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Political intolerance as a clog in the wheel of democratic governance: The way forward

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This paper synoptically discusses the concept of political (in)tolerance and its implication on any democratic setting alongside with the concept of governance. Against this background, it argues that most African states took over from centralized and unrepresentative colonial ethnic and religious separatism – tribalism – and become victims to centrifugal aspirations of ambitious politicians speaking in the name of ethnic, religious and regional minorities (Esman, 1997). This monocratic political order (which derives from the Hobbesian notion/conception of the state) not only failed as a system but led to serious in tolerance and in some cases disastrous consequences for the economy and people of Africa (Olowu, 1995). And as a result, enormous amount of money is being spent worldwide on questions of political tolerance. Political intolerance and lack of debate, according to literature, had caused retardation in ideas, innovation, creativity and growth of political consciousness among people due to the fear of misconception of such ideas by their political opponents or fellow comrades. This makes democratic transitions arduous thereby threatening the consolidation of democracy. Political tolerance is not easy to practice. However, its exercise, without jettisoning social justice or the abandonment or weakening of one's conviction will promote a culture of political pluralism. This, without any controversies, will guarantee peace and harmony which is a cornerstone of democratic consolidation. For democratic engine to be well propelled, regardless of any strategy, the best public policy should arise out of citizens' willingness to imbibe positive values as well as any other attribute and be ready to tolerate the expression of a plurality of political opinions, including those different to their own. This is essential because, instrumental to good democratic governance is human beings with positive values and other dimensions of human performance that enable social, economic and political institutions to function and remain functional, over time (Adjibolosoo, 1995).

Key words: Political (in)tolerance, democratic governance, political consciousness, monocratic, democratic engine, positive values, centrifugal aspiration, ethnic and religion separatism, social justice, hobbessian, democratic consolidation.

INTRODUCTION

God, in His infinite wisdom, made our dear country (Nigeria) a rainbow collection of tribes and tongues. The rainbow in the sky is a thing of beauty. But we seem blind to the beauty in our rainbow collection of tribes and tongues. Instead, we find mutual suspicion, hate and fear in other tongues and tribes. Consequently, several parts

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of our country are today convulsed in political intolerance political intolerance manifested in inter and intra-ethnic conflicts leading to loss of lives as well as the destruction of private and public properties. The gun is beginning to rule and ruin our country. This inexorable march to perdition must be halted. We must halt it (Adamu, 2002). Few years before the 21st century, there were some inexplicable concern of many statesmen and important world bodies for all nations to adopt democracy as a form of government. Although, in most countries inequality is entrenched in the socio-political system, yet the spokesmen insist that life of men on earth will be greatly improved morally if all people came to live under democratic government (Awa, 1997 as cited by Akindele, 2002).

One needs not search relentlessly for other statement(s) that captures the theme of this paper more than the above two statements as a premise for the commencement of its analytical articulation. This is so in that the issues of politics and good governance can only be achieved through political tolerance in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country like Nigeria. Generally, political (in)tolerance is an issue of serious importance of which constant and frequent attention must be directed and devoted. It forms the basis for peaceful coexistence between the Muslims and the Americans in the United States, Arabs and the French in France, the Chechens and the Russians in Russia and Communists, Jews and atheists throughout the world.

However, given the so much research effort devoted toward understanding (in)tolerance one might conclude that few important questions remained unanswered. In fact, this is not so. The reason why multi-ethnic, multi- language and multi-cultural country, like Nigeria, who fought with common voice and unity for independence, still faces serious political problem due to intolerance, still remains a fundamental subject that deserves constant examination and re-examination from various perspectives. This is precisely the objective of this paper, for at least two reasons. First, events in Nigeria since the return to civil rule in May 1999 show that political intolerance manifested in the termites of ethnic and religious intolerance/crises are beginning to eat into the wood works of the country's national unity and cohesion. Second, when a multi-religious and multi-ethnic nation of Nigeria's status in the African and global politics faces increasing crisis of confidence engendered by years of frustrations and disappointments, the temptation to seek refuge in the comparatively safe haven of ethnicity and religion which lead to political intolerance is almost obligatory. Thus, when people, out of fear, ignorance or suspicion or a lethal combination of these, retreat into this, their immediate enemies are other tribes and those of different political persuasion or ideologies who, only a while ago, were their best friends.

Some physical examples are the community and ethnic clashes between the Ijaw and Itshekiri in 1997, Ife and Modakeke in 1997, Iju and Itaogbolu in 1998 over the creation and location of local government headquarters

(Olaopa, 2001) as well as the election and religious crises experienced in Jos in 2009. Political intolerance is not only limited to communities, it is also one of the features of individual politician in Nigeria to the extent that the country, in the last three years, has witnessed increasing spate of political assassination. The reason for this according to Olaopa, Akinola and Salaam (2009), is that governance has deviated from a call to service, but avenue for corruption and accumulation of wealth. This, they argued, resulted in a system of patronage in public offices which provoke political intolerance. The attitude actually led to political assassinations because professional, economic and political elites sought political power as a condition to fulfilling and furthering their economic interests (Olaopa et al., 2009). Ethnic, religious and political intolerance replaces tolerance and understanding and, these hinder the principles of democracy explainable in good governance. Today, in Nigeria, it is important to research into this scenario which seems to be playing itself out across our society on a regular basis, raising fears about its continued existence as one country because the shadow of political intolerance lengthens far beyond the shadow of mutual understanding.

