

**AFRICA, DEMOCRACY, AND THE MORTALITY OF JEREMY
BENTHAM'S UTILITARIAN HYPOTHESIS: A REVIEW**

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ABSTRACT: *This paper centers on Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarianism as it relates to democracy in Africa. His assertion on Utilitarianism is an ethical theory that lays emphasis on happiness over pains based on the greatest outcome. His theory is relevant to democracy because he explained the right form of leadership especially the legislator in enacting laws for the benefit of the masses. Democracy entails good governance, rule of law, credible elections and making the right policies that promotes economic growth and developments. African states, since independence has fall short of these practices. Before the advent of democratic governance, most African States had experienced military rule after gaining independence from their colonial masters. Corruption and leadership failure is identified as factors militating against democratic governance in Africa. This paper suggested that leaders with the right ideologies and good policy orientation should be elected to promote democracy in Africa. More so, Africa's political institutions and legal system should be strengthened to achieve good democratic practices.*

KEYWORDS: Africa, democracy, mortality of Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian hypothesis, review

INTRODUCTION

The state of nature according to Thomas Hobbes is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". It is characterized by "war of every man against every man," a constant and violent condition of competition in which each individual has a natural right to everything, regardless of the interests of others. Hence, individuals gave up their natural right to form a social contract which is govern for the protection of all and to curtail arbitrary misused of such right. Hobbes' social contract theory has a significant impact on the establishment of several forms of government that had existed throughout the centuries. In all modern states, governmental functions have greatly expanded with the emergence of government as an active force in guiding social and economic development. Government has thus become the major or even the dominant organizing power in all contemporary societies. However the most acceptable form of government that endures citizen's rights, freedom and liberty is democracy. Democracy is practiced by countries and states of the world whereby citizen's rights

are protected and their representatives are elected through a free and fair election. Democracy reflects the core value of the Unity of Nations (United Nations) at the global level which promotes human rights, development, and peace and security. Thus, the UN does not advocate for a specific model of governance, rather promotes democratic governance as a set of values and principles that should be adhered in order to attain greater participation, equality, security and human development. The global movement toward democracy, spurred in part by the ending of the cold war, has created opportunities for democratization not only in Europe and the former Soviet Union, but also in Africa.

One of the major differences between Western and Third World countries is the effective implementation of democratic values in governance. Thus, is convenient to conclude that Western countries are developed because her citizen's rights are highly protected with an effective political system. This may not be the case with African countries. After gaining independence from their colonial emperors, most African countries deviated to military rule, a system of governance occasioned by the "dictates" or decree of the military that violates the basic principles of democratic governance.

Following several decades during which violent civil conflict was common in African countries, the period from 1990 onwards was marked by a spreading and deepening of democratic principles. Nonetheless, many African countries still experience political instability and civil unrest. In terms of political instability in Africa, it is also undeniable that the continent has had some difficult moments during the last fifty years, but what is still unexplained in the many analyses that have analyzed events in Africa is the fact that in almost all the cases of political instability in Africa, it is evident that the major problem is leadership. To-date, almost every country in Africa is still haunted by historical injustices and oppressive structures that were bequeathed to the post colonial leadership. This is a crucial aspect that informs contemporary weak institutions of the state, flawed legislative systems and constant struggles for political power to the detriment of the well being of many nations, which could have moved on a path of development as part of modern societies. While the international community, whose geo-security and resource interests seem to benefit from the status quo in Africa, has not been pro-institutionalization of functioning systems in Africa, instead, their involvement, continue to undermine Africa's stability through the militarization of conflicts for accumulative purposes (Antony Otieno, 2008). Regardless of Western influence, Africa's problem still lies within Africa.

However, scholars over the years have propounded several theories in utilizing successful democratic practices. One of such notable scholar is Jeremy Bentham, an English philosopher and political radical known today for his moral philosophy, especially his principle of *utilitarianism*, which evaluates actions based upon their

consequences. Bentham's theory may be effectively analyzed in Western countries where his utilitarian principles are of certain practicability. However, the same may not accrue to African democracy that has been bedeviled with corruption, nepotism, prebendalism and contempt for the rule of law. The question is does Jeremy Bentham's theoretical postulation apply to Africa's democratic governance? Why is leadership a critical issue affecting governance in Africa democratic system? This paper critically discusses Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarianism as it relates to democracy in Africa.

