

GOVERNANCE AND POLITICS: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

**A LECTURE
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**By
O. Igho Natufe, PhD***

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KYIV, UKRAINE**

*O. Igho Natufe is a Professor of Political Science at the Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia. A retired Senior Policy Adviser with the Government of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, Igho also taught Political Science and International Relations in Canadian, Ghanaian, and Nigerian universities. The views and opinions expressed in this lecture do not reflect the views and/or opinions of the Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences.

Introduction

The question of good governance has captured the attention of international institutions, including the World Bank¹ and several inter-governmental organizations like the G-8². Both institutions have made this issue a critical prerequisite in their aid and donation policies to countries with poor records on governance.

But what do we mean by *governance*? There is a temptation to use governance and government interchangeably. *Government* is said to derive from the Greek word *kyberman* which means *to steer*. Being in the midst of Political Science and Law students, I do not have any urge to define government in greater details. But, let us agree to define a *government* as a collective body of elected and appointed institutions empowered to legislate and adjudicate for the good of society, while *governance* is conceptualized as the processes and systems by which a government manages the resources of a society to address socio-economic and political challenges in the polity. Thus, a *government* is elected or appointed to provide good, effective and efficient *governance*. According to Daniel Kaufmann, governance embodies “the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good.”³

A good governance system is defined by its relationship to some key prerequisites, including Accountability, Transparency, Participation, and Predictability. Let us briefly review these elements.

► Accountability

In a democracy, elected and appointed government officials, from the president down to the office messenger in a local government council, must be accountable for their actions and policies. They must provide answers for their activities to the general population. It is imperative that the population demands this from all government officials at all levels of the political system. One way of doing this is for members of each electoral constituency to construct a performance measurement framework compelling respective government officials to provide answers for their activities and policies. They must demand regular meetings with their respective elected officials at the constituency level.

► Transparency

Simply put, transparency is the easy and unrestricted access of government information by the population. The general public must have access to information on government

¹ See, The World Bank, Reforming Public Institutions and Strengthening Governance. A World Bank Strategy, Washington, D.C., November 2000.

² The G8 gave prominence to this issue at its 2005 Summit. See, G8 Gleneagles 2005, SUMMIT DOCUMENTS, <http://www.g8.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1094235524805>

³ Daniel Kaufmann, “Myths and Realities of Governance and Corruption,” in Working Papers & Articles, World Bank, Washington, D.C., September 2005, p. 82

policies and programmes. It is vital that ministers and bureaucrats ensure the unedited dissemination of such information as demanded by the general public, excluding information pertaining to a nation's security. The general public should agitate for the enactment of an Access to Information Act that guarantees the unrestricted access of the public to information on government policies and programmes. The enactment of such an Act will compel governments to adhere to the tenets of transparency in their decision making process as well as limiting the chances of government officials engaging in corrupt practices.

► **Participation**

This is a very important component of the elements of governance. It is imperative that citizens participate at all levels of their government's decision making process. Their participation does not end with merely casting their votes on Election Day. They must insist and ensure that their votes are counted. For effective participation in public policy, it is essential for citizens to organize themselves into credible interest groups (professional associations, academic unions, students' unions, labour unions, non-governmental organizations, etc) that constantly review government policies, articulate the positions of the general population, and engage elected officials in public debates regarding the rationale and impact of their policies and programmes on the population.

► **Predictability**

A democratic polity is governed by laws and regulations anchored on the Constitution of the country. Therefore, it is imperative that the application of these be fair and consistent, and thus predictable, within the boundaries of the Constitution. Any arbitrary application of the laws and regulations would vitiate the Constitution and inhibit good governance. A critical element of this is the recognition of the principles of jurisdictional responsibilities, especially in a federal polity like Nigeria. For example, can a federal government establish an Act empowering itself to review the finances, policies and activities of state governments and punish erring state officials?

The above elements presuppose an educated, politically conscious, enlightened and an actively proactive population. Where the population is ill equipped to engage in any of the above, it is a certainty that the rudiments of good governance will readily be compromised by the government of the day. This situation buttresses the view that a society gets the government that it deserves.

We have provided a macroscopic view of governance. Now let us view *politics*. In a political system, particularly in a multi party democratic system, political parties are established to articulate contending interests of the population. Members of a political party meet to elect their officials. Citizens cast their votes on Election Day to elect their representatives in parliament. Members of parliament (Congress, etc.) debate their contending views on national development and seek a compromise resolution. An elected government formulates policies and enacts laws that determine how the nation's policies and programmes are to be administered. Citizens involved in the above *processes* are engaged in *politics*. What is politics?

