the citizens.

Having examined governance and good governance, another concept to be clarified is development. Development itself is a multidimensional concept and can also be viewed from a multidisciplinary perspective, but central to development are people. This is in line with the view of Todaro (1982), who postulates that development should be perceived as a multidimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of the entire economic and social systems. Development can only be said to have taken place if the wellbeing of the people is guaranteed. This view was corroborated by Seers (1969) when he asserted that the purpose of development in the society is to reduce poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Development has been defined technically by several scholars across the globe as well as many world governance institutions, such as the World Bank and United Nations. Indeed, it comprises the overall progress in the society that manifests in the welfare and wellbeing of the people.

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Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the social contract theory. This theory was propounded and popularized by Thomas Hobbes, J. J. Rousseau, and John Locke. It suggests the emergence of the modern state and what the modern state should do for the citizens. It emphasizes that before the emergence of the modern state, people lived under the state of nature. The state of nature, according to this theory, preceded the modern state. In the state of nature, people exercised their personal right to govern themselves. In fact, they provided for themselves and self-fulfilled all their needs. However, as time went on, the strong among them started to devour the weak. Consequently, the lives of the people were cut short and lawlessness pervaded the landscape because 'might was right'. According to Thomas Hobbes, the state of nature was solitary, nasty, brutish, poor, and short.

According to the social contract theory, when the people became tired with life in the state of nature, they decided to form the modern state to protect their lives and properties, as well as to provide them with their welfare needs. The modern state has to do with numerous institutions that collectively comprise the state system, while the institutions give the state its true meaning (Ekekwe, 1986).

Models of Governance

The issues of good governance and development are crucial to Africa, considering the state of development of the continent. In comparison with Europe and North America, Africa is lagging behind in virtually all indices and indicators of development. This explains why the discourse on governance and development is not only welcome in Africa but is seriously embraced.

At this juncture, the models of governance are examined. Asaduzzaman and Virtanen (2016) discussed the following five models of governance.

1. *The Government-as-Machine Model:* This model views the government as a machine that is dominated by rules, regulations, and standards of all kinds. Without rules and regulations, the government cannot be in a position to discharge its functions efficiently and effectively.

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2. *The Government-as-Network Model:* This model posits that the government is an intertwined system, a complex network of temporary relationships designed in such a way as to be able to solve societal problems. It emphasizes the need to build partnership and collaboration of the government with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as private sector organizations, to be able to perform its functions better.
3. *The Performance-Control Model:* This model suggests that the government should be run like a business. While, the government is not setup to make profit, the model explicates the fact that the government should be run in such a way as to be able to meet the needs of the citizens. The thrust of this model is that different units of the government should be in place with the assigned functions and targets they are expected to meet.
4. *The Virtual-Government Model:* This model postulates that the elements of the new public management should be applied in government for efficient and effective service delivery. These elements include privatization, contracting out, and outsourcing.
5. *The Normative-Control Model:* There are five important elements in this model which include

- *Selection*: People are chosen based on values and attitudes in combination with credentials;
- *Socialization*: This has to do with ensuring that membership is dedicated to an integrated social system;
- *Guidance*: Guidance is by accepted principles rather than imposed plans, by vision rather than targets;
- *Responsibility*: All members are made to share responsibility. Everyone needs to be trusted and supported by leaders;
- *Judgement*: Performance is judged by experienced experts as well as the recipients of the service.

All of the above models are useful in governance, but adopting and applying them is dependent on the circumstances prevalent in the country or the society. The aspects that can bring about good governance and

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development in Africa are encouraged. This is because Africa as a continent is in dire need of good governance and development.

Methodology

The data were derived from archival materials. Secondary method of data collection was chosen keeping in view both the contemporary and the historical nature of the research. The gathered data were analysed using the historical and descriptive methods. The methodology adopted in this paper stemmed from the need and desire to make the subject matter easy to understand for students, researchers, and government officials. The latter can easily use the knowledge gained to formulate and implement useful policies that can improve governance and development across the world. Though the study area is Africa but the knowledge associated with this paper can be useful for all countries of the world. The issue of development is the business of all countries and governance is one of the prerequisites for development. This is because development is an end and governance is a means of achieving this end. It is against this backdrop that governance should be thoroughly studied to engender development across the world.