Many analysts have continued to predict the failure of Nigerian federation on account of the profile of its emergence as a post-colonial state, the nature of its formation, the behavior of the political elites, the mode of politics and diversity (Adejumobi, 1991; Agagu, 2005; Dudley, 1982; Ogunsanwo, 1990). As a result of these, they have seized every opportunity offered by the occasional political convulsions to assert its imminent fall as a federation. Some have indeed wondered if the country with all its diversities can be molded into a stable and united federation (Nnoli Okwudiba, 1978 1989, 1989, 1994, 1995, 1998). However, this pessimistic thinking notwithstanding, it is believed that no fears should be entertained as the forces of unity will continue to defeat the forces of disunity in Nigeria. This is so in that, despite the loud and strident voices of the evil little men, they are outnumbered by good men and women. It should equally be noted that, merely piling pious hope upon hope is not sufficient to defeat the forces of intolerance. The country cannot afford the luxury of such naivety any longer, given the ugly scars of political intolerance that it is facing. The problem of intolerance experienced in Nigeria have been blamed on the divisive politics emanated from the various conception of politics particularly its conception as a game of comparative opportunities (Olaopa et al., 2009; Jega, 2000). These comparative advantages in political opportunities tend to create assumed opportunity for one group or tribe to dominate others. This, with other conceptions of what politics is and what is not further fuel people's attitude towards political intolerance (Omolayo and Arowolaju, 1987; Akindele, 2000). Against this background, this paper will attempt the discussion of the concept of politics, how it generates the discord of political intolerance and its effects on the achievement of good governance. In doing this, the meaning and causes

of political (in)tolerance will be identified and ways to combat intolerance in Nigeria and other democracies in Africa will be proposed.

POLITICS: A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

Politics can be understood to imply an art (human activity or practice) and an academic discipline or a field of study. {This portion is X-rayed from the first author's previous work (Akindele et al. (2000): The subject-matter of political science, Ibadan: College Press & Publishers Ltd)}. As an art or practice, politics may be construed in terms of being an occupation which involves the skill, insight and astuteness of a leader or other officials involved in politics as a career. It also involves the activities of people who work for a political party. As an academic discipline, politics involves the study of how people are governed. It deals with the study of the relationship between the 'rulers' and the 'ruled', that is, the relationship between the government and the citizens.

Many people usually confuse politics as an academic discipline with politics as an art. The captives of this ignorance and confusion are found not just among the uneducated but also among the educated ones. They refer to students and teachers of politics, albeit erroneously as 'politicians', thus, equating political scientists with politicians. We consider it expedient to point out here that there is a world of difference between politics as a field of study and politics as an art or practice. People who practically engage in political activities are politicians. On the other hand, those associated with politics as an academic field of study, for instance, teachers of and researchers in politics are known as political scientists. These two spheres are clearly demarcated. None-theless, a political scientist may choose to take part in practical politics (in which case he also becomes a politician). While many political scientists have been successful in practical politics, an expert in political science may not necessarily be a good politician. Often, 'politics' is used interchangeably with 'political science' and government' as depicted by the names ('politics', 'political science' government') given to this discipline in various institutions of learning. As a reference to a field of study however, 'political science' rather than politics is generally preferred though, not limited to it while when we talk of it in terms of practice we normally use the word politics.

So far, we have examined two senses in which politics can be considered. But, specifically, what constitutes the nature of politics? Or, put more succinctly, what is politics? Politics is something about which virtually everyone has some ideas and it affects the lives of everyone. William Welsh (1973) and Robert Dahl (1956, 1976) capture this characteristic of politics in their works by asserting that politics is ubiquitous in human

circumstances. Writing in a similar vein, Aristotle (384-322BC) observes that 'man is by nature a political animal'. Yet, it has so far proved impossible to find a universally acceptable definition of politics. This may indeed be seen as paradoxical. The inability to reach a consensus regarding the definition of politics derives, in part, from its ubiquity and pervasiveness and the varying conceptions to which it has been subjected by scholars, practitioners and the uninitiated ones. Some people generally associate politics with dirty tricks, scheming and power relationships and conflict at any level. Hence, people talk of politics in the family, in students' community and trade unions among a host of others.

Arising from the mistiness surrounding the concept, there are some political scientists who argue against any rigid definition of the discipline of political science. This view holds that by rigidly defining the discipline one would tend to restrict its natural growth. It then posits that political science is whatever the political scientist desires to bring within its scope and therefore the definition of political science is only contextual. This definition is symmetrical to the adage which says beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. However, despite the haziness, various scholars have attempted to provide definitions of politics within the parameters of political science. For example, politics has been defined as inclusive of: Analytical Politics dealing with the 'state as an organism for concentration and distribution of political powers of the nation and Practical Politics dealing with the form and substance of actions of the state.

Alfred de Grazia (1962) states that politics deals with the events that happen around the decision making centres of government'. Similar definitions range from the conception of political science as 'the study of government', the study of the control, distribution and use of power over human activities in society. Khan, Mackown and McNiven (1972) define politics as the human behaviour and ideas in the context of an organized community where this behaviour is concerned with the determination of priorities and policies in the name of the community. And, according to Apter (1977), politics involves the 'relations between the ruler and the ruled and the means and ends each employs'.

On the basis of these conceptions, the role of the political scientists becomes very clear. They (political scientists) usually strive to deal with 'the role and character of authority and power, the characteristics of political man and political behaviour, the requisites for political stability and causes of political change and revolution'. Other orientations of political scientists include gaining the knowledge of what really happened and why such things happened. In the word of Peter Merkl (1979), a political scientists 'wants to learn in a general and systematic way what means will best achieve particular goals, by what standards can one appraise events and actions in the realm of politics'. The orientation to deal with some of these issues dates back to the classical Greek period and

period and beyond. Those who have intellectually and analytically

dealt with issues of politics include(d) Cicero, St. Augustine, Thomas Acquinas, Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke (in the 17th century), Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill (in the 19th century) and 18th and 19th century products: Frenchman Jean Jacques Rousseau and German Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