The paper reflects on global best practices in democratic values and practices in relation to African democracy.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

The paper is substantially qualitative and descriptive in nature. Data for the study was obtained mainly from secondary sources such as text books, journals, articles, online publications. The study gives no consideration to statistical and mathematical data, but examines, explains and interprets data collected and collated from secondary sources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature centers on examining democratic practices in some African States in comparison to acceptable democratic norms and values.

Democracy.

The Merriam/Webster Dictionary defines democracy as a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections. It was coined from the Greek word "demos" (people) and "kratos" (rule) in the middle of the 5th century BCE to denote the political systems then existing in some Greek city-states, notably Athens. Then, democracy was in direct form where the people of Athens all partook in the administration. But as society increased in number and size it became very difficult for direct democracy to be practiced. Rather the electorate would later elect their representatives through periodic elections to represent the wishes and aspirations of the masses. Many governments that conduct elections – as the case may be, tend to describe themselves as democratic; in some cases, the term has even been incorporated into the official name of the state although in most cases where this happened the states concerned appeared significantly undemocratic (Wiseman 1990, 4). According to American political scientist Larry Diamond, democracy consists of four key elements: 1. a political system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections; 2. the active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life; 3. protection of the human rights of all citizens; 4. a rule of law, in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all

citizens. As for the systems of democracy, we can typically break these down into a parliamentary system and presidential system. The major difference between the two systems is that in the presidential system, the executive leader, the president, is directly voted upon by the people (or via a body elected specifically for the purpose of electing the president and no other purpose) and the executive leader of the Parliamentary system, the Prime Minister, is elected from the legislative branch directly – both have advantages and disadvantages embedded in each system.

For instance, in the Presidential system, it is more difficult to enact legislation especially if the President has different beliefs than the legislative body. It is difficult to measure democracy and this assertion can be seen in the views of some scholars. For instance, the Washington Post article by Seva Gunitsky titled “How to measure ‘democracy’?” The author points out that the more common indices of democracy i.e. Polity and Freedom have their flaws which just goes as far as to show that there is no consensus about the way to measure democracy. The Polity is concerned about that constraints on the elites i.e. how much a president is checked by parliament. On the other hand, Freedom cares much more about individual rights and personal freedoms. In a nutshell, the various researchers on this topic agree the main issue with existing measures of democracy is that they are inadequate for measuring small changes and differences in the quality of democracy; empirically analyzing relationships among various elements of democracy; and evaluating the effectiveness of targeted democracy promotion efforts.

Democracy in Africa

In reviewing relevant literatures, Professor Saliba Sarsa and Julius Adegunle wrote a piece titled "Democracy in Africa, political changes and challenges. The authors of this work mention that democracy is easier to understand than to live because it is “not a quick fix or to be practiced only on election days. They term democracy as a “general project” that must be anchored on different facets of the participation of citizens, accountability of rulers, open economies and just societies. Unfortunately, these characteristics are not imbibed by some of Africa's strongmen. Example of such African leader is former President of Uganda, Idi Amin Dada who expelled all Indians in Uganda as he deemed them leeches to the growing economy and ignored the participation of citizens as he ruled Uganda for 9 years without any elections. Another of such African leader is Robert Mugabe who deprived citizens of their chance at wealth through his notorious land reforms that only favored his close allies and also illegally sent soldiers to engage in the Congolese civil war which set the economy back as he raced to please returning veterans who weaken the opposition in order to keep him in power.