Results and Discussion

Africa, as a whole, is facing several challenges which greatly hamper the development process and significantly reduce its pace. Indeed, Claude Ake asserted that what is developing in Africa is underdevelopment (Ake, 1996b). In the 21st century, many African countries still find it difficult to conduct free and fair elections; while corruption remains highly prevalent causing a high rate of poverty. Further, the continent is marred with unemployment, insecurity, and a low level of educational attainment. Virtually all countries in Africa are products of the colonial rule. The colonial masters deeply exploited their material and human resources. This partly explains why there were series of agitations for independence by the people in Africa. Many believed that Africa would start witnessing unprecedented growth and development after independence but events that played out in post-colonial Africa proved otherwise. Ake argued that the colonial state did not change at independence, only the leaders changed. Ake (1996a), referring to the political class in Nigeria and by extension all Africa, opined that "it did not fight the colonial system in order to change it but merely to inherit it, its intent, now clearly manifest, to inherit the

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exploitative colonial system" (p. 23). Politics constitutes a significant challenge to the issues of governance and development in Africa. The nature of politics in most parts of the continent is antithetical to good governance and development. This explains why Ake opined that politics keeps Nigeria underdeveloped. According to Ake (1996a), the political class in Africa values political power to the extent that they can do anything to get it. Part of what they do to get power is antithetical to development. The political class is so engrossed in the pursuit of political power that they have little time for governance and development. This explains why in many parts of Africa, immediately after every election and the leaders sworn in, they immediately start making preparations to return to the same or other offices in another four or so year. When leaders are so preoccupied with the issues of politics and elections, they can hardly offer good governance that may lead to development.

Furthermore, the continent is not developing as it is supposed to because most of the political leaders use their positions to amass wealth for themselves and their families, leaving the vast majority in penury. This explains why despite the enormous resources available in Africa, Africans themselves are so poor. There is large scale corruption in many African states, while money meant for development projects and programmes is embezzled by most political leaders. Massive corruption that characterized government activities in Nigeria made President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration to establish two anti-corruption agencies, namely the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Despite the existence of these agencies, corrupt practices remain prevalent in the country.

Due to the issues of electoral malpractices, if not curbed, good governance and development would remain a distant dream in Africa. In many parts of Africa, electoral malpractices are still very much prevalent. The products of manipulated elections are not likely to be good leaders because they operate in a compromised environment which favours their stay in power. Since the system favours them, they are not likely to change the system. This explains why many African leaders do not take issues of transparency and accountability seriously. Without transparency and accountability, what is left is bad governance and bad governance cannot engender development. Leaders who are products of electoral malpractices

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are not likely to engender electoral reforms that may lead to free, fair, transparent, and credible elections.

Many political leaders in Africa exhibit impunity in governance. There are many instances of abuse of office and state power; the instruments of state power are used without recourse to the rule of law. This situation manifested in Nigeria during the End Sars protest in 2020 and the End Bad Governance protest between August 1 and August 10, 2024. The security agencies were deployed, the protesters were teargased, and live ammunition was used against them, leading to loss of lives. In Nigeria's Fourth Republic, only the late President Yar'adua and Goodluck Ebele Jonathan initiated serious and meaningful electoral reforms. President Muhamadu Buhari did not do much in the area of electoral reform. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has been over a year in office, yet there is no evidence of discussion on electoral reform that can engender free, fair, and credible elections. According to Sogolo (2024), political leaders in Nigeria often disobey and disregard laws, rules, and regulations. The situation is the same in virtually all countries in Africa. State power is used for the benefit of political leaders with little or no regard for the populace. Since a large number of citizens are alienated by the governance system, they develop a parochial political culture which favours the political leaders. This is because they have greater opportunity to perpetuate the advancement of their personal interest, as against the interest of the vast majority of the citizens. This explains the increase in poverty level in many African states. Due to bad governance, many of these states are not able to provide public goods to their citizens and as such development has remained at bay. This is because there is a relationship between governance and development. Good governance is more likely to promote development, while bad governance hampers development. High level corruption in many African States has caused high levels of poverty, unemployment, and hunger. Just recently, the citizens of Kenya and Nigeria trooped out to the streets to protest against what they termed as bad governance. The foregoing conditions have led to poor infrastructure, poor economy, terrorism and kidnapping, secessionist agitations, unemployment, and general level of insecurity and underdevelopment.

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Conclusion

The role of governance in development cannot be overemphasized. Indeed, every country desirous of development must pay serious attention to the governance system. The issues of governance cannot be discussed without reference to the electoral system. The electoral system is very important in determining the nature of governance and by extension, development. When the people are given an unhindered opportunity to select their leaders through elections, they are likely to produce leaders that engender good governance. On the contrary, manipulated elections are likely to produce bad leaders. Hence, leaders and followers in Africa need to work assiduously to ensure that there is good governance and development across the continent.