The contributions of such political theorists as David Easton and Harold Lass well cannot be ignored. David Easton (1957, 1969) sees politics as the 'authoritative allocation of values for society' while for Harold Lass well (1936, 1950) politics is concerned with 'who gets what?, when? Where? And how?' This has recently been remodified to include WHY? by contemporary political scientists (These authors are one of the contemporary political scientists who have found it appropriate to add the question Why? To the determinism underlying policy actors of Government and/or policy makers as classically espoused by Harold Lasswell). Reviewing these two definitions Nnoli (1978 1989, 1989, 1994, 1995, 1998), among others, opines that they are hardly sufficient definitions of politics as they are concerned only with the distribution of resources to the neglect of the production of resources. Conversely, Nwabuzor and Mueller (1985) have contended that Lasswell's (Op cit) definition is useful in that 'it expands the horizon of the enquirer, encouraging him to look for politics in many social settings other than formal public government'. Another conception of politics is that which views it as the struggle for power. A radical variant of this is offered by the Marxists as derived from the works of Karl Marx (1818-1883). In essence, politics is class struggle and the state is an oppressive instrument in the hands of the ruling class. The combination of these and other areas constitute the focus of the study of political science. While traditionally the conception of the focus of political science has been on the structure of government and the state, another dimension has since been introduced which brings into the purview of political science the nature of the forces that constitute and shape government, its policies and actions.

THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL (IN)TOLERANCE

The above conceptions notwithstanding, peoples' inability to really delineate the real or actual meaning of politics from what it is not particularly as being associated with dirty, tricks, scheming, comparative opportunities and power relationships and conflict at any level have made politics a zero-sum game. The result is lack of tolerance among various players. This is a situation that has typically been conceptualized as an unwillingness to extend expressive rights to disliked groups or individual. As it

concerns the subject of our discussion, political intolerance as a by-product of the misconception of politics has to do with the unwillingness of people to accept the political ideas or political ways of behaving that are different from their own political beliefs and ideologies. According to the oxford advanced learner's dictionary of English Language, intolerant simply means' not willing to accept ideas or ways of behaving that are different from your own'.

Gilbson (2004), argues that a great deal of attention has been devoted by social scientists to the problem of political intolerance. This he corroborated by asserting that, 'for instance in the United States alone, major national surveys were conducted and reported by Nunn, Crockett and Williams (1978), Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus (1982), Gibson (1992), and Davis and Silver (2004), in addition to a variety of highly focused projects (e.g., Hurwitz and Mondak, 2002)' (Gilbson, 1992). Although more effort has most likely been devoted to understanding the voting preferences and behavior of ordinary citizens, political intolerance is one of the most investigated phenomena in modern political science (Gilbson, 1992). The direction of efforts and allocation of resources to investigating intolerance is understandable since the problem of political intolerance is one of the most pressing issues facing most nations in global system today. This is as a result of the influence and effects of globalization and emigration at the international level. One of the consequences of globalisation is the disappearance of physical and artificial barriers which has stimulated close socio-cultural, political and economic interactions among people and nations. At the national or domestic level also, there is high propensity for conflict and political intolerance within countries, particularly of African descent, due to their ethnic, linguistic, cultural and regional differences in the process of social and political relations. Given the fact that conflict is an inevitable characteristic of any social interactions, clashes have often resulted and tolerance is one of the few solutions to the tensions and conflict brought about by multiculturalism and political heterogeneity (Gilbson, 1992). However, it has been asserted that taking a tolerant stance is one of the more difficult tasks citizens face in a society (Rukambe, 2009) due to the fact that we are not born tolerant, but must learn to be tolerant (ERIC Digest, 2002).

Political tolerance can also be defined as "the willingness to extend basic rights and civil liberties to persons and groups whose viewpoints differ from one's own" (Patricia, 2001). This is a central tenet of liberal democracy. Democracy must encourage a wide array of ideas, values and beliefs even those which may offend segments of the population, provided such rights and freedoms are guaranteed in the laws of the land (Rukambe, 2009). Democracy functions better when there is perfect harmony between the will of the majority and respect for the rights of individuals and groups in the

minority (Rukambe, 2009). Without safeguards for the free expression of divergent opinions, Patricia (2001) argues, we risk a "tyranny of the majority". It has been argued that in a free and open society, public deliberation should expose "bad" ideas instead of suppressing them. This notion was clearly put into perspectives by Hani (http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/Politics) when he posited that:

We as the ANC-led liberation alliance have nothing to fear and everything to gain from a climate of political tolerance. We do not fear open context and free debate with other organisations … open debate can only serve to uncover the bankruptcy of our political opponents.

Along the same argumentative plane but with respect to Namibia, Pohamba (2009) was of the opinion that political power must be won or lost on the battle field of ideas, through the strength of persuasion. Thus, in simpler terms, political (and social) tolerance means accepting (accommodating, living and putting up with, and respecting) the views and ideas of others you do not agree with (Rukambe, 2009). On the other hand, Immanuel (2008), defines political intolerance as the lack of respect, acceptance and accommodation for others in the events of exercising openly their rights and freedoms. Political intolerance obtains when a group or an individual is not willing to let others act, speak or think differently from the opinion or views held by such an individual or group. In this case, an individual or a group may be discriminated against simply because of their political beliefs or association. In many instances, violence and intimidation is the natural reaction of intolerant people to views they consider inconsistent with theirs.

It has been established by literature that societies with longstanding democratic traditions have higher levels of political tolerance compared to newer democracies. According to Rukambe (2009), a recent study by Diane Orces about political intolerance in the Americas showed that countries such as Canada, US and Costa Rica displayed low level of political intolerance because of higher levels of democratic consolidation, compared to fledgling democracies, such as Panama, Bolivia, Honduras and Ecuador. The study further revealed that democracy thrived better in a climate of political tolerance compared to one of intolerance (http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu /files/lze0z6/Orces.pdf).