In his celebrated book entitled **Politics: Who Gets What, When, How**, published in 1936, Harold Lasswell opined that politics is a process engaged by elected officials to determine “who gets what, when, where, and how.” This formulation subsequently influenced the widely held notion of politics in the West as a contest for power for the distribution of resources in the polity. Thus, politics is a process of resolving societal conflicts that arise when determining who gets what, when and how. On the other hand, Marxist scholars perceive politics as an ideological struggle for power for the acquisition and distribution of resources. By injecting *ideological struggle* into their definition, Marxists sharpened the content of the concept with the emphasis on class differentiation in the political process. Mao Zedong offered an interesting definition when he declared that: “Politics is war without bloodshed while war is politics with bloodshed.”⁴ Unfortunately, Mao Zedong did not live long enough to see that in several countries, including Ukraine, Nigeria, and Kenya, for example, politics is war with bloodshed.

At this juncture, I would like us to explore the relationship between governance and politics, while we hold constant the above definitions of both phenomena. We will use as an example, the process of policy formulation in a matured democratic environment where the above identified elements of governance are at play. By a matured democratic environment is meant one where citizens are actively engaged in the political process, and where elected officials are more responsive to the elements of governance. Policy formulation in such an environment elicits the active participation of various citizen’s groups, professional organizations, etc., at every stage of policy debate in the country’s parliament. Effective policy formulation requires a solid policy making environment and, as noted by the World Bank, “policy reforms are less likely to succeed when public institutions and governance are weak.”⁵

The Issue

It is pertinent to note that, Daniel Kaufmann *et.al* have identified six dimensions of governance which could be collapsed into the above categories. Their six dimensions of governance are:

1. “Voice and accountability (VA), the extent to which a country’s citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and free media
2. Political stability and absence of violence (PV), perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including political violence and terrorism
3. Government effectiveness (GE), the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the

⁴ Mao Zedong, “On Protracted War,” in Selected Works: Vol 2, Peking, 1965.

⁵ The World Bank, Reforming Public Institutions and Strengthening Governance: A World Bank Strategy, p.1.

- quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies
4. Regulatory quality (RQ), the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development
 5. Rule of law (RL), the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence
 6. Control of corruption (CC), the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as 'capture' of the state by elites and private interests."⁶

For the purpose of this lecture, we shall confine ourselves to three of the above: government effectiveness, rule of law, and control of corruption in a democratic polity. We shall focus our attention on Ukraine.

The process and quality of policy formulation and implementation are critical elements in determining the level of engagement of the population and measuring the quality of governance of the society. To what extent is the process, to paraphrase Kaufmann *et.al*, a " 'capture' of the state by elites and private interests."⁷ The environment for policy formulation must be democratic and it is imperative that the process be transparent. The degree of citizens' participation in this process is determined by the level of their education and political consciousness, as well as on the access to political elites and effective communication.

For example, if the debate is on the banning of methyl bromide in agriculture, we expect spirited contributions from opposite sides of the issue, including farmers' unions, scientists, labour unions, and legislators representing their contending views, to actively participate in the debate to shape the policy decision making process.

It must be stressed that corruption is a global problem from which no country is immuned.⁸ Even the United States of America (USA) is ridden by corrupt practices which threaten the foundation of democracy in that country. While the level of corruption in less democratic countries like Ukraine, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Russia, causes grave socio-economic hardships for the population with the corresponding deficit on social services and infrastructural development, corruption in America is given a legal backing