In Jonathan Van Eerd's book titled "The quality of democracy in Africa; opposition competitiveness rooted in legacies of cleavages" he somehow ties these into a series

that looks at challenges to democracy in the 21st century. In his analysis, Eerd opined that multiparty democracy is peculiar to almost every sub-Saharan African countries. With the exception of the South European countries that started the third wave of democratization in the 1970s, most of the subsequent third wave transitions produced “incomplete” or “grey area” types of democracy. Eerd points out that only a minority of these third wave electoral regimes became representative democracies/polyarchies. (As described by Robert Dahl, this is a form of government in which power is invested in multiple people, a polyarchy takes a form of neither a dictatorship nor a democracy.)

In the debate as to whether Colonialism promotes democracy in Africa, Kawalya-Tendo in his book "Democracy in Africa, a literature review" objected. His assertion is premised on the study of the divide and rule policies that the British and the French implemented in their colonies. This is exemplified in the Rwanda genocide, where powers were given to the minority Tutsi and alienated the Hutus. Another example is the case of Uganda where they installed Acholi over the majority Baganda which led to the agitations of several tribes fighting for their independence from the forged British state. In the case of Nigeria they favored the Yoruba over the Igbo and Hausa tribes. In an article published by Alexander Lee and Jack Paine of the University of Rochester, the authors seek to investigate the democratic nature of colonial democracies. They denote that although former British colonies are considered more democratic than other countries, there is a change as we see a “convergence” in democracy levels. The authors attribute the divergence of policy approaches to decolonization by European powers as being contributors to this pattern. On the other hand, it is agreed upon by some that Britain promoted bureaucratic structures that maintained order through the rule of law rather than through arbitrary authority. However, there are different scholarly views concerning British colonization and democracy; whereas, before the advent of colonial rule, African societies were primarily traditional societies ruled by kings and divided into empires and kingdoms e.g the Oyo empire, Benin Empire, Songhai Empire, the African traditional political system was based on communal panache with an element of collective participation in local affairs. The spirit of oneness has made the traditional political system more unique in the world. Accountability was sacrosanct, even more than Western societies; the chiefs handled both communal functioning, divine and even any natural catastrophe that occurs. As check and balance, the chief/s may be asked to go to exile or commit suicide if he violates the fundamental ethos of social order (Ake 1991). It is in line with Ake’s argument that Salih (2001) recognizes the democratic structure of African indigenous institutions, he argues that democracy was embedded in African pre-colonial administration; however, the colonial and postcolonial political systems have commandeered the exclusion of citizens from democratic governance. The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914

saw a rebirth of the Nigerian state, thereby destroying its traditional institutions and introduced the British system of indirect rule.

In the post-colonial era, Kenneth Kalu and Toyin Falola in their book titled "Exploitation and Misrule in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa." discourse that the European powers that colonized Africa "weakened" or, in other cases, "destroyed" the indigenous political systems that existed prior to their arrival. Political structures were set up reflecting European structures and their idea of leadership were foreign to Africa. The ways in which Africans assimilated and reshaped the colonial legacy created problems for African societies and nations after independence. In general, European forms of government placed an emphasis on the independence of individuals within society which is what we find in most of the literature. In Africa, by contrast, the individual is seen as part of a larger community, such as kin, ethnic group, or village. What the authors left out is how Westerners tend to judge political leaders by such qualities as personal character, statesmanship, and political skill and they expect leaders to safeguard individual rights and privileges. Africans, however, tend to judge leaders on how well they reflect the communities that they represent and how they can best serve those communities. One expression of this difference is the way each society considers the relationship between wealth and power. The author points out the divergence between Western and African democracy in dealing with corruption. In Western nations an individual who uses public office for private gain is considered corrupt or at least is "viewed unfavorably." In Africa, power and wealth are related, and politics is seen as an avenue to economic control. This is widely true as the status quo is that it may not matter if an individual enriches themselves while in office, as long as they also redistribute wealth and resources to the people they represent.

Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarianism

Jeremy Bentham, jurist and political reformer, is the philosopher whose name is most closely associated with the foundational era of the modern utilitarian tradition. He was an English philosopher, jurist, economist and a social reformer born in February 15, 1748, London, England and died in June 6, 1832. Influenced by many enlightenment thinkers, especially empiricists such as John Locke and David Hume, Bentham developed an ethical theory grounded on a largely empiricist account of human nature and lived during a time of major social, political and economic change. In 1760, Bentham entered Queen's College, Oxford and, upon graduation in 1764, studied law at Lincoln's Inn. Though qualified to practice law, he never did so. Instead, he devoted most of his life to writing on matters of legal reform—though, curiously, he made little effort to publish much of what he wrote. However, his impact was greater in later years as his ideas were carried on by followers such as John Stuart Mill, John Austin, and other consequentialists. Bentham wrote on so many issue bordering on

politics, economy morality, religion, legislation etc. Below is his basic principle on Utilitarianism and governance.

His theory on utilitarianism is an ethical theory that differentiates right from wrong based on outcomes. Thus this theory denotes that ethical choices are the ones that produce the greatest good for the greatest number. Thus, Jeremy Bentham discovered the principles of legislation in his book *An Introduction to the Principles of Moral and Legislation*, which was published in 1789. The principle of utility, according to Bentham is the property in any object that produces pleasure or happiness over pain or mischief whose interest is considered. Mankind, he said, was governed by two sovereign motives, pain and pleasure; and the principle of utility recognized this state of affairs. The object of all legislation must be the “greatest happiness of the greatest number.” For example, assume a hospital has four people whose lives depend upon receiving organ transplants: a heart, lungs, a kidney, and a liver. If a healthy person wanders into the hospital, his organs could be harvested to save four lives at the expense of one life. Utilitarianism is in opposition to egoism, the view that a person should pursue his own self-interest, even at the expense of others, and to any ethical theory that regards some acts or types of acts as right or wrong independently of their consequences. This would arguably produce the greatest good for the greatest number. But few would consider it an acceptable course of action, let alone the most ethical one. He deduced from the principle of utility that, since all punishment involves pain and is therefore evil, it ought only to be used “so far as it promises to exclude some greater evil.”

There are three principles that serve as the basic axioms of utilitarianism:

1. Pleasure or Happiness Is the Only Thing That Truly Has Intrinsic Value.
2. Actions Are Right Insofar as They Promote Happiness, Wrong Insofar as They Produce Unhappiness.
3. Everyone's Happiness Counts Equally.

These principles can be categorized into Bentham's theory of Value and the theory of Right action: the former proposing actions as right if they tend to promote happiness and the latter proposing an action regarded as right if it brings about the best outcome of the choices available. Bentham was primarily interested in improving the law and his goal for the legislator was the utilitarian principle or the greatest happiness principle. Therefore, his advice was not initially aimed for individuals and their life choices but for the legislator. Although Bentham sees pleasure as the key of explaining how human beings act, he relies more often on the concept of pain when constructing his legal theory. While he does endorse act-utilitarianism, his ‘sanction-based’ theory of obligation is more applicable to the legal system he was so interested in improving.

Democracy as a Means for Good Governance

Bentham wrote a great deal, not all of which is easily comprehensible; some of his most influential work appeared in French under the editorship of Dumont before it appeared in English. However, his support from the French Revolution quickly faded in the face of the regicide and the French declaration of war on Britain in 1793, and he took a turn in his writing that can only be described as anti-democratic, for example, that ‘The people are all will—they have no reason, no understanding’ and that democracy only worked in America because, as most men were farmers, ‘their business keeps them separate and quiet. He went so far as to suggest that political education for the poor should be limited to ‘a sermon’ and a short one.

Eventually, Bentham’s own experience in his ongoing pursuit of legal reform eventually led him to become a supporter of radical parliamentary reform, even in Britain. His return to those ideas came with the ‘discovery’ in 1804 of what he referred to as ‘sinister interest,’ or the idea that rulers, in pursuing their own self-interest, might act in opposition to the interests of the citizens over whom they rule. But even as he whole-heartedly came to embrace democratic republicanism, the basic structure of the system never changed in his thoughts: There were rulers, and there were the ruled, and what was important was to ensure as best as possible that the interests of the former were aligned with (or subordinated to) the interests of the latter. The best means by which that could be accomplished, he came to believe, was by enabling the ruled to hold the rulers accountable through a system of representative democracy, reflecting an instrumental perspective that permeates his political theory.

