Original Article

World Bank Concept of Good Governance, Contemporary Nigerian Democracy, and the Place of the Mass Media

Olasunkanmi Arowolo[1], Khadijah Yusuf[2], Jamiu Yahya[2], Oladimeji Lambo[3] & Damilola Oduolowu[4]*

[1] University of Kent, United Kingdom, Giles Ln, Canterbury CT2 7NZ, UK
[2] Lagos State University, P.M.B 0001 Lasu, Lagos, Nigeria.
[3] Punch Newspapers, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria.
[4] University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211, United States of America.
[*] Author for Correspondence ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5296-6478; Email: o.arowolo@kent.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

This article presents a conceptual argument on good governance from the World Bank's and other relevant experts' perspectives. For good governance to be achieved in an effective manner, it is essential for all parties to play a relevant role, including individuals, the general public, the government, and the news media. Also, several factors contribute to good governance, these include accountability, equity, and justice, protection of life and properties, upholding the rule of law, amongst others. The mass media is regarded to be the greatest backbone of democracy and the most effective tool for investigating, informing, and educating the public on issues that are important to the everyday lives of the citizenry, to enhance participation, and ultimately for Nigeria to achieve adequate good governance. Thus, this paper recommends that to effectively achieve good governance, there is a need for absolute resolve and the willingness to change our mindset, way of life as well as partisan-media dynamics.

Introduction

For many countries: federal, state, and local governments around the world, the idea of good governance has become essential for decision-making and programme execution (Pomeranz & Stedman, 2020). Globally, responsible organisations like United Nations, and World Bank amongst others pay attention to the growing issue because of how crucial the idea of good governance is to the global community as noted by Drake et al. (2001):

> The World Bank's idea of 'good governance' is concerned with the relationship between the state, the market, and civil society in loan-receiving countries ... The World Bank argues that in order to be effective, the state must play a critical role in managing and regulating the market and civil society ... The Bank is seeking to establish well-functioning market economies with stable property rights, enforceable contracts, high levels of transparency, and low levels of corruption (p. 2)

Morphologically, the root word of the term 'governance' and 'government' is 'govern'. Etymologically, the word 'govern' has its primary origin from the Greek word 'kybernan' which means 'to steer', the Latin origin 'gubernare' – a nautical borrowing from Greek kybernan which means 'to steer or pilot a ship'. From which it morphologically evolved to Old French meaning 'steer, be at the helm of; govern, rule, command, direct' (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2017).

The idea of governance refers to the manner of governing. Particularly how the government, an established institution in a state, rules and runs the state's administration. Over the time, different forms of governance and approaches has been practiced in different countries of the world. This has led to the conceptualisation of the varying practices. Popular among them are military, democracy, parliamentary, monarchy, and republican.

More specifically, as the fabric of society changes, new structures and processes emerge to carry us through the next stage of social evolution. Democracy is at the forefront of these changing structures (Hubbard, 2017).

The name 'democracy' is derived from the Greek term *demos*, which means 'people,' and *kratein*, which means 'rule of law' which is also a Greek meaning 'to govern, to rule'. "Democracy" can then be translated by the following terms: *Government of the People or Government of the Majority*. A widely acknowledged definition was given by Abraham Lincoln as 'the government of the people, by the people and for the people (Lincoln, 1863).

It is important to note here that all these efforts are all tilted towards conceptualisation of good governance for the betterment of general society and democracy as the most popularised form of governance in the world emphasise fundamental freedom, human right, transparency, and accountability in governance. It is well-intentioned to mention that the concept of 'democracy' emphatically recognises 'public opinion' and 'freedom of the media' because "public opinion is made up with citizens or specific groups that reflect on their community and express their criticism, their proposals, or their agreement to influence the construction of political will" (Becker & Raveloson, 2008, p. 15).

In the same way, Santas and Ogoshi (2016) say that the main features of a democracy are public participation, the supremacy of the majority will while respecting minority rights, the establishment of government by the people through regular elections, competition for public office, freedom of the press and association, an uncorrupted judiciary, respect for the rule of law, an open and accountable government, and the existence of competing political parties.

The democratic norm holds that the supreme authority of a political society resides in the sovereignty of the people. Democracy, as explained by Oyovbaire (1987), is a form of government that gives authority to agents to implement broad decisions made by majority vote and tries to realise a universally recognised common good through collaborative initiative and discussion of policy matters impacting public affairs.

Understanding Democracy, Good Governance, and Its Key Components

No doubt, democracy is not a perfect form of governance but widely known as the *best form of governance* (Dalton et al., 2007)) as well as "the only moral and legitimate way through which a society can be administered" (Ogundiya, 2010, p. 204). But then, it has proven to be open to abuse of power and more democratic leaders have been accused of bad governance, especially in the third world countries practising democracy where sharp practices, bribery, and corruption and political parties' conspiracy has held the public to harmful ransom. Thus, what constitute a true or good governance has become a thing of global concern.

Drake et al. (2001) similarly acknowledges same view:

> there are many competing views on what the term 'good governance' should mean, but most donors argue that it should include some (if not all) of these: increased public accountability and transparency; respect for and strengthening of the rule of law and anti-corruption measures; democratization, decentralization, and local government reform; increased civil-society participation in development; and respect for human rights and the environment (p. 4)

Drake et al. (2001) did not merely agree to with this view, but also explains what good governance should involve.