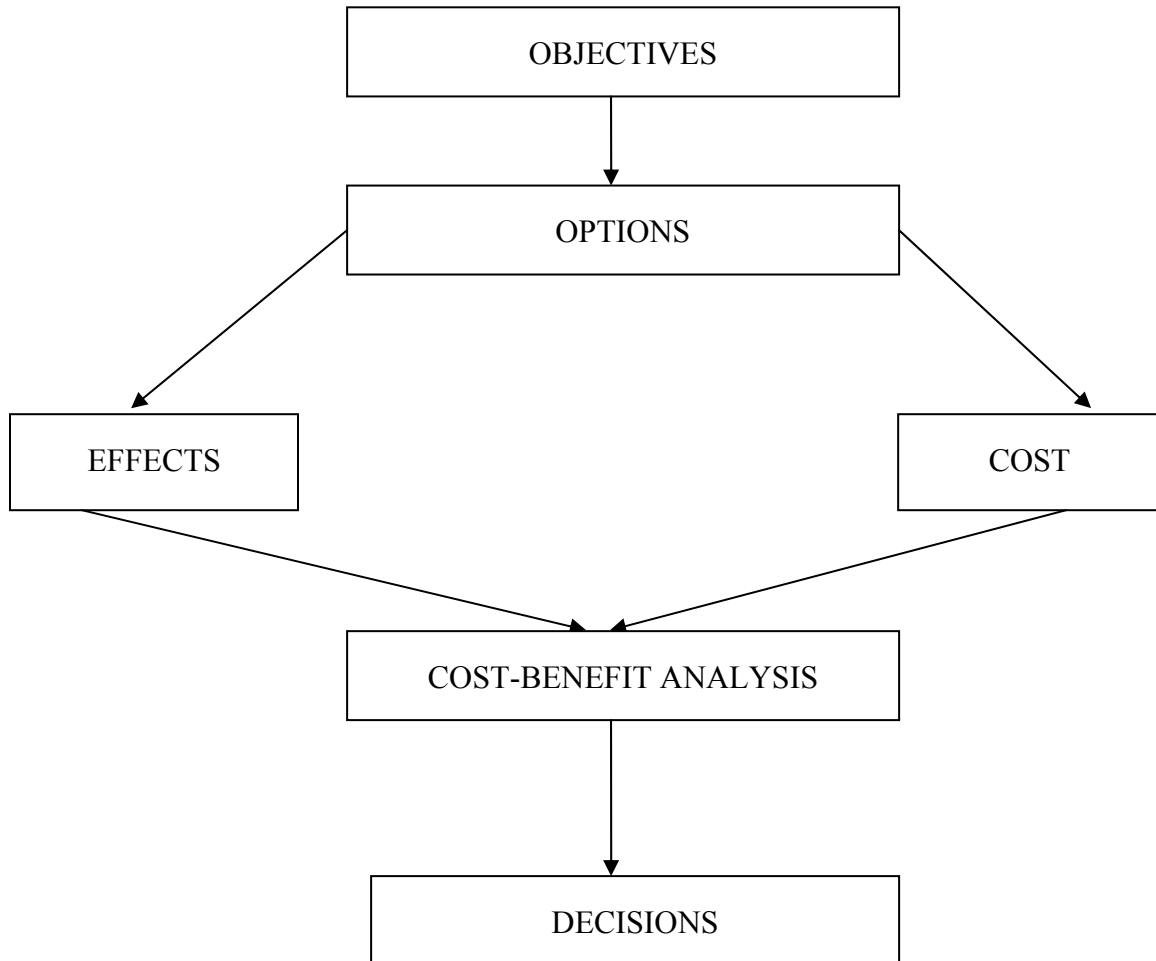
⁶ Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Masimo Mastruzzi, Governance Matters V: Aggregate and Individual Governance Indicators for 1999-2005, World Bank Institute, World Bank, Washington, D.C., September 2006, p.4.

⁷ Kaufmann *et.al*. Governance Matters V, p.4.

⁸ Se, Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2013, <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2013/results>

by the US Congress in the form of registered lobbying groups.⁹ However, this cloak of legal cover does not conceal the fact that corruption in the USA remains a dysfunctional element in the public service, just as it is in Ukraine, Russia, Nigeria, Afghanistan, etc. It becomes an irrelevancy to argue that there is a good and a bad corruption.

POLICY FORMULATION



⁹ See, Francis Fukuyama, “America in Decay: The Sources of Political Dysfunction”, *Foreign Affairs*, September-October 2014,

http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141729/francis-fukuyama/america-in-decay?cid=nlc-foreign-affairs-this-week-082814-america-in-decay-5-082814&sp_mid=46845006&sp_rid=Y29uc3VsdGluZ0BzdHJhdGVwb2wuY2ES1

The process of policy debate is captured by the above diagram. First, the **objectives** of the proposed policy are thoroughly defined and debated. The next stage is to consider the **options** available. Arising from the options' debate is a consideration of the corresponding **effects** and **cost** of adopting the respective options. This is followed by a detailed **cost-benefit analysis** of the effects and cost. The result of the cost-benefit analysis will inform the policy **decisions**. In a matured democratic environment with a high degree of confidence in the elements of governance exemplified, for example, by Canada and the USA, (Accountability, Transparency, Participation, and Predictability) policy decisions reached via this approach have a higher probability of reflecting a balanced option anchored on informed reasoning, as compared to an infantile democratic environment represented by, for example, Ukraine, Nigeria, Russia, and Afghanistan.