Furthermore, only through a representative democracy with ‘universal suffrage’ could the individual interest of the electorate be aggregated and reflected in the political system. Bentham’s primary interest, throughout his career, was legal reform. He believed that the fundamental basis of all human activity was self-interest, which, while valuable because it was the source of all human productivity was also a danger because people unrestrained would end up undermining their own happiness even as they pursued it. Thus the principal role of government was to provide people with a sense of security, principally in the form of private property rights, so they would know that they could enjoy the fruits of their labor or that they would be rewarded for taking financial risks. Government need do little to encourage people to seek their own subsistence, that the people might also enjoy abundance. Further, government policy should promote equality to the greatest extent possible to ensure the widest distribution of happiness - although never in a way that might undermine or threaten security (which he thought it would most of the time). Bentham follows Locke in envisioning the structure of government not as a separation or balance of power but what Schofield calls ‘a chain of subordination’. Indeed, Bentham was critical of the balance of powers idea because it suggested equality among elites. Rather, the chain of subordination meant that each branch of government stood in a specific relation to

the sovereign: The sovereign's role as supreme power was limited to the exercise of the act of investiture in the establishment of a legislative body that would act on the basis of the interests of the sovereign. The legislature then would have superiority over the administrative branch (which includes the judiciary), which carries out the commands of the legislators. This accomplishes one of Bentham's fundamental requirements for good government, that rulers be dependent upon, and accountable to the people. The people invest their representatives with power, and the people can take it away from them. Simply put, then, Bentham's primary concern in his constitutional theory is the development of official aptitude, to ensure that legislators (the primary branch of government) act in the interests of their constituents.

In the Radical Reform Bill in 1817, Bentham considers 'virtual universality' where he excluded women as well as children from exercising their vote. Bentham justifies his position by saying that the greatest happiness requires constitutional reform that expands the franchise and makes legislators accountable to the electorate. If it is necessary to exclude half the adult population to accomplish it, so be it, since some expansion is better than none at all. What matters most is official aptitude, which is the consequence of a democratic system, not the principle of democratic participation.

In effect, democracy in Bentham's political theory amounts to a third- or even fourth order concern: 1. The first concern is the greatest happiness of the greatest number; this requires good laws. 2. To get good laws requires establishing a system for good governance, which requires maximizing official aptitude and minimizing expense. 3. Democracy, then, is instrumental to good governance - and the ultimate end, the greatest happiness - insofar as it ensures official aptitude and minimizes expense. Schofield admits that, 'The system of representative democracy was not an end in itself - the end was the greatest happiness - but it was an indispensable means to that end, in that it was only under such a system of government that effective measures could be implemented to secure the appropriate aptitude of officials and minimize the expense of government. There may be no question that by the later part of his career Bentham may have whole-heartedly embraced the idea of representative democracy. However, this should not be confused with the acceptance of democratic principles.

Criticisms

The aim of utilitarianism is to make decisions on the basis of a calculation of consequences. As a moral theory, there are however many critiques of utilitarianism which vary as they have different reasons and different targets due to the fact that utilitarianism is not a single coherent theory but a cluster of related theories which have developed throughout the years. The theory of utilitarianism has been bitterly criticized based on the following:

- a. The doctrine of maximum welfare of the maximum number is not free from complications:**

Sometimes it is possible that the majority may become selfish and in the name of maximum welfare of maximum number; it may suppress the minority. For instance, the Muslims of Pakistan have turned out the Hindus from their country. This is altogether unfair. Therefore, many atrocities can be committed in the name of this doctrine.

b. Utilitarianism laid emphasis upon the material comforts only and ignored the spiritual happiness:

The utilitarian's have cared only for physical comfort, and have ignored the suppression of sense and self-control. They have also no cared for the spiritual comfort which one derives from self-sacrifice for the sake of humanity.

c. The moral and psychological basis of utilitarianism is not real

Utilitarianism is based on the notion that whatever functions should or should not be performed by the individual should be tested on the touch-stone of utility. If this notion is accepted, each individual will work only for his own pleasure. He will ignore benevolence, renunciation, service and sacrifice. This is the main drawback of Bentham's theory.

d. Bentham's notion on general pleasure of the maximum is not realistic

J.S. Mill, a student and ardent follower of Bentham, rejected the proposition that all pleasures are the same and can be compared. This emanated from Bentham failure to distinguish between pleasure and happiness and defining them as the same thing. Mill in his modification of the principle of utility proposed different 'levels' of pleasure and recognized that some pleasures were more desirable and valuable than others.