It is important to note that the foundational pillar upon which a stable nation is built is good governance (The Centre for First Nations Governance, 2023). This is because the concept of good governance embodies ideals diligently designed to fulfil the vested interest of propelling a nation to lofty heights. In this sense, a democratic nation will be in disarray if the laws become ineffectual (Inglehart & Welzel, 2009)

No sane nation can survive from the pitfall of corruption, lawlessness, unaccountability among many other abhorrent ideas associated with bad governance except they are sternly frowned against to promote good governance. While this situation may be characteristic of states making great gains or world leaders standing tall within the council of nations, it is reasonable to assume that excellent governance is a necessary complement to effective economic strategies (Preston, 1992)

In order to ascertain whether governance is of good or poor quality, it is essential to establish a clear definition of the term 'governance'. The concept of governance has been defined in different ways. Albrow (2001) definition describes it as "the management of society by the people" (p.151), while Schneider (1999) characterizes it as "the exercise of authority or control to manage a country's affairs and resources" (p. 7).

Governance refers to the way in which governments exercise their authority over a country's social and economic resources, primarily within the context of domestic politics. The effectiveness of governance

can vary greatly, depending on how well a government manages these resources. The World Bank, which is a leading advocate for good governance, defines it as having three key components: an efficient public service, a reliable legal system, and an administration that is accountable to the people (World Bank, 1989).

The concept of good governance involves more than just the management of society by people and the exercise of control over a country's affairs and resources. It also includes other important factors such as the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector management, accountability, and responsiveness of public officials to citizens, the rule of law, and public access to information and transparency. This definition was given by the World Bank in 1989 and 1992.

Other International Monetary Organizations have similarly defined the concept of good governance like the World Bank (EBRD, 2010; Mangurian et al., 2011). Monetary agencies defined governance with a focus on finance and management, while UNDP, OECD, UNN, UNESCO, and other Multilateral Donor Agencies used a political problems approach in their definitions. The UNDP defines good governance as following the rule of law, being open and fair, involving people, being effective and efficient, being accountable, and having a strategic vision in politics, economics, and administration. This definition includes all the important features of good governance as identified by experts. good governance attributes include participation, working towards consensus, following the rule of law, being open, accountable, responsive, efficient, and effective. The OECD's definition also includes these components. The OECD identifies eight key characteristics of Good Governance: democratic, consensus-driven, responsible, transparent, responsive, effective, efficient, equitable and inclusive, and adherence to the rule of law. It also seeks to reduce corruption, consider the opinions of minorities, and provide vulnerable groups a voice in decision-making.

Good governance is defined by a set of characteristics including effective public sector management, accountability, responsiveness, the rule of law, and transparency. These characteristics act as governance instruments, providing the necessary framework for effective governance. The definitions show that good governance consists of two terms, 'governance' and 'good'.

As a result, a simple grasp of these operational phrases reveals the undeniable conclusion that the act of governing may be both beneficial and terrible. Because we are concentrating on good governance, there is a need to consider other definitions of the concept assimilating the already existing explanation of the World Bank.

Good governance is based on philosophy and must be assessed against certain norms and aims (Madhav, 2001; Ogundiya, 2010). It examines the operation of a certain part of society through the eyes of its recognised stakeholders, beneficiaries, and customers. To characterise administration as excellent or poor, Ogundiya (2010) gives insight into understanding the essence of *the state*, which is not only incorporated in the constitution but also a function of religious beliefs and the nature of the state's current challenges.

The essence of the Nigerian state, according to Section 16 (2) of the Nigerian constitution, is to promote the common good. Eboh (2003) eloquently explains the implications of this. He stated that the common good is diametrically opposed to the good of rulers or controlling organisations.

This implies that everyone has the obligation to the community as much as they reserve the entitlement to benefit from the community. The word 'common' suggests that the 'good' is general. Hence, it must include everyone and cannot leave anyone out. If anyone is excluded, even in a small way, it goes against the idea of the 'common good'. This idea is supported by Ogundiya (2010), who says that good governance achieves justice, fairness, people and

their property's safety, increased participation, rule of law, and better living standards for citizens.

In the same way, good governance is defined in Nigeria's Vision 2010 plan as a means of ensuring accountability in all aspects. According to Dunu's (2013) analysis, good governance also entails preserving the legal system, having an independent judicial system, and permitting freedom of speech and political participation. Moreover, good governance is characterised by openness, equality, and integrity in public service.

From these definitions, it can be inferred that the notion of good governance applies to all sectors of society, including the government administration, legislative branches, courts, press, private business, corporate sector, trade unions, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Consequently, the purpose of providing the greatest possible benefit for the majority of the population can only be achieved if all of these distinct societal components conduct their activities with social responsibility in mind. (Madhav, 2007).

Therefore, the only way to judge whether a government is effective or ineffective and whether a country's policies have been successful or unsuccessful is to assess how its affairs are managed. Dysfunctions of governance suggests that people in political and economic power have not handled the economy and other social institutions appropriately. The World Bank (1992) noted that bad governance can be characterised by a number of features, such as not having a distinct divide between public and private matters, which can lead to the misuse of public funds; a lack of consistency in the implementation of laws and regulations; and too many regulations, licencing requirements, etc. that can hold back development.