But there is an important qualifier in this comparative analysis. That is, the level and scope of corruption in either system. As a prerequisite for granting "poor countries" debt forgiveness by the G8 at the Gleneagles 2005 Summit, the summit agreed, *inter alia*:

- "To provide extra resources for Africa's peace keeping forces so that they can better deter, prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa; and
- To give enhanced support for greater democracy, effective governance and transparency and to help fight corruption and return stolen assets."¹⁰

Democratic practices and good governance flourish in an environment where political elites possess the required leadership skills anchored on the tenets of democracy. It is essential that they represent a broader constituency beyond their immediate surroundings in articulating their respective policies, which derive from a sound knowledge of the rudiments of interest aggregation. Education, political consciousness and the level of poverty have a vital role to play in this process. It has been argued that "the euphoria of independence disguised the reality that (beyond a consensus in favor of independence) support for many African regimes was drawn from a narrow base, often with quite weak roots in the society at large."¹¹ The political history of immediate post-colonial African countries lends credence to this thesis. We have also witnessed this phenomenon in, for example, Ukraine, Russia, and the other former Soviet republics, where political parties are strongly identified with individuals with no universal construct to bind the diverse constituencies represented in the entire country.

It is instructive to note, however, that the failure of politics and governance in less democratic countries is not always due to the leaders of the respective countries. Very often the policies of international donor institutions, including the World Bank, and powerful foreign countries, play a crucial role in setting the countries astray as donor policies contribute to "undermining the ability of governments to affect national and

¹⁰ G8 Gleneagles 2005, SUMMIT DOCUMENTS

¹¹ The World Bank, Reforming Public Institutions and Strengthening Governance: A World Bank Strategy, p.73,

strategic choices in public” policy.¹² While governments, without exception, recognize the value of good governance practices, most of them, especially in the less democratic countries, face systemic challenges that hinder their implementation of those practices. First, as observed by the World Bank, “the major political players who dominate the state apparatus are fundamentally unwilling to change their behaviour and to move toward more accountable governance.”¹³ Second, the regime lacks the capacity to affect good governance. Third, and perhaps of more vital importance is the role of donor organizations in dictating policy choices to recipient governments. The World Bank represents this group of donors, as witnessed by its structural adjustment policy (SAP) that was imposed on several Asian and African countries. The European Union injected Greece with this painful pill in 2009. The World Bank has recognized that, “many of the earlier failures of” its public sector management “initiatives were the result of a failure to recognize this diversity in political and institutional starting points, and to tailor the reform program accordingly. Yet donors, including the Bank, persisted in providing technical assistance for improved management in contexts where the pre-conditions were not present.”¹⁴ Irrespective of the admitted policy failures of the World Bank, it must be stressed, however, that the success of good governance in any country depends on the attitude of the elected leaders, as well as citizens, towards democratic practice and the operation of a democratic system.

Ukraine

PRESIDENTS OF UKRAINE: POST-SOVIET ERA

Leonid Kravchuk	1991-1994
Leonid Kuchma	1994-2005
Viktor Yushchenko	2005-2010
Viktor Yanukovich	2010-2014
Petro Poroshenko	2014-present

Ukraine has experienced twists and turns in its attempt to construct a democratic polity since it re-gained its independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Ukraine is one of the countries referred to by the eminent political scientist, Samuel P. Huntington that transited “from non-democratic regimes to democratic regimes.”¹⁵ This transition has been severely affected by environmental shocks, some caused by the failures of the political leadership to provide effective government, while others were caused by external factors aided by internal clients. This lecture shall focus on the internal factors vis-à-vis good governance and politics.

¹² Ibid., p.74.

¹³ Ibid., p.76.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, Norman, Oklahoma, 1993, p.15.

While J. A. Schumpeter regards democracy as an “institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the peoples vote”¹⁶, the contest for political power in Ukraine seems to thrive towards what Huntington refers to as “political decay.” According to Huntington, “political order depends in part on the relation between the development of political institutions and the mobilization of new social forces into politics.”¹⁷ In Huntington’s analysis, “political decay” manifests itself when the institutions of the political system are outgrown by the demands of the “new social forces into politics.” Simply put, when a government loses the capacity to effectively respond to and manage the demands of the “new social forces” a chaotic situation emerges that give rise to “political decay.” In 2004 and 2013/2014 (Maidan 1 and Maidan 2) Ukraine encountered this phenomenon, which is bound to dominate Ukrainian political discourse for the foreseeable future.