In Africa, according to Rukambe (2009), the early democratisation process which accompanied decolonisation in the 1960s saw higher levels of political intolerance compared to the 'second liberation' in the 1980s. With nation-building and national unity as the national rallying cry during decolonisation, political dissent was considered an anathema to this urgent political goal. This led to the outlawing of opposition parties, gagging of the media and centralisation of state power under totalitarian

rule (Rukambe, 2009). This experiences was eloquently summarised by Mashele (2009) while commenting on Kenya during the Daniel Arab Moi era that everything was then tied to the ruling KANU party and citizens were obliged to follow the footsteps of the leader under the philosophy of *Nyayo (footsteps):* Moi himself was the leader and pathfinder and the rest of society the followers(Guardian, 2009). The situation was so worse, according to Rukambe (2009), that nobody dares to have a different opinion from the ruling party except such person is ready to disappear or flee into exile. This period saw immense polarisation and conflicts as citizens jostled for power and resources, a situation which pitted Kenyans against each other mainly along ethnic and regional lines (Rukambe, 2009).

Nigeria's political balance sheet also portend the same picture as President Obasanjo was equally accused of using the Economic and Financial Crime Commission to witch-hunt, harass and embarrass political opponents and those suspected to be anti third term agenda. Political parties' primaries were manipulated in favour of the government supporters while people are being detained over unverified allegations. During this period, a lot of politically suspected and motivated killings were experienced within the country's body polity. Court rulings and decision were disobeyed at will. In fact, most democratic tenets and decency were thrown in to the mud as the constitution and its principles, which are suppose to be the fundamental basis of democracy, were being violated at will without any remorse or repentance. The system was characterized by mutual distrust and suspicion between the president and his Vice, between the executive and legislature and other political functionaries due to lack of tolerance. All these resulted in lack of hope, commitment and integrity as well as pervasive deceitfulness and hatred among the rulers, between the rulers and the ruled and among the citizens with its accompanying socio-political disintegration which are clogs in the wheel of democratic governance.

A lot of reasons have been advanced by scholars as the main factors responsible for political intolerance. Some of these causes as discussed by Rukambe (2009) are highlighted below.

1. People tend to be politically intolerant when their interest is threatened or when they stand to lose benefits, powers and rights they (exclusively) enjoyed. For example, the unending rift between the former president Obasanjo and his vice, Atiku Abubakar.
2. A further cause of political intolerance is bigotry and dogmatism, that is "my views and beliefs are true and always right". It is common some political actors, especially the ruling elite, to believe their views, values and aspirations are absolute or gospel truth which all must follow without question. In this situation, as further explained by Rukambe (2009), anybody who expresses divergent views from those held by the ruling elite is

labeled and dismissed as "racist, reactionary sell-out, agent of imperialism, idiot, political prostitute, cockroach, dog, traitor, or prophet of doom".

3. The politics of the belly is another cause of political intolerance identified by Rukambe. According to him, where and when people in a party, government, or in society at large, seek to position themselves to be considered for plum jobs, lucrative tender, or for any political favour, they tend to do anything and stop at nothing, to achieve their ulterior goals. They will badmouth and backstab friends and foes alike using any means at their disposal: from spreading false information via gossip andhoax e-mails to even plotting the "elimination" of whoever they dislike or disagree with.

4. Political intolerance abounds when citizens feel the avenues for dialogue and constructive engagement are restricted or shut down. Political pluralism and diversity requires an environment in which citizens engage with each other and with public institutions in a free and open manner. If such avenues are non-existent or limited, people become disenchanted with democracy and revert to undemocratic (sometimes violent) means to vent out their frustration and anger.

5. A further cause of political intolerance is citizen and political actors' ignorance about the rules of engagement in a democracy. According to Rukambe (Ibid), more often than not, citizens do not understand the rules that underpin democracy. And, if otherwise, then the question that arises is: why do some people consider it their right to say this area, village, or neighbourhood belongs to party A, or this is private land and we do not allow party politics here; or this our tribal land and your party has no support in this area, go elsewhere to your tribesmen for them to vote for you?

6. Political intolerance also grows in any environment where the rules of the democratic game are either non-existent, not clearly-defined, are simply not enforced, or are enforced unfairly. For example, where electoral systems and processes are skewed in favour of one group or political party and to the disadvantage of others; where electoral institutions lack independence and impartiality, or resources to carry out their mandate without fear, favour or prejudices; where electoral rules and procedures tend to inhibit free and open electioneering, or undermine a levelled playing for all in an election; or bar aggrieved parties from seeking and obtaining justice from courts; and where no regular and inclusive opportunities exist to reform electoral law, surely political intolerance will grow and will burst forth into the open in one way or another, over time.

7. Political intolerance also results from political parties and individuals who have lost national appeal and popularity and have now resorted to using the "tribal or ethnic card" for their political survival. Such people would seek to mobilise political support along ethnic and regional lines.

It is generally accepted that, instrumental to good

democratic governance is human beings with positive values and other dimensions of human performance that enable social, economic and political institutions to function and remain functional, over time (Adjibolosoo, 1995). This quality is lacking in Nigeria body politics due to the government lack of focus with respect to human capital development. It is unfortunate that people who are supposed to be custodian of democratic values, as political leaders, are fewer respecters of such values. Most of the factors identified above by Rukambe as causes of political intolerance and which can be called contaminators of democratic governance are conspicuous characteristics of Nigerian political system and elites. Consequently, there is lack of transparency, accounta-bility, integrity, commitment and responsibility on the part of the leaders expected to be oiling and propelling the democratic engine. This situation will demotivate the electorates and cause loss of hope, unity and loyalty and eventually lead to political alienation.