Considering the high unemployment rate, the embezzlement of public funds, the increasing corruption rate (Nigeria is one of the most corrupt nations), inter-ethnic conflicts, exploitation of power by government officials, misappropriation of public funds, incidents of kidnapping, the growing number of cybercrimes, and other forms of criminal activities, it can be argued that Good governance is still unattainable in Nigeria.

Similar sentiments were echoed by Ogundiya (2010), who emphasised that the issue of Nigerian development stems from the absence of Good governance. The critical question to ask at this juncture is: how can the news media contribute to promotion of Good governance, and what makes the news media an important prospect in this regard?

More importantly, it should be noted that this "concept of good governance has been on the agenda of development institutions now for more than 20 years and it has become indispensable in development co-operation" (Maldonado, 2010, p. 2). In fact, development institutions like International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (World Bank) are key influencers, highly instrumental in financing programs, and projects geared toward attaining developmental objectives in diverse countries. But for adequate clarification, the World Bank's perception of good governance and its implication on Nigerian Contemporary Democracy with special reference to the place of the media in propagating the good governance notion remains the focus of this paper. More so, to thoroughly expound on this subject matter, documenting the founding principles that served as the basis for the World Bank's interest in governance becomes necessary; after which other contextual elements associated with the subject matter will be duly addressed.

Understanding the World Bank Concept of Good Governance

The use of the term 'governance' to denote the necessity for institutional reform and a more effective public sector in Sub-Saharan nations was initially introduced in the 1989 study. But from the World Bank's 1992 publication on Governance and

Development, Governance "was defined as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development" (World Bank, 1992). Two years later, the World Bank modified its definition adding the adjective 'good' to governance and gave a more substantial definition. Although, the World Bank initially shy away from the use of the adjective 'good' from the onset, but the reason they were reluctant according to Frischtak (1994), is because the use of the adjective 'good' referred to a subject view on the performance of a state and that interpretation of the meaning of "good governance" could vary. Nonetheless, the "good governance" notion was conceptualized and from World Bank (1994) report that "Good governance is epitomized by predictable; open, and enlightened policymaking (that is, transparent processes); a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government accountable for its actions, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs; and all behaving under the rule of law".

Mass Media and Good Governance

The mass media are often referred to be the fourth department of government due to its influence and monitoring function (Akinfeleye, 2003). Since the late 17th century, the central role of the mass media in democratic administration has been acknowledged and remains a core element of contemporary democratic philosophy and practise.

The term "mass media" refers to all of the channels by which information may be sent from one person to multiple, dispersed, and diverse audiences. They also refer to the means through which messages, information, ideas, knowledge, and culture are disseminated to a wide number of people. According to Nwosu (1996, p. 11), as mentioned in Afamuefuna (2007), the mass media refers to the equipment used by everyone participating in a mass-mediated communication scenario to move messages over long distances or over short periods of time. Thus, the mass media are the primary

modern way of connecting with a vast distributed diverse and anonymous audience concurrently and often immediately. Radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and the internet are examples of these. Since the mass media is most people's main source of information, the existence of democratic or special bias in the media may have a significant impact. Also, because of the public's reliance on the media, they have the ability to define political or democratic agendas and choose which problems will be the focus of public debate. Citizens are taught about their rights and privileges through the media in order to engage effectively in the democratic process (Mile, 2009). This article uses the terms 'the media' and 'mass media' interchangeably to refer to the news media.

The Mass Media, Contemporary Nigerian Democracy and Good Governance

The mass media serve as the pillars of democratic system. In its logical sense, the media is meant to be the fourth branch of the government, that is the "Fourth Estate of the Realm".

The media is an important part of democracy and society. The role and place of the mass media in democratic politics and in society in general are clearly expressed by the media as the fourth estate of the realm. Regarding good governance in democratic countries, McNair (1999) identified, there are five primary functions of the media.

First, it serves as a means to inform citizens of what is happening around them, often referred to as the surveillance or monitoring function of the media. This function helps to ensure transparency and accountability. Second, the media must educate citizens about the significance of the facts presented to them, to help them understand the implications of events or issues.

Third, the media must provide a platform for public political discourse, which facilitates the formation of public opinion and feeds that opinion back to the public. This includes providing space for the

expression of dissent, which is crucial in maintaining the notion of democracy consensus. Fourth, the media functions to give publicity to governmental and political institutions, acting as watchdogs to ensure that they are acting in the best interests of the public.

Finally, the media serves as a channel for the advocacy of political viewpoints. This helps to ensure that diverse voices are represented in public debate and that there is a fair and balanced representation of different perspectives. All of these roles are crucial in promoting good governance and ensuring that citizens are informed, engaged, and empowered to participate in the democratic process.

The mass media, having established itself as the backbone of both the public and the government, plays a critical role in the promotion of better governance in modern Nigerian democracy. The media are the conveyor of information on democracy. To keep the public informed and aware of the impact of government and private activities, the mass media provides education, entertainment, and sensitivity. They also highlight events, environmental issues, and other significant topics that can affect the citizens (Dunu, 2013).