UKRAINE’S RANKING IN GLOBAL CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX

Year	Number of Countries Surveyed	Rank	President in Office
2001	91	83	Leonid Kuchma
2004	145	122	Leonid Kuchma
2008	180	134	Viktor Yushchenko
2009	180	146	Viktor Yushchenko
2010	178	134	Viktor Yushchenko
2011	183	152	Viktor Yanukovich
2012	176	144	Viktor Yanukovich
2013	176	144	Viktor Yanukovich

Sources: Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index
http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_early

NOTE: Transparency International began publishing its annual Corruption Perceptions Index in 1995 with a survey of 41 countries, excluding Ukraine. Thus, the above table does not have any data on the corruption index under the presidency of Leonid Kravchuk. The 2014 edition is yet to be published.

The anti-regime uprising that engineered the overthrow of the democratically elected government of President Viktor Yanukovich on February 22, 2014 underlined the extent of disarray and discord in the Ukrainian polity. With the support of rival political parties, the organizers of the Maidan uprising have instituted a form of democracy that may be inimical to the establishment of a democratic system in Ukraine. The ouster of Yanukovich from office facilitated the separatist agitations in the Donbas region that led to military confrontations between the government of Ukraine and the separatists. These developments raise a fundamental question regarding the democratic values of terrorism

¹⁶ J. A. Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, London, 1947, p.269

¹⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in changing Societies, New Haven, Conn., 1968, p.vii.

and the terrorist contents of a democracy.¹⁸ The government that replaced Yanukovich's regime, with the aid of the anti-regime uprising, will have to either replicate the policies of those who organized Maidan 2 and overthrew Yanukovich or construct a universal outreach policy to cater for the diverse constituencies that make up the Ukrainian mosaic. But when anti-regime uprising produces anti-democratic legislations, as exemplified in Egypt and Ukraine, then the political system gravitates deeper into decay. The lustration law passed by the Rada (Ukrainian Parliament) vitiates the tenets of democracy. Without any due process of the rule of law, the lustration law disenfranchised millions of Ukrainians from the political system. A leader of the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, Yevhen Zakharov referred to the lustration law as "a great defeat" of democracy¹⁹ A major problem affecting good governance in Ukraine is the level of corruption in the system. The above table indicates the ranking of Ukraine in global corruption perceptions index for selected years of three past Ukrainian presidents. We see an unenviable progression of the level of corruption from 2001 to 2013. A group of oligarchs that emerged in Ukraine after 1991, just like in neighbouring Russia, has captured the state treasury for its private use, with the connivance of the presidency. Billions of dollars that could have been ploughed into social services and infrastructure development were diverted into private bank accounts, thus accelerating gross economic inequality and poverty among the population, as well as fueling unhealthy regional confrontations.

The challenge for the Ukrainian government is how to address the huge democratic deficits in the system. The president and his government have to come up with reasonable strategic approaches to addressing the following deficits

1. Corruption and theft of public property.
2. High unemployment and growing poverty.
3. Breakdown of social services and infrastructural decay.
4. Loss of people's confidence in the system.
5. Regionalism and the national question.

How the above issues are resolved will depend on the management of, according to Huntington, "the relation between the development of political institutions and the mobilization of new social forces into politics." So far, Ukrainian politicians have failed the test of politics. They have been unable to construct any viable stratagem on national development, but have instead aided and abetted the social and ethnic discords that have aggravated the decay in the polity. On the other hand, the "new social forces" that have emerged since Maidan 1 need to re-define their national agenda to include membership from all regions and ethnic affiliations if their intent is to represent the diverse constituencies of Ukraine. These "new social forces" represent the contending views that

¹⁸ See, O. Igbo Natufe, "TERRORISM AND POLITICS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS – ANALYSIS", March 18, 2013, <http://www.eurasiareview.com/18032013-terror-ism-and-politics-in-international-relations-analysis/>

¹⁹ David Stern, "Ukraine's politicians face mob attacks", 20 October 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29536641>

emerged particularly after the ouster of Yanukovych in February 2014. They need to reconcile their positions and reconstruct an ideological prism reflective of the Ukrainian mosaic. In contemporary times, they define the contours of Ukrainian politics. For Ukraine to be on the right path of governance, elected officials – at the national, regional, and municipal levels – need to moderate the development of political thinking by working in conjunction with the “new social forces” in constructing a new Ukraine. But if they fail to achieve congruity in critical areas of public administration, a new social order might emerge in the decay of the old. Therefore, the challenge is for current political leaders to demonstrate their leadership in addressing the democratic deficits listed above, in order to install the tenets of good governance in Ukrainian politics.