The implication of this is also not farfetched. It will result in large scale intolerance and violence including political factions running amok, burning of homes, seizing of ballot papers, killing and assault and assassination of political candidates and opponents, the situation that can cause apathy on the side of citizens and eventually lead to bad governance due to the absence of basic democratic values and principles in the society (Ranney and Kendall cited in Adjibolosoo, 2009). Consequent on this, many political leaders and citizens have lost their respect for democratic norms and the level of political intolerance heightens, grows and approaches an alarming proportion. The aftermaths of this attitude are electoral frauds, thugs, political assassination, all as products of the high level of political intolerance that strewn all over Nigerian political landscape (Olaopa et al., 2009). True democracy which manifests in good governance demands that citizens endure, tolerate, create and maintain a supportive political culture devoid of mutual distrust and suspicion. It also implies the attainment of good life through the improvement in the quality of life in terms of the provision of basic necessities of life, health and education, clean neighborhoods, leisure and recreational engagements and others (Adjibolosoo, 2009). The increasing wave of political intolerance identified within the experienced exchanges of words and utterances in the Southwest geopolitical zone of the country brings to mind the crisis that engulfed the old western region which eventually led to the fall of Nigeria's first republic. This also raises serious worry for the next elections as 2011 is approaching.

This opinion was put into perspective by this Day (2005) editorial that:

"Barely two years to the next general elections (referring to 2007 election), it is not out of place that politicians have heightened preparations to actualize their different aspirations across the country. But in the Southwest

geo-political zone, gladiators have not only raised the stakes but have also introduced disturbing dimensions to the struggle for power in 2007."

This situation, which is still repeating itself now, is worrisome and the worries are not without basis especially going by the antecedent of political violence emanated from lack of tolerance associated with the Southwest which resulted in bad governance. It seems as if players of the political system in the current dispensation in the Southwest zone may want to repeat the history of the past if care is not taken, they may not have learnt from the past as their attitudes seem to suggest. This problem of intolerance and the attitude of political actors towards political sit-tightism and non respect for the views of opposition is not peculiar to Nigeria (as witnessed under Obasanjo), it is also seen in the character of some other African leaders as deciphered by the 2007 Kenya general election results, the November 22, 2008 alleged head-on clash between RDP and SWAPO supporters in Outapi, Omusati region of Namibia and the variously proposed constitutional reforms/changes for selfish interests in Uganda, South Africa Mbeki, Zimbabwe and Zambia. It is in the context of all these that the issue of (good) governance is considered germane for discussion in the immediate section.

CONCEPT OF GOVERNANCE

Like most concepts of its kind, the concept of governance due to its complex weaving of "economic, political and social aspects of a Nation" (Shehu, 1999), has not been amenable to easy or simplistic definition. In other words, the concept has not been an exception to the volatility and eclecticism for which the disciplines in the Social Sciences have been globally noted whenever it comes to the conceptualisation of core issues. This explains Esman's (1997:1) claim that "no two political scientists would agree on what the concept of governance is, or what it means". Infact, as Hyden (1999) once noted, "only few authors (have) define(d) it (the concept of governance) with a view to serving analytical purpose" hence, "governance as a concept has not been extensively used (or defined) in the political literature until very recently when it gained currency" (Nkom and Sorkaa, 1996).

This notwithstanding, as Hyden (1999:24) once argued, "the concept of governance has come to occupy a more prominent position in the discourse of international development". If this is correct or, should be taken to be correct, the question needs to be asked that: what exactly or actually is governance? World Bank (1989) defines governance as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development". According to the World Bank (1993), governance has three dimensions. These dimensions which, Eyinla (1998), equally noted are: "the nature of political regimes; the exercise of authority in the

management of social and economic resources and the capacity of government to design and implement policy and to discharge its functions".

These dimensions were specifically identified and concretely elucidated by Olowu and Erero (1997) who, both conceptualized governance as relating to the "rule-ruler- ruled relationship". Specifically, Olowu and Erero (1997) identified the three dimensions of governance in the context of "rule-ruler-ruled relationship" as inclusive of "functionalism, "structuralism" and "normativism".

According to them, functionally, governance deals with "rule-making, legitimization and enforcement" while it struc-turally comprises of three distinct institutions: the "ruler or the state", the "ruled or the society" and the "rule of law". In this regard, Olowu and Erero (ibid) viewed governance as the "relationship between state and society insti-tutions". In the same vein, they claimed that "normatively, this relationship highlights the values associated with good governance". These values according to them include: "transparency, organizational effectiveness, accountability, predictability, legitimacy, popular partici-pation and plurality of policy choices". Within the same context, Boeninger (1992), defines governance as the 'good government of society". According to this scholar, governance has three dimensions: political, technical and institutional. Nkom and Sorkaa (1996) synopsized the interrelatedness of these dimensions thus:

> "The political revolves around the commitment to exercise authority or public control in a just, legitimate and rule oriented fashion. The technical concerns issues of efficiency, competence or the capacity to manage public affairs effectively to solve problems and to produce good results in resource mobilization and public management. The institutional involves options, choices and growth – enhancing activities by the public while ensuring honest or good conduct on the part of the public officials."

In the same vein, Landell-Mills and Serageldin (1992) argued that governance encompasses two interrelated dimensions: political and technical both of which consist of the government's "will to govern well and the capacity to efficiently and competently handle public manage-ment". Governance, according to Gould (1972) refers to the act of exercising control over others, inducing others to behave in specified ways as required by law. It is "policy making and policy execution regulated by systems of law and guidelines which are segregated into specific operations to achieve specific national objectives (Shehu, 1999: 1). To Brautigam (1991) and Ikpeze (1999: 73), governance connotes "the exercise of power and autho-rity in both political and economic spheres". Thus, as Ejituwu (1997), argued, "governance implies the exercise of power by a person or group of persons for the benefit of the populace" because, as he equally later claimed, it

is through governance, that "the government in power dictates the form of relationship it establishes between it and the people as well as the goal of the state in economic, political and social terms" (Ejituwu, 1997).