Governments and politicians throughout the globe are beginning to recognise the significance of the media, particularly social media, in promoting good governance. In the United Kingdom, a "Survey of Policy Opinion on Governance and the Media" published by BBC (Lines, 2009) clearly shows that even though the emphasis on good governance in the development agenda is debatable, there seems to be a growing acknowledgement of the media's role in democratic accountability. There are also some signs that policymakers are learning to appreciate the significance of news media in development process.

The news media have obligation to support good governance. As outlined by UNESCO (2005), a strong, varied, and impartial media can aid in the implementation of sound governance practices. Moreover, the media can promote effective governance in a variety of ways.

Participation

Participation in Good Governance means involving regular people in decision-making and governance. According to a paper by UNESCO in 2005, when citizens take part in the decision-making process, it leads to better transparency and helps to make sure that political choices are based on the needs of the people they affect. Additionally, citizens participation is essential for democratic legitimacy since it relies on the interest and participation of the populace in their own government.

Dunu (2013) expands on this idea, claiming that the media and other intermediary organisations promote citizen engagement in the act of government. However, it is widely acknowledged that the media play a crucial role in increasing involvement, as they report on portions of the decision-making process and give stakeholders a say in the decision. The mass media, according to UNESCO (2005), facilitates participation in two ways. First, it gives citizens access to platforms where they can obtain accurate and sufficient information that enables them to make educated decisions and follow the best course of action for themselves. The media serves as a feedback mechanism by giving people a way to voice their opinions and register their thoughts about various situations.

The media are the main information intermediaries in society. They provide important information to various sectors, including government agencies. This information helps facilitate successful interactions between different parts of society. According to Dunu (2013), one excellent example of the media encouraging citizens' engagement in national issues in the country was the mass media's coordinated effort in increasing public debate and

debates across the country in President Obasanjo's third term agenda. As a result of widespread outcry over the third term initiative, it was rejected. A recent instance is how the interactive news media channels has helped people to report suspicious activities of Boko Haram. This reduced the danger of the Islamic sect in the country.

The unrelenting campaign of the Nigerian media, as well as the availability of multiple forums for debate and discussion, not only secured popular participation in this critical national issue, but also had an impact on the outcome.

The Rule of Law

Law sustains good governance. Good governance requires impartial legal systems. The rule of law may be regarded as a collection of behaviours that allow the law to operate as a mediator between diverse stakeholders in society, as well as a normative standard invoked by members of society who indicate their support for this idea (UNESCO, 2005). Again, the media is the sector of society best capable of encouraging vigilance toward the rule of law by supporting investigative journalism and promoting the transparency of all institutions vital to ensuring society values the rule of law (UNESCO, 2005).

The media, as part of its core function of informing and educating the public. This function is to serve all individuals through a variety of channels, so that every citizen is aware that respect for the rule of law is the most important safeguard for every individual. The media also serves to keep public officer within established (constitutional) and other legal limitations. It functions as the check and balance of the society for both the citizens and as the fourth branch of government. A typical example is the case of the Badoo crisis in Ikorodu, in this case the social media was effective, and without it there was a tendency the culprits of this gang could still be on the loose.

Transparency

According to UNESCO (2005), transparency is often seen as institutions' honesty, or the extent to which outsiders attempt to monitor and evaluate the actions of insiders. Transparency helps to hold organisations, governments, and institutions responsible for their policies and operations. Likewise, transparency refers to decision-making conducted by the government that allows people and groups in society to have access to substantive and procedural information while protecting their privacy and security (Bellver & Kaufmann, 2005).

The media is acknowledged as the principal medium of disseminating information to the public. Free and independent media assures media and, eventually, public access to information. The media can play a significant role in increasing the level of government accountability by explaining government policies and actions in the following manner: what should be done, why and how an intervention must occur, who is involved, and by what criteria decisions are made; as a result, government actions and inactions are exposed to the public. Nigerian media are lauded for promoting transparency in Olutokun & Seteolu (2001) and Olaiya et al.'s (2013) research.

The media disclosed high-profile corruption cases involving high-ranking public officials in the democratic system. The exposure of corrupt officials has taken a new turn with the intervention and transparency of the media.

Responsiveness

Good governance necessitates that institutions and systems serve all stakeholders expeditiously by responding to their issues, desires, and aspirations (UNESCO, 2005). As discussed previously, the media serve as a feedback system via which citizens may bring their plight to the attention of the State. The media do this through various media campaigns that serve to remind the State of their obligations to the public/citizens.

Consensus Oriented

According to UNESCO (2005), there are several actors as well as many viewpoints in each society. The report emphasizes the importance of good governance in achieving sustainable human growth. To achieve this, there must be a collective effort involving various societal actors in mediating and reaching a consensus on what is best for the entire community. This involves taking a broad and long-term perspective on what is required to achieve sustainable growth and development. However, achieving this requires a deep understanding of the historical, cultural, and social settings of the society or group in question. Therefore, it is essential to incorporate this understanding into the decision-making process to ensure that the needs of the community are effectively met. In summary, good governance plays a vital role in achieving sustainable human growth, and it requires the collective effort of all societal actors and a deep understanding of the societal context.