Recommendations

For there to be good governance and development in Africa, all hands must be on deck to find the solution to bad governance and underdevelopment. There should be electoral reforms that warrant free and fair elections. There is a strong correlation between election and governance. When elections are free, fair, and credible and the votes of the people count, then the leaders that emerge in such elections are more likely to listen to the people and their demands and try as much as possible to meet those demands. Moreover, if they fail to meet the demands of the people, they are likely to be thrown out in the next election. However, the reverse would be the case of a manipulated and rigged election; leaders who emerge from flawed elections are not likely to care much about the people because they believe that they do not need people's support or vote to win elections. These leaders are more likely to loot the resources of the state because parts of the loot are likely to be invested in influencing elections and election-related matters. According to Anifowose (2003), "without free elections, citizens would have no meaningful say in setting the national agenda, defining policy alternatives and determining who will rule" (p. 41). It is on this note that efforts should be made by the citizens and governments of African states to engage in electoral reforms that would cleanse the electoral system in order to make the votes of the people count. When this is achieved, politicians are not likely to spend too much money on elections. When they eventually assume office, they are more likely to spend state funds for developmental purposes. The citizens should continue to demand for free, fair, and credible elections.

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There should be political awareness and sensitization of the people to encourage them to be active participants in politics and governance. When citizens do not participate actively in politics and governance, the leaders have a field day doing whatever they like. Docility on the part of the citizens encourages bad governance and massive corruption by the political class. No doubt, bad governance and massive looting give rise to poverty, hunger, unemployment, security challenges, and low level of development in all facets of national life.

Manufacturing, production, and employment generation should be encouraged. According to Karl Marx, economic substructure determines the nature of the superstructure. In this vein, poverty, hunger, and unemployment can discourage people from participating actively in politics and governance. The political class in Nigeria has over the years exploited and continues to exploit the poor, the hungry, and the jobless youth in politics and governance. This they do by giving them money to buy their votes during elections. Further, they have been used also as thugs to disrupt elections, cart away ballot papers and boxes, and for burning the properties of the political opponents of their principals. They even go as far as killing political opponents. To guide against this ugly scenario, the government should try as much as possible to create jobs as well as an enabling environment for both foreign and local investors to come and invest so that poverty, hunger, and unemployment may be reduced drastically.

The fight against corruption should be taken seriously and those found wanting should be punished in accordance with the law. Corruption is pervasive, prevalent, and predominant in virtually all countries in Africa. It is one of the reasons for the low level of development across the continent. All hands must be on deck to tackle corruption because without dealing with this scourge, development will remain a distant dream.

Policies for national integration should be put in place to discourage tribalism and nepotism. Virtually all countries in Africa, at one time or another, experienced colonialism. Most countries in Africa are made up of different ethnic groups. Nigeria has over 300 ethnic nationalities. The diverse nature of the country in terms of ethnicity and religion has been affecting governance adversely. To worsen the situation, politicians exploit such divisions to advance their political interest. This situation manifested itself in the 2023 General Elections in Lagos State where some

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Yorubas threatened the Ibos not to come out to vote because they felt the Ibos were not supporting the ruling party. Some who dared to come out to vote were beaten up. This type of situation negatively affects governance and development. To guide against this scenario, the governments of African states should try as much as possible to formulate and implement integration policies.

Last but not the least, discrimination of all kinds should be shunned and discouraged to encourage peace, loyalty, and patriotism. For example, the current President of Nigeria is from the Yoruba ethnic group and has appointed virtually all heads of critical sectors in the country from his tribe. These include the Chief of Army Staff, the Inspector General of Police, the Director General of the Department of State Security Service, the Chairman of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, the Minister of Finance, the Central Bank Governor, and others. This has created animosity and anger among other ethnic groups in Nigeria and as such, they have been agitating for secession because of their perceived marginalization. This has resulted into violence and absence of peace in some parts of the country, while nation-building and development in general have been affected adversely. No doubt peace, loyalty, and patriotism are needed for nation-building. They can be achieved in any country only if the governance system serves every segment of the country. All segments and sections of the country would have the sense of belonging if they are not discriminated against in governance. This would make them see the need to contribute their quota in nation-building. The Ibos in Nigeria feel marginalized and as such they are agitating for secession from the Nigerian state. The leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) Mazi Nnamdi Kanu has been arrested and placed in detention. This situation is partly what is fuelling the security crisis in the eastern part of the country, a condition that has led to the death of many people including security agents.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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