Implicit in the foregoing conceptual analysis of governance is the fact that, the latter connotes "the use of political authority and exercise of control over a society and the management of resources" (Wai, 1995). Hence, according to Obadan (1998: 24), governance - (in this sense) – includes: institutional and structural arrangements, decision-making processes, policy formulation, implementation, capacity development of personnel, information flows and the nature and style of leadership within a political system.

In his contribution to the conceptual discourse on governance, Idowu (1998: 74) had this to say:

"governance refers to the functions undertaken by a government maintaining a unified state, defending its territorial integrity and running its economy… It (equally) means the effective and efficient functioning of govern-ment towards securing the well-being of its citizens."

Jega (1999:101) analysed the concept of governance in relations to the "person entrusted with political power and authority". In this regard, governance according to him, involves the following:

a) Responsibility and responsiveness in leadership and in public service.
b) Accountability in the mobilization as well as in the utilization of resources.
c) Discipline, effectiveness and efficiency in handling public (as well as personal) affairs.
d) Selflessness and impartial service to the people
e) Popular participation and empowerment of the people in the conduct and management of their common affairs (Jega 1999: 101).

For governance as the "duty of government to see to the orderly and stable management of the economy" (Ukpong, 1999), to have the foregoing attributes and be effective, efficient and beneficial for democratic political arrangement, it has to be good. This is more so, since we can, as well, have bad governance. The possibility of bad governance could be said to be what the World Bank had in mind in 1989, when it began to dichotomize between good and bad governance by "advocating a political reform approach to government as a way of ensuring positive economic growth" (World Bank, 1989; Idowu, 1998).

Infact, the World Bank (1992) identified the features of bad governance as follows:

i) Failure to make a clear separation between what is public and what is private, hence a tendency to divert public resources for private gain.

ii) Failure to establish a predictable framework for law and government behaviour in a manner that is conducive to development, or arbitrariness in the application of rules and laws;
iii) Excessive rules, regulations, licensing requirements, etc, which impede the functioning of markets and encourage rent-seeking;
iv) Priorities that are inconsistent with development, thus, resulting in a misallocation of resources;
v) Excessively narrow base for, or non-transparence, decision-making.

This explains Obadan's (1998:25) characterization of bad governance as a system dominated by "ugly problems like pervasive corruption, lack of public accountability and "capture" of public services by the elites among others". These, put together, lead us to the discussion of good governance at this point of the paper. It is then decipherable from the chronology of the discussion in this paper so far, on the concept of governance, that, its goodness and utility to mankind cannot be taken for granted without severe consequences. This is particularly so, in that, as Ogunba (1997: 1), once noted "the way a people are governed is of paramount importance in determining the quality of life of the people". It is equally more so, if as Esman (1997: 1), opined, "Governance is a process that requires a viable authority" through which "the leaders are expected to exercise the power that resides with them in the interest of the state" (Ejituwu, 1997; Ogunba, 1997: 37). The need for good governance is not far fetched looking at the fact that:

"If governance is arbitrary, oppressive and capricious, the collective psyche of a people can be damaged and individuals within the community can suffer various forms of disorientation. If, on the other hand, governance is open, democratic and humanistic, a people can experience a sense of rejuvenation and fulfillment, which can lead to highly positive achievements (Ogunba 1997; Esman, 1997: 1)."

This explains Obadan's (1998: 39) position that, "it is the responsibility of citizens to demand good governance" because "it (that is, good governance) may not be forthcoming from the political leaders without prodding". Commenting on good governance, Esman (1997: 1) argued thus: "before governance can be considered good, government has got to be effective. It must first command the respect and allegiance of the people over whom it exercises governance and must satisfy certain basic collective needs."

He went further to identify some minimal elements and/or essentials of effective (good) governance as inclusive of: "provision of security for the people", "defence of the territorial borders of the state", "protection of lives and property", "enforcement of laws to enhance predictability" and "economic development". According to this scholar,

"governance requires the ability to ensure the where-withal of sustained government". He equally asserted that "effective (good) governance requires that public autho-rity be able to raise the revenues necessary to pay for services that must be provided". The essence of this argument is that, "effective governance must be able to make possible the performance by the state of certain basic services" – transportation, communication, education and health services – "relatively cheaply and reliably" (Erero, 1996; Esman, 1997). This is more so, since effec-tive governance means the capacity of the state - through its power of determinism or, authoritative allocation of scarce critical societal resources – to deliver the basic necessities of life to the governed and, equally "facilitate the process of economic development". These lines of argument tally with those of Obadan (1998:25) and Amoako (1997: 10), who have posited that:

"good governance implies efficient and effective public administration, good policies and sound ma-nagement of natural resources. It calls for the ability of a state to anticipate challenges to its well-being, provide core services with people and then argu-ment these services, act as a catalyst of charge, and guide the various forces in a society toward harmony (and national development) devoid of ideological imperialism and multi-dimensional genocidal tendencies) (Emphasis mine)."

Pursuing the same line of argument, Obadan (1998) further claimed that:

"Good governance implies ruling on the basis of equity and social justice and an end to corruption, nepotism and political manipulation of public institu-tions. Only when citizens have the belief that their government operates on their behalf, in an open and accountable manner, will government be able to obtain their willing co-operation in, for example, mobilizing resources for development."

Driving home this line of argument, Obadan (1998: 34), emphasized that, through good governance, a govern-ment should be able to effectively perform, among others, the following tasks:

i) Establishing a foundation of law.
ii) Maintaining a non distortionary policy environment, in-cluding macro-economic stability.
iii) Investing in basic social services, infrastructure.
iv) Protecting the vulnerable group in the society.
v) Protecting the environment.