In this context, the primary tasks of the media include: the dissemination of information, education, and enlightenment to the public in order for them to make well-informed decisions and take actions that benefit society. In this way, the media contributes in mobilising citizens to support the country's development programmes.

A typical example of mobilizing citizens is the case of 2015 presidential election; the media effectively persuaded citizens to come out and cast their votes, the citizens were also informed of the voting activities especially through the social media, thus enacting an almost free and fair election.

Equity and Inclusiveness

A society's wellbeing depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and not excluded from the mainstream of society. This requires all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, to have opportunities to improve and/or maintain their wellbeing. The media's role in this regard is quite simple giving balanced and fair coverage to all issues in a manner that diverse voices and opinions will be represented (UNESCO, 2005). It is in this function that the Nigerian media have been faulted. The Nigerian media has been charged with bias for how it covers and presents subjects of public interest (Dunu, 2013).

Effectiveness and Efficiency

Good governance entails procedures and organisations that satisfy societal needs while making efficient use of resources. In good governance, the concept of efficiency encompasses the sustainable use of natural resources and environmental protection. Good governance therefore necessitates the optimization of resource usage and the management of societal requirements and environmental issues. In other words, effectiveness and efficiency imply that governmental institutions are operating in accordance with the rule of law, significantly improving the government's general performance.

Although the media cannot guarantee the efficiency and productivity of all institutions in society on their own; the media, can assist keep the various institutions and administrators on their toes by quickly and regularly publishing instances of ineptitude and other systemic wrongdoings. Similarly, the media, through the establishment of media campaigns, films, editorial comments, and other channels of criticism, can highlight inefficient and unproductive organisations and practices. These media practices will reduce inefficiencies in public institutions, organisations, and government. (UNESCO, 2005).

Accountability

Accountability is a fundamental aspect of good governance. Governmental institutions, the private sector and civil society organisations, must be held accountable to the public along its corporate actors. The answer to who is accountable to whom depends on where decisions or actions take place. If they

happen within an organization or institution, accountability will differ from when they occur outside. In general, the government is responsible to the public. Accountability refers to the task of evaluating government officials' activities in order to evaluate their competence in carrying out their public duties (UNESCO, 2005).

Accountability means making sure that individuals and organizations handle public funds properly and follow the agreed-upon rules and standards. This also involves assessing whether there is fairness and performance in all areas and reporting accurately on progress and achievements in relation to their responsibilities. The media is one of the most essential accountability measures. The Nigerian media are thus constitutionally required to hold the government accountable. Information accessibility is vital for accountability. The public can only hold people in authority accountable for their decisions and inaction if they are provided with relevant and sufficient information. The media has a responsibility to provide people with accurate and timely information. This is because they are the main source of information. According to Dunu (2013), it is a moral responsibility.

The Challenges of Good Governance

In order to effectively promote good governance in the Nigerian democratic system, the media must overcome a number of obstacles that have impeded the media's ability to fulfil its primary purpose. These challenges range from the part of the citizens down to the government. The media, the government, and the citizens are part of the contributors to the challenges facing the role of the media in promoting good governance in this contemporary Nigerian Democracy.

It remains evident that the media is constantly been pressured from the public, political parties, interest groups, and the government, respectively. As a result of this pressure, the media frequently aligns with the particular interest group or political party

that is the subject of their reporting. Ogbu (2013) argues that the mass media environment is not suitable for professional media practice, and that media practitioners have little independence as a result of these challenges.

Corroborating this view, Santas & Ogoshi (2016) echoes on Ende (2013) view:

> despite the vibrancy of the Nigerian media, the differentiation of press and its inclinations towards politics have continued to influence its functionality, perception, and disposition by the virtue of the issues surround its ownership and control or its sympathy, the press in Nigeria has remained essentially the stale old wine in new bottle despite all attempts at repackaging. Thus, there is much dependence on external influences such as government control and ownership of the mass media content. This situation is very pronounced in government owned media establishments where news stories are slanted, putting spin on stories, "fiction writing, and partisanship has become the norm in contemporary media practice (Santas & Ogoshi, 2016, p. 80).

Ethnicity is also another major challenge that Nigerian media is grappling with at the present. A country with over 300 ethnic groups and about 500 languages, it becomes difficult for the media to satisfy all these groups. Some of the groups might perceive the media as partial when issues concerning them are reported in favour of another group. According to Okpe (2005),

> ethnicity has challenged and is still challenging the profession of journalism in Nigeria. The tenacity of this phenomenon has however, compounded the dilemma of journalists since it puts disrepute to their professional ethics and sense of moral and social responsibility. (167)

Santas and Ogoshi (2016) noted that the ethnicity problem has taken deep ties in the government's policy, which supports this line of thought. A simple

examination of the history of the media sector reveals that the problem has lasted since the previous republics. Okpe (2005, p. 165) refers to this concept as the "Axis question" and also the "North / South division," which elicits ethnic concern beyond national interest. Galadima and Enighe (2001, p. 67) state that the mass media of the first republic were not coordinated. In their coverage of national events, the media exhibited tribal, regional, or sectional prejudice. As a result of this position, the press has been separated into different geopolitical regions. According to some researchers, when a national issue enters the public realm for debate, the Nigerian media frequently takes a North versus South stance on it (Jibo and Okoosi-Simbine, 2003, Iwokwagh, 2011). They also cite the fact that ethnicity has been deployed, especially in recent years, to justify government excesses.

