

**POLITICAL INTOLERANCE AS A CLOG IN THE WHEEL OF
DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

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INTRODUCTION

God, in His infinite wisdom, made our dear country 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 of our country are today convulsed in 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 title and the expected discussion of this topic 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 ours.

Not only this, our discussion will help us retrace our steps and refocus our energies in the delicate task of nation building to which all and sundry must be committed. Admittedly, the topic itself is not particularly new. It has featured in several variants as a subject of socio-political and scholarly discourse in our

country for quite sometime now. But it remains a fundamental subject that deserves constant examination and re-examination from various perspectives for at least two reasons. Firstly, events in this country 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 our national unity and cohesion.

Secondly, when a multi-religious and multi-ethnic nation like ours 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. Ethnic, religious and political intolerance replaces tolerance and understanding and these hinder the principles of democracy explainable in good governance.

Today, in Nigeria, we see this scenario playing itself out across our society on a regular basis, raising fears about the continued existence of our country as one. The shadow of political intolerance lengthens; the shadow of understanding is growing shorter.

Many self-appointed analysts have continued to predict the failure of our federation on account of our diversity, and have seized every opportunity offered by our occasional political convulsions to assert the imminent fall of our federation.

Person of little faith have indeed wondered if this country with all its diversities can be moulded into a stable and united federation. However, this pessimistic thinking notwithstanding, we should have no fears that the forces of unity will continue to defeat the forces of disunity in Nigeria, because, despite the loud and strident voices of the evil little men, they are outnumbered by good men and women. But by merely piling pious hope upon pious hope we cannot hope to defeat the forces of intolerance. We cannot afford the luxury of such naivety any longer, given the ugly scars of political intolerance that confront us in this country. A forum such as this is a good beginning. It sends the right message that concerned citizens of our country have ears that hear and eyes that see. We must encourage more of it in various parts of this country. And we can be sure that slowly but surely, we will resolve the problem of political intolerance and build bridges of tolerance and understanding across our ethnic and religious divide. Since the solution to every human problem begins with a gathering of this nature provided the participants resist the temptation to see and turn it into an academic talk shop, the matter before us will be taken very seriously and urgently and we shall surely find the instrument to forge a binding bond of unity and tolerance from our diversity in tribes, tongues and politics for enhanced good governance of men.

The problem of intolerance experienced in this country have been blamed on the divisive politics emanated from the various conception of politics particularly its conception as a game of comparative opportunities. This comparative advantages in political opportunities tend to create assume 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. It is against this fact that we consider it necessary to discuss the concept of politics, how it generates the discord of political intolerance and its effects on the achievement of good governance.

II. Politics¹: A brief synopsis of its subject-matter:

Politics can be understood to imply an art (human activity or practice) and an academic discipline or a field of study. 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.

¹ This portion is X-rayed from the first author's previous work (see Akindele et al. (2000): The subject-matter of political science, Ibadan: College Press & Publishers Ltd).

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. Nonetheless, 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 and Robert Dahl 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, schemings, 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 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. Its 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 state 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 et al. 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, 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 world of Peter Merkl, 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 beyond. Those who have intellectually and analytically dealt with issues of politics include(d) Cicero, St. Augustine,

Thomas Aquinas, 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 Lasswell cannot be ignored. David Easton sees politics as the ‘authoritative allocation of values for society’ while for Harold Lasswell politics is concerned with ‘who gets what?, when? Where? And how?’. This has recently been remodified to include WHY? by contemporary political scientists².

Reviewing these two definitions Nnoli, 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 et al. have contended that Lasswell’s 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.

² These authors is 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.

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 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 of this 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.

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'. 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.

The implication of this is also not far fetched. It will result in large scale intolerance and violence including political factions running amok, burning of

homes, seizing of ballot papers, killing and assault 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 in the society.

As a result of this, many political leaders have lost their respect for democratic norms and the level of political intolerance will be approaching an alarming proportion. Hence, electoral frauds, thugs, political assassination, all as a result of the high level of political intolerance strewn all over our political landscape. 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. 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 2007 is approaching.

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

Barely two years to the next general elections, it is not out of place that politicians have heightened preparations to actualize their different aspirations across the country. But in the Southwest geopolitical zone, gladiators have not only raised the stakes but have also introduced disturbing dimensions to the struggle for power in 2007.

This situation 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. It is in the context of all these that the issue of (good) governance is considered germane for discussion in the immediate section.

III. 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 (Ibid) 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 structurally 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 institutions”. 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 participation 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 management”. 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 authority 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” (Ibid).

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 government 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; and
- (e) Popular participation and empowerment of the people in the conduct and management of their common affairs (Ibid).

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:

- Failure to make a clear separation between what is public and what is private, hence a tendency to divert public resources for private gain;
- 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;
- Excessive rules, regulations, licensing requirements, etc, which impede the functioning of markets and encourage rent-seeking;
- Priorities that are inconsistent with development, thus, resulting in a misallocation of resources;
- Excessively narrow base for, or nontransparence, 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 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 op cit: 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 op cit: 1).

This explains Obadan’s (1998:39) position that, “it is the responsibility of citizens to demand good governance” because “it (i.e., 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 wherewithal of sustained government”. He equally asserted that “effective (good) governance requires that public authority 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 Ibid).

This is more so, since effective 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 management 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 argument these services, act as a catalyst of change, 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 institutions. 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 (Ibid: 34), emphasized that, through good governance, a government should be able to effectively perform, among others, the following tasks:

- Establishing a foundation of law;
- Maintaining a non distortionary policy environment, including macro-economic stability;
- Investing in basic social services, infrastructure,
- Protecting the vulnerable group in the society; and
- Protecting the environment.

Other scholars have considered good governance vis-à-vis the *raison d'être* 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:

- Accountability of government officials (political leaders and bureaucrats) for public funds and resources;

- Transparency in government procedures, processes, investment decisions, contracts and appointments. Transparency is a means of preventing corruption and enhancing economic efficiency;
- Predictability in government behavior. This is particularly 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;
- 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 uncertainties 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.
- 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 regulations, which are understood by everyone in the society (Ibid).

The foregoing, put together, undeniably points to the fact that, there is a relational umbilical cord between governance 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) tolerance 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 socio-political 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 - (See 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 democratic 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, demonstrations 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) couldn’t but have been progenized by the attractiveness of the undercurrents of democracy as

a form of political organisation 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 Schmitter (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.

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

IV. Conclusion

This paper has synoptically discussed the concept of political intolerance and its implication on any democratic setting alongside with the concept of governance. In doing this, the importance of democracy vis-à-vis political tolerance was examined given the attention it has attracted over the years.

Against this background, the relationship between political (in)tolerance with the concept of governance was briefly examined wherein we posited that democracy without tolerance cannot succeed as a mechanism of good political governance. Moreover, that through democracy with citizens' tolerance of one another's views, and accountability, mutual distrust and suspicious, ethnic and tribal loyalty and crises will be avoided and minimized for the pursuit of good governance.

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