Other scholars have considered good governance vis-à-vis the raison d'etre of statehood in this manner as well (Kaufman, Kraay and Zoido-Lobaton, 1999; Corkery and Bossuyt, 1990; Healey and Robinson, 1992, 1994; Bello

– Imam, 1997; Ayo and Awotokun, 1996, 1997; Nkom and Sorkaa, 1996; World Bank, 1989, 1992, 1993). These scholars' works on the concept of good governance treat it as a system of rulership that is devoid of political expediency and antidemocratic political ends. It is deducible from their works that, good governance stands for dignified existence of all political animals in democratic political settings within the global political community. According to Obadan (1998: 24) "good governance consists of five fundamental elements". He listed them thus:

i) Accountability of government officials (political leaders and bureaucrats) for public funds and resources.
ii) Transparency in government procedures, processes, investment decisions, contracts and appointments. Transparency is a means of preventing corruption and enhancing economic efficiency.
iii) Predictability in government behavior. This is particu-larly critical to the carrying out of economic transactions between individuals and in taking investment decisions: governments and public institutions should not be capricious in their behaviour and actions.
iv) Openness in government transactions and a reliable flow of the information necessary for economic activity and development to take place. Without information, rules will not be known, accountability is low, and risks and un-certainties are many. With these the cost of committing capital is also huge. An open system should, thus, be encouraged to release information to stakeholders and promote dialogue among the people as well as ensure their active participation in the socio-economic development of the country.
v) Observance of the rule of law must be adhered to by government and its citizens; this means that governments and institutions should be subject to rules and regula-tions, which are understood by everyone in the society (Obadan, 1998).

The foregoing, put together, undeniably points to the fact that, there is a relational umbilical cord between gover-nance and political (in) tolerance. In other words, it points to the fact that, there exists a significant degree of affinity between the two. This is the subject matter of focus in the next section to which we now turn.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL (IN)TOLERANCE AND GOVERNANCE

From the discussion of the concepts of political (in) tole-rance and governance within the context of this paper so far, we found it innocuous to contend that, the affinity between the two vis-à-vis the governance of men and/or the relational thrust between the "ruler" and the "ruled" within most political systems particularly, the democratic polities of the world, is self evident. Without gainsaying, it

is deducible from this discussion and/or analysis that both concepts constitute the traditional and contemporary flashpoints, which cannot but provoke the mind-set of the elites and the laymen in equal measure. The concepts are both fundamental and inalienable vis-à-vis the sociopolitical and economic systemic existence of all human beings within the various if not all polities of the world today hence, as Obadan (1998: 39) rightly argued, "when democracies are working well, they tend to create strong incentives for accountability, good governance and development.

Concretely put, however, we would like to contend that, the affinity between political (in) tolerance and governance vis-à-vis the fortunes and/or misfortunes of the larger citizenry could actually, in the real sense of it, be better appreciated, determined and analysed within the context of the evolution of most, if not all polities of the world over time. This is particularly so, if as Hyden (1995: 58), once opined, "no society escapes its past" and if "there is a definite path dependency" that "bears on the present". It is equally more so if "building democracy is not an exercise that starts from a clean state" (but), on the "ruins of the past order". The political history of most African states (particularly Nigeria) with respect to the issues of democracy vis-à-vis political (in) tolerance and governance becomes relevant in this regard. For example, as Esman (1997: 2) once argued:

"Most African states took over from centralized and unrepresentative colonial ethnic and religious separatism – tribalism – and become victims to centrifugal aspirations of ambitious politicians speaking in the name of ethnic, religious and regional minorities."

Government (in Africa) at this time was not based on the consent of the governed and, the latter had no voice in choosing their leaders who were not really accountable to them. Joseph's (1987) study of prebendalism in Nigeria and his "argument that the rulers in Africa are unable to act independently of the community they serve" echoed this. This explains why Hyden (1999), once claimed that, "the state in Africa failed to live up to the expectation people had in them in the first two decades of independence". Infact, as Nzongola-Ntalaja (2001) noted, this was the case, because the leaders at that period of time were "more interested in advancing their own narrow class interest whose realization require authoritarian methods of rule and neglect of the general welfare".

This trend, the reasons for it and, its consequences which, in part, catalysed the quest and struggle for alternative paradigm (democracy) vis-à-vis the governance of the African people and which has attracted the intellectual attention of scholars of repute - (Migdal, 1988; Chabal, 1992; Hyden, 1980; Rweyemamu and Hyden, 1975) – were equally clearly put into perspective by Olowu (1995); Wunsch and Olowu (1990), Hyden and

Bratton (1992), Hyden (1999), Olowu and Rasheed (1993), Dia (1993), Makinde and Aladekomo (1997), Erero (1996), Nzongola-Ntalaja (2001). Specifically, commenting on the disillusionment about the inherited legacy of state–based, monocratic or centralized political order adopted in Africa at the inception of independent demo-cratic governance, Olowu (1995), claimed that:

"The monocratic political order (which derives from the Hobbesian notion/conception of the state) not only failed as a system but led to serious and in some cases disastrous consequences for the economy and people of Africa."

These consequences include(d): wars, political violence, economic decline, systemic governmental corruption and, social and infrastructural decay. This failure, according to Wunsch and Olowu (1990), Olowu (1995), Nzongola-Ntalaja (2001), was due to the "premature centralization" and the "development of democratic process by fits and starts" (Akinkugbe, 2001) due to over assumption of its political utility and relevance to the needs of the people. This, consequently, led to the agitation for democratic political change and good governance in most African states, Nigeria inclusive (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2001). The spontaneous angry eactions, civil disobedience, demon-strations by Nigerians following the annulment in 1993 of the June 12, 1993 presidential election are a case in point. The insistence then by Nigerians on their political preferences (accountable democratic governance) could not but have been progenized by the attractiveness of the undercurrents of democracy as a form of political organi-sation that had long remained a mechanism for cohesion, peace and security within and across nations and their determination to achieve the deannulment of the election.