Moreover, ignoring the current security issue in the country is akin to undermining governance. The present situation in terms of security is posing a huge threat to the practice of journalism and the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. The situation has even taken a different wave with the development of insurgency in the country (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2008). The activities of the Boko Haram sect, MASSOB, and IPOB, to mention a few are gradually affecting the media industry in the country. These groups at various times had issued warnings to media institutions and journalists across the country. Thus, the media is at the crux of determining what and what not to feed the public with, to even think that the lives of journalists are also at risk.

A bigger issue that cannot be overlooked is the case of corruption that has eaten deep into the Nigerian Democracy. In fact, corruption is the new democracy. It has eaten deep into the activities of the mass media in Nigeria and is a threat to the sustenance of democracy. According to Santas & Ogoshi (2016), corruption has hampered the

media's ability to promote social engineering in Nigeria. A major area where corruption has manifested its wings is the situation of corrupt media men. In an appraisal, Santas & Ogoshi (2016) reflected on Alemoh (2011) report that:

> *Nigeria media practitioners have been accused on several occasions in regard to issues of bribery, corruption, and a host of other unethical behaviour in the discharge of their day-to-day duties of reporting News events. More often journalists demand "brown envelopes" after undertaken an assignment. Some even sacrifice the ethics of the profession on the altar of bribery and corruption by either killing of news stories or writing fictitious stories just to promote the image of a political figure* (Santas & Ogoshi, 2016, p. 82)

Another significant difficulty is that Nigerian journalists, particularly in the public sector, tend to over-censor themselves out of fear of repercussions. This results in a situation where information is frequently partial or deliberately downplayed or some facts are missing (Busari & Amedu, 2022).

The Nigerian media faces several challenges, including low pay for journalists, media divisions based on North-South political affiliations, ownership influence that impacts media stance on issues, allegations that media reflects the views of proprietors, protocol journalism that shields public officials from scrutiny for favours, the extreme commercialization of news, biased and ethnic reporting of events (Olukotun, 2001), and the use of blackmail journalism.

Finally, it is worth noting that the majority of Nigerian media outlets lack current communication technology. Poor infrastructure and antiquated technology are still employed to publish news. This will affect the means of transferring digital information. This situation may be linked to the government's lack of political will to undertake the restructuring of the media sector and the rampant

corruption among public officials. Okpe (2005, p. 635) regretfully comments that "in a globalizing world characterized by competition to hook on to the stupendous breakthroughs in information technology and application, it is common sight in Nigeria to see journalist hopelessly relying on equipment acquired several decades ago".

The Media in its True Course

The ability of the media to promote good governance is also determined by the media itself. The UNESCO publication Media and Good Governance (2005) strongly demonstrates that the media should perform their duties appropriately. The UNESCO paper states that media freedom, independence, and plurality are necessary for good governance. Remarkably, a similar argument was made in the Centre for Development Communication's 2006 paper.

> To contribute to good governance, media should be editorially independent, free from any pressure and external interferences, and reflect the plurality of opinions and perceptions in order to truly help citizens to be informed, understand the issues at stake, and make up their minds, and finally, judge events by themselves.

Therefore, the media must remain essentially independent of all forms of manipulation, including political, ownership, economic, and governmental influence. The question here is how possible this is in a democracy run in Nigeria. Researchers have observed that the Nigerian media is besieged by commercialisation concerns; the syndrome of "he who pays the piper calls the tune" and it is also divided along ethnic lines (Dunu, 2013). According to Dunu's 2013 argument, the media promotes good governance in, by, and for the media.

Trustworthiness and Responsibility in Media: for Good Governance

To contribute successfully to good governance, the news media should demonstrate trustworthiness as exemplars of the concept of good governance. According to Dunu (2013), the media can achieve this by adhering to professional ethical principles through self-regulation and continuously improving their professionalism. They must also be accountable to the public in the information, education, and entertainment they provide.

Furthermore, the media should recognize their responsibility to the public, their profession, and themselves in carrying out their activities. By doing so, the media can ensure that they are serving as a reliable source of information that fosters transparency and accountability.

Upholding Accountability: The Role of Media in Good Governance

The media, according to (Dunu, 2013), must combat the three Cs: corruption, collusion, and cronyism. They must support human rights, maintain the rule of law, and keep residents informed at all times. To do this role honourably, journalists must be equipped with the investigative skills required to deliver the truth to the public and fulfil their duties in supporting good governance. The Nigerian media has received criticism for providing inaccurate information, with some press conferences being misrepresented to fit the biases of either the journalist or media owners. It is suggested that the media should refrain from any unprofessional practices that could undermine their credibility and aim for professionalism in all their activities. Nonetheless, the issue of professionalism is a contentious topic concerning the practice of journalism as a profession in Nigeria, according to Adaja (2012).

While it is crucial for the media to maintain professional ethics, the issue of what constitutes professionalism has not been fully agreed upon.