G. E. Moore proposed 'ideal utilitarianism' where he rejected a purely hedonistic character of utilitarianism and argued for the incorporation of a range of values that may be maximized to attain pleasure. He argued against the idea that pleasure was the only consideration to evaluate morality.

Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarianism and Democratic Governance In Africa

The practice of democratic governance seems to be a mirage to many in Africa. African leaders, rather than govern for the greater good of the people utilize offices for their selfish interest. This explains the reason for Africa's economic backwardness and continued political instability amidst the high levels of poverty, unemployment and poor infrastructure. Jeremy Bentham's' idea of a democratic governance for the maximum benefit of the people is not practicably realizable in Africa's democracy. Corruption, defined as the misuse or abuse of power, funds or political/administrative positions for private gain has gained cancerous proportions in Africa, African's disconnected political system, most imperatively the Nigerian state, emanating from the forceful integration by her British colonial masters without taking into cognizance multiple and diverse ethnic groupings and the lack of will (political) to pursue common good. Most African states have followed the political steps of former colonizers in the post independence regimes. They employ the political model operating in western colonial states. Experience from Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria,

Kenya attempted parliamentary model applicable in the Britain prior independence while French colonies followed comparable fashion (Ozor 2009). However, despite the adoption of western political style, most African states are still categorized as hybrid (mixture) regime - a pseudo-democratic states or semi authoritarian (Cranenburgh, 2011). A manifestation of the dynamics of institutional corruption and spoil politics in African democracies is found, for example, in a study conducted by Transparency International, it found that 44% of parents have paid unlawful fees for free education in Uganda, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Madagascar, Niger, and Senegal (Transparency International 2009). In Zimbabwe, local councilors have liaised with housing officials to buy government houses and sell them at inflated rates for the citizens (Transparency International 2015). In Kenya, the political regime of Mwai Kibaki was accused of inflation of contracts by the anticorruption agency led by John Githongo. In Liberia, the government that ruled up till 2005 was accused of stealing more than \$100 million annually (Ellis 2006).

This culture of primitive accumulation by public officers saddled with the responsibility of safeguarding public treasury has portrayed African postcolonial state as failed state (Appolloni and Nshombo 2013). Hence, leading to conflicts, civil war, terrorism, political instability, poverty, and exasperating developmental cynicism (World Bank 1997). Bentham's idea of a constitutional reform which expands the franchise and makes legislators accountable to the electorate is central for the common good of the people. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo through the leadership of Mobutu Sese Seko witnessed a high institutionalized level of corruption in the political and bureaucratic frame. Corruption was also accredited in the judicial system, a situation whereby adjudication is based on the level of wealth or affluence, political, and social status. The judicial verdicts are not instituted on the evidence presented in the court of law.

Corruption also manifests among directors of public institutions and proliferation of “ghost workers.” Almost every public sector is involved in corrupt practices (Mbaku 2010). In Nigerian, political structure is personalized to the extent that it is difficult for ordinary citizens to have access to basic necessities of life. Political office holders are seen as “demigods” who serve their party interest and loyalist. Money politics also takes another dimension in Africa, in terms of obtaining party nomination forms; the contender must have acquired lots of money, legally or illegally, thus, disenfranchising those with genuine interest of the country. Money has been a veritable tool in the hands of politicians to manipulate and influence election results. While the citizens have bowed to the mammoth threat, especially, the youths who are unemployed or victims of poverty, consequently, instituting political hegemony (Muse and Narsiah 2014); therefore, money politics serves as a determinant for political participation and representation, youth and women in this process become the victims who have no access to economic resources (Adetula 2008).