This could be argued to have been largely so because, the annulment, borrowing the language of Schmiter (1994: 57), revealed the "unprecedented challenges", "serious dangers and dilemma" of modern democracy in the 1990s and beyond. The annulment perfectly fits within the parameters of "authoritarian tutelage" and its assumed efficacy by entrenched Autocrats, Monarchs, Dictators and Nativists. It was actually a negation in Nigeria, at that time, of what Gyimah – Boadi (1994: 75) called "the apparent rebirth of political freedom" because, it dashed the democratic hopes of the Nigerians and general supporters of democracy all over the world prior to the commencement of democratic governance in Nigeria in 1999.

WAY FORWARD

Democracy as we come to know and think of it today, to be meaningful as a mechanism of governance, has to encompass political tolerance, the elements and/or essentials of (good) governance. In order to achieve this,

opportunity should be created and given to all stake-holders, the citizens, the elected leaders and society at large to interact and discuss respective issues of concern and importance. This could be propelled by a vibrant media, independent civil society, active political parties and a representative parliament.

To enhance effective identification and control of potential areas where incidents of political intolerance are imminent, there is need for the development of appropriate code of conduct for political parties and candidates. Where such already exists, it should be strenghtened by mobilizing resources to enhance its proper adequate functioning. The India case whereby the election ma-nagement body works with the Police to sincerely identify individuals who are prone to instigate violence during elections and have such individuals warned and put under surveillance (Rukambe, 2009) should be imbibed. The rule of the game (or code of conduct) should include public undertaking by political parties to adhere strictly to the code of conduct and to accept sanctions or penalties in the event of any violation. However, such sanctions and penalties should have legal force for them to be an effective deterrence (Rukambe, 2009).

Also, there is a need to enlighten citizens, community and party leaders alike, to understand that for democracy to flourish the marketplace of ideas must also be seen to flourish. Civic education should be instituted to enlighten citizens about their rights and obligations in a democracy, especially promoting political tolerance. This is essential because research has revealed that the higher the level of education, the more tolerant of divergent views people are. To achieve this government can incorporate demo-cracy education, including teaching on political tolerance, in the school curriculum at all levels.

In addition, the constitution should be strengthened in a way that it gives sound framework for electoral conduct with serious emphasis on strict adherence and punish-ment for any violation. To achieve this, there should be provision for better electoral systems, independent elec-tion administration; free and accessible voter registration; free and open competition among political parties to canvas votes; professional and transparent conduct of elections and the vote count; effective systems for re-solving electoral disputes; regular and inclusive electoral law reform must be encouraged.

Moreover, it must be ensured that racialized and ethni-cized parties or individuals are not allowed to pursue too narrow sectarian interests that could put them on a collision course with the national interest, thus precipita-ting a situation of political intolerance. They must equally be guarded against the use of ethnic differences to mobilise political support because such accentuation of differences, according to Rukambe (2009), could cause ethnic polarisation and hatred which instead degenerate into violence.

All the above, can be seen as a necessary condition for guaranteeing democracy and its consolidation, however, this paper stands to align with Adjibolosoo's (2009) opinion that the necessary and sufficient condition for good governance, sustained economic growth and human-centered development is human factor. The reason for this is simple. Any change in strategy and institution without a change in the attitudes and behaviour of the operators will be a futile effort. People's positive personal attributes, sincere confession and repentance and their willingness to demolish archaic cultural beliefs, practices, traditions, attitudes, selfishness and intolerance are sine qua non to create the violent-free political environment for an excel-lent democratic process and good governance (Emphasis mine) (Adjibolosoo, 2009). Therefore, to avoid political intolerance and achieve democratic governance, indivi-dual must be ready to imbibe positive values that will propel the engine of democracy. Our conviction on this find solace in the claim and assertion of Henry, Arthur and Jones (1995), that people are the actors through which strategy unfolds, as a result of which firms as well as political institutions succeed or fail.

Conclusion

This paper has synoptically discussed the concept of political intolerance and its implication on any democratic setting alongside with the concept of governance. Against this background, it posited that whether hetero-geneous societies can live peacefully and democratically together is a question of immense practical importance throughout the world today. And as a result, enormous amount of money and research activities are being directed worldwide on questions of political tolerance. However, exercise of political tolerance and promoting a culture of political pluralism are, without any controver-sies, a cornerstone of democratic consolidation. Intole-rance not only threatens established democratic systems, but it also makes democratic transitions arduous by threatening the consolidation of democracy.

As argued by President Jacob Zuma of South Africa, "political intolerance and lack of debate had resulted in the disintegration of democracy and the destruction of nations, as witnessed elsewhere in the world a climate in which we resist open engagement on issues of national interest due to political intolerance or fear will never allow the growth of political consciousness".

This, in the view of Immanuel (2008), clearly indicates that political intolerance retards ideas, innovation and creativity as people are not challenged to knock behind their brain when thinking in the absence of intellectual ad-versaries. The reason for this is that they might be afraid or are not too sure of how their views and/or opinions will be received, conceived and interpreted by their political opponents or fellow comrades.

However, while political tolerance is a direct antonym of

direct antonym of political intolerance, its practices should not and must not be taken to mean toleration of social injustice or the abandonment or weakening of one's conviction (Immanuel, 2008). Although, political tolerance is not a

concept that is easy to practice, practically, if tried, it gua-rantees peace and harmony in the political differences and relationships thereby catalyses the evolution and consolidation of a good democratic society needed in Nigeria and the entire Africa.

For democracy to work well, citizens must imbibe posi-tive values as well as any other attribute and be willing to tolerate the expression of a plurality of political opinions, including those different to their own. The best public policy should arise out of competition among divergent views and ideas that are expressed in a free and transparent public discourse. Thus, as argued by Dahai (2004), a democratic society needs pluralist formation of knowledge for citizens to participate effectively in the state, market and civil society and to attain empowerment.

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