This disagreement might be responsible for the inconsistent practices that exist in the Nigerian media. However, it is imperative that the media strives to uphold the tenets of professionalism in their activities to promote credibility and enhance their contributions to good governance.

Media Accountability: Building Trust for Good Governance

The concept of good governance for the Media refers to the news media's ability to function effectively. To achieve this, the media should work towards creating and maintaining a favourable legislative climate that ensures media freedom, independence, and plurality. Additionally, The government should create a safe and secure atmosphere for news media outlets to conduct investigations and should refrain from deploying laws as a means to impede investigative journalism. These measures are necessary to protect the safety and freedom of the news media in seeking information. It is the responsibility of news media workers to adhere to these standards to serve their audience, profession, and country. Professionalism and ethical conduct are two key factors in obtaining and analysing information. The news media also requires infrastructure, organisational capability, and proper investigative capacity to effectively promote good governance.

The Nigerian news media has often been criticized for unprofessional conduct leading to inaccuracies in reporting. The news media must strive for professionalism and avoid practices that may jeopardise its credibility. The issue of professionalism remains contentious, with disagreements on how to regulate journalism as a profession in Nigeria. However, efforts to ensure that the news media adheres to high standards and promotes good governance should be prioritized. The news media has a significant responsibility to its audience, the profession, and the country. It must fulfil this obligation through professionalism, ethical conduct, and the necessary infrastructure and organisational capacity to carry out its duties effectively.

Conclusion

We examined the World Bank's definition of good governance in this article and found democracy as one of its critical indicators. More so, achieving good governance in a complex society like Nigeria is seemingly a herculean task. To effectively achieve good governance, everyone has a pertinent role to play, from individuals to the people, the government, and the news media.

Also, several factors contribute to good governance. These include accountability, equity and justice, protection of life and property, and upholding the rule of law, amongst others. The mass media, as the fourth estate ideal emphasises, have a significant role to play in realising the World Bank's concept of good governance. Though not expressly stated in the Nigerian constitution, Section 22 of the constitution grants the news media the legal obligation to monitor and hold the government accountable.

Consequently, the Nigerian press has been theorised as the 'watchdog' of the government. What this suggests is that the mass media is responsible for checks and balances through their reports of government programmes and activities of its officials. Of course, this responsibility can only be fulfilled in a society where there is freedom of the press, backed by the constitution. As such, the mass media investigates and informs, and educates the public on issues that are important to the everyday lives of the citizenry, to enhance participation.

Therefore, in a democratic society, good governance should be obtainable with the state and the press playing their different roles. By this, the word bank's pursuit to establish well-functioning market economies with stable property rights, enforceable social contracts, transparency, and low levels of corruption would be actualised. Again, to achieve good governance, there must be a constant

simultaneous reciprocity of responsibilities between the government, the mass media, and the people.

The present challenges facing the achievement of good governance in Nigeria could be faced with absolute resolve and the willingness to change the people's mindset, way of life as well as the partisan-media dynamics. A look into media practices, especially with particular attention to fulfilling the role as "the fourth estate of the realm" will not only influence effective good governance but also serve as the watchdog for all levels of government – federal, state, and local; that fails to effectively perform their role.

References

Adaja, T. (2012). Nigerian Journalism and Professionalism: Issues and Challenges. New Media and Mass Communication. https://doi.org/10.7176/NMMC.VOL515-21

Afamuefuna, C. A. (2007). Democracy and good governance in Nigeria: The place of the mass media. *International journal of communication*, (6), 253-264.

Akinfeleye, R. A. (2003). *Fourth Estate of the Realm or Fourth Estate of the Wreck - imperative of social resposibility of the press*. University of Lagos Press.

Albrow, M. (2001). Society as Social Diversity: The Challenge for Governance in the Global Age. In *Governance in the 21st century* (p. 217). Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Alemoh, T. A. (2011). Journalism training, workplace influence and the quest for professionalism. *Communication for social change and development. Uyo: BSM Resources Nigeria Ltd*.

Becker, P., & Raveloson, J. A. (2008). *What is Democracy?*

Bellver, A., & Kaufmann, D. (2005). Transparenting Transparency: Initial Empirics and Policy Applications. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper,* (forthcoming) (Washington) http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance

Busari, W. B., & Amedu, A. A. (2022). *Revisiting the Accountability Role of The Media in Contemporary Nigeria. 10*, 13–22. www.impactjournals.us

Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999). Lagos: Federal Government Press. Dalton, R. J., Shin, D. C., & Jou, W. (2007). *Understanding democracy: data from Unlikely Places*.

Dalton, R. J., Shin, D. C., & Jou, W. (2007). *Understanding democracy: data from Unlikely Places*.

Drake, E., Malik, A. Xu, Y., Kotsioni, I., El-Habashy, R., & Misra, V. (2001). *Good Governance and the World Bank.* Collingwood, V. (ed). University of Oxford.

Dunu, I. (2013). Good governance in Nigeria: What role for the media. *European Scientific Journal, 9*(32).