A holistic approach to ensuring the greater good of the greatest number of democratic governance in Africa is ensuring that, issues of poverty alleviation, security of life and property, fight against corruption, rule of law and development - oriented leadership should be taken into critical consideration in ensuring good and democratic governance. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) played a crucial role in ending colonialism in Africa before its replacement with the African Union (AU). Unlike the OAU, the AU takes democracy and good political governance seriously (AU Constitutive Act 2000, Arts 3 & 4). Other measures on governance involved the establishment of organs of the AU, the Peace and Security Council that deals with conflict prevention, management, and resolution; the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) that engages the participation of civil society, trade unions, and academics in the governance process of the African Union. The Pan-African Parliament is providing the forum for the input of African parliamentarians into AU processes. In addition, the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is an important system for the renewal of governance at the continental level; it is an arrangement facilitating the sharing of experiences in development by African leaders. The AU has been very successful in addressing the needs of the African political class but it is yet to make a significant difference in the lives of many ordinary Africans.

However, The AU has failed to use the excellent diplomatic, legal, and normative tools at its disposal to change the actual behavior of the misbehaving political elite(s). It has been unable to prevent leaders from clinging on to power. Moreover, it has been less successful in connecting its activities and programs to many ordinary Africans; providing common public goods and services valued by commoners in Africa; giving voice to the majority of young people in Africa; promoting intra-Africa trade, good governance, and financial independence of the African continent as well as struggled to address the expressed material needs and quotidian concerns of ordinary Africans.

The Problem of Leadership in Africa Democratic Governance

Leadership is a critical tool for promoting good democratic governance and greater good in Africa. The use by African state elites of arbitrary and repressive measures and their inability to apply governmental regulations throughout the national territory is a sign of state weakness or “softness”. Paradoxically, the independent African states consolidates power at the political center and extracts considerable economic resources from society; yet it spends much of what it obtains on itself and lack the capacity to spur the country’s development as a whole (Connrwell 1995:15). According to Graig (2005:132) leadership is defined as a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates in an effort to reach organizational goals. While Robert et al (2004) affirms that leadership involves a complex interaction among the leader, the followers, and the situation.

The problem of leadership in Africa is can be identified in the following;

a. Respect for the rule of law and human rights:

The lack of respect by leaders and citizens for the rule of law and human rights often poses a great challenge to stability. The judiciary in many states is handicapped by structural difficulties and inadequate funding. The independence, integrity, and performance of the judiciary would only be guaranteed through adequate funding, remuneration, modernization, professional staff, and regular training.

b. Lack of clear economic and development policy

Poor democratic governance in Africa can be traceable to political leadership deficiencies. African political leaders do not see a pressing need to state their macro-vision for the continent. The nature of Nigerian state for instance, has evolved a predatory political class that was concerned with power struggle, consolidation, alignment and realignment in the context of hegemonic control, without a clear economic advancement blueprint. This is linked to the lack of ideology in the political space. (Seteolu, 2004; Obi, 2000).

c. Absence of political will

A political will is the compelling force for sound leadership quality, the ability to do what is right, what is relevant and what is attainable within the context of patriotic nationalism. Thus, the ability to implement policies that have a nationalistic importance and relevance without allowing pockets of interest to distract from what should naturally be of national benefit and greater good.. In contemporary Africa, Nelson Mandela represents that model of leadership by personal sacrifice to redeem his people from servitude.

CONCLUSION

Corruption and bad leadership are critical issues affecting democratic governance in most of the African States. It is imperative to note that leadership is an undeniable fact in human history, especially in matters relating to the management of both human and material resources. Bentham's theory on utilitarianism projects good leadership as maximizing the people's happiness over the minority. In other for African States to attain greater democratic governance and economic development for the greatest number, the right leaders with good policy ideologies should be voted into political offices. It will be difficult to eliminate corruption completely, but it can be curtailed by strengthening the judiciary and giving "legal teeth" to laws.

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