Eboh, p. M. (2003). Philosophy, Women and Responsible Leadership in Africa. In J. O. Oguejiofor, (Ed.), *Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa*. New Brunswick, and London (pp. 13-26). London: Transaction Publishers

EBRD. (2010). *Annual Report 2010*. www.ebrd.com/

Ende, T. S. (2011). Media coverage of the 2011 elections in Nigeria. *Issues in the*, 31-48.

Frischtak, L. L. (1994). *Governance capacity and economic reform in developing countries* (Vol. 254). World Bank Publications.

Galadima, J. D., & Enighe, J. M (2001). The press in Nigerian politics: A historical analysis of issues and pattern of news coverage. *The Nigerian journal of communication*, 1(1), 62-74.

Hubbard, B. M. (2017). The Foundation for Conscious Evolution, 2017. http://barbaramarxhubbard.com/evolution-democracy/ July 30, 2017.

Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2009). How Development Leads to Democracy: What We Know About Modernization. *Source: Foreign Affairs*, *88*(2), 33–48.

Iwokwagh, N. S. (2011). *Mass media and the challenges of sustainable democracy in Nigeria.* Makurdi: Selfers Academic Press Ltd.Jibo, M., & Okoosi-Simbine, A. T. (2003). The Nigerian Media: An Assessment of Its Role in Achieving Transparent and Accountable Government in the Fourth Republic. *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 12(2), 180–195.

Lincoln, A. (1863). *The Gettysburg Address by Abraham Lincoln.* https://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/gettysburg.htm

Lines, K. (2009). *Prepared for the BBC World Service Trust Governance and the Media A survey of policy opinion*.

Madhav, G. (2001). *Report of the One-Man Committee on Good Governance*.

Maldonado, N. (2010). *The World Bank's evolving concept of good governance and its impact on human rights.* Stockholm, Sweden, May 29-30.

Mangurian, D., Mata, R., & Heinz, W. (2011). *The Annual Report is produced by the IDB Office of External Relations*. www.iadb.org.

McNair, B. (1999). *An Introduction to Political Communication*. London: Routledge

Mile, T. J. (2009). Mass media, democracy, and national reconciliation in Nigeria: Perception, crisis, and options. In T. Keghku, & B. B. Melladu (eds). *Topics in the mass media and public relations practice in Nigeria*. Makurdi. Aboki publishers.

OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) (2000). Partnership for Poverty Reduction: From Commitment to Implementation, Statement by the DAC High-Level Meeting, Paris, 11 – 12 May 2000.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2008). Human Rights, Terrorism and Counter-terrorism. In *Fact Sheet No. 32. Human Rights, Terrorism and Counter-terrorism*.

Ogbu, I. E (2013). Mass media and the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. Mkar journal of media and culture. Vol. 1. No. 1 pp 257 -274

Ogundiya, I.S. (2010). Democracy and good governance: Nigeria's dilemma. African journal of political science and international relations, 4(6), 201208.

Ogundiya, S. I. (2010). Democracy and good governance: Nigeria's dilemma. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, *4*(6), 201–208. http://www.academicjournals.org/ajpsir

Okpe, O. O. (2005). Journalism and the challenges of ethnicity in Nigeria in the twenty-first century. *African journal of indigenous development*, 2(1), 155 -171.

Olaiya, T., Apeloko, D. O., & Ayeni, O. (2013). Factors in Mass Media, Third-Term Agenda and Governance in Nigeria. *New Media and Mass Communication*. https://doi.org/10.7176/NMMC.VOL1048-62

Olutokun, A. & Seteolu, D. (2001). The media and Democratic rule in Nigeria. *Development policy management network bulletin*, XIII (3).

Online Etymology Dictionary, (2017). Govern. Retrieved from http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=govern,

Oyovbaire, S. E. (1987). *Democratic Experiment in Nigeria.* Benin City: Omega Publication Limited.

Pomeranz, E. F., & Stedman, R. C. (2020). *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning Measuring good governance: piloting an instrument for evaluating good governance principles*. https://doi.org/10.1080/1523908X.2020.1753181

Preston, L. T. (1992). *Governance and Development.* The World Bank.

Santas, T., & Ogoshi, J. D. (2016). An Appraisal of Mass Media Role in Consolidating Democracy in Nigeria. *African Research Review*, *10*(1), 73. https://doi.org/10.4314/afrrev.v10i1.7

Schneider, H. (1999). *Participatory Governance: The Missing Link for Poverty Reduction* (No. 17). OECD Publishing.

The Center for Development Communication (2006). Strategic communications for good governance programming workshop. Paper presented on 24-27 April 2006 at Geneva, Switzerland.

The Centre for First Nations Governance. (2023). *Five Pillars of Effective Governance - Centre for First Nations Governance*. The Five Pillars of Effective Governance: The People the Land Laws & Jurisdiction Governing Systems Resources. https://fngovernance.org/five-pillars-of-effective-governance/

UNESCO (2005). Good Governance. Retrieved from http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.phpunescourl_id=5205&url_do=do_printpage&url_section=201.html.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2002). *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World.* New York: UNDP.

World Bank. (1989). *Sub-Saharan Africa. From Crisis to Sustainable Growth: A Long-Term Perspective Study.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Bank. (1992). *Governance and Development.* The World Bank.

World Bank. (1994). *Development in Practice. Governance - The World Bank's Experience.* The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / THE WORLD BANK.