THE ICT CULTURE AND TRANSFORMATION OF ELECTORAL GOVERNANCE AND POLITICS IN AFRICA: THE CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

The utility of ICT infrastructure in public administration and governance in Africa is at a low ebb and therefore yet to gain popularity. Public administration and governance in most states of the region are marked by inefficiency and poor performance index. In the actual sense, African government and politics remain challenged by poor quality administration, bad governance and lack of electoral integrity. The application of ICT infrastructure for the conduct of elections and governance administration is yet to become a culture. Utilizing content analysis, discussions and field survey methods, the study is set to accomplish three basic objectives. One, investigating the utilitarian values of ICT and electronic infrastructure in governance in Africa. Two, identifying the challenges confronting ICT-propelled electoral administration and governance in Africa. Three, generating some affirmative possibilities for transforming the basic limitations to e-governance and e-administration in Africa.

Key words: Corruption; e-administration; e-election; e-governance; efficiency; electronic technology

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Advancement in information and communication technology (ICT) has opened up a vast world of opportunities, and revolutionized transformation, particularly in procedural processes and the way things are done. The contemporary world is therefore witnessing a transformative culture involving the use of electronic technology. A device that has enhanced the automation of processes and manipulation at all levels. In essence, the shift from practice traditionalism in the ways of doing things to electronic culture is not isolatory, as all sectors of society or human endeavours are benefitting recipients. Hence, in vogue are electronic-propelled services such as e-banking, e-commerce, e-library, e-learning, e-shopping, e-ticket, e-registration, e-booking, e-health and many other forms. Electronic technology has enhanced the transformation of virtually all services to wireless procedures with the removal of the burdens of distance and timeline barriers. Procedural activities and processes have become invisible to both service operators and clients. Electronic service systems have consequently created a community of people made up of managers, patrons and clients connected and bound together by wireless electronics.

Governance, administration and politics in general are not isolated from the benefits of electronic transformation. Specifically, governors, the governed, patrons and clients of public institutions have become integrated into an online community. Governance and administrative procedures have become electronicized with the concepts of e-government, e-governance and e-administration.

This study is principally set to examine the possibility of achieving e-service delivery in governance, administration and electoral practice in Africa. In trying to pursue this broad objective, the study will be guided by four major research questions. One, what are the utility values of electronic propelled governance and administration, which have become the driven force for its adaptation and acculturation in Africa? Two, what are the debilitating challenges to

e-governance, e-administration and e-electoral system in Africa? Three, can Africa, as a continent, and individual African states sustain the electronic culture in the face of infrastructural decay and moralistic deficits? Four, and finally, what can be done, in terms of affirmative possibilities to kick-start Africa into efficient and sustained electronic culture? In attending to these basic questions, the rest of the study is divided into seven sections as subtitled in the body of the text.

Interpretative Definitions

The concepts of government, e-governance and e-administration have been subjected to contending interpretations. The starting point of presenting the varied interpretations of these concepts is to first examine the concept of e-service which is believed to be the facilitator or enhancer of e-government and its corresponding applications. Cogently, e-service refers to the provision of service via the Internet (Wikipedia, 2013). It equally, according to Jeong (2007 cited in *ibid*), constitutes the online services available on the Internet, whereby a valid transaction of buying and selling is possible. E-service is in contradistinction to the hitherto physical, direct contact, one-on-one traditional transactions and interactions between buyers and sellers. E-service eliminates the physical procurement of goods and services. The essential information about procurement is provided on the website, including the type goods and services available, the location and the price tags. This type of procurement gives birth to related concepts such as e-buy, e-commerce, e-banking etc. A much more attractive definition is offered by Rouley (2006 cited in Wikipedia, 2013)), who sees e-service as the deeds, efforts and performance, the delivery of which is meditated by information technology.

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E-service provides a number of possibilities in terms of its values or benefits. Lu (2001 cited in Wikipedia, 2013) enlists some of the values of e-service, which include: accessing a greater customer base; broadening market reach; providing potential for increasing customer knowledge and providing alternative communication channels to customers. Entrepreneurs, industrialists and the private sector in general are favoured by e-service. It enhances the perceived image of companies and it lowers the entry barrier to new markets and the cost of acquiring new customers. It equally enables them to gain competitive advantages (ibid). E-service provides the opportunity of global reach for service providers and suppliers of goods and services far beyond the urban frontiers to the remotest communities, as long as Internet services are available.

E-government is a by-product, and a dominant application, of e-service, like e-business, e-commerce, e-learning, e-payment and others. E-government deals with the entire public rather than the narrow domain of the private sector. It can therefore be referred to as the "public e-service". Akinyili (2010) sees e-government simply as the use of ICT to enhance access to, and delivery of, government services for the benefit of all. She enunciates further that e-government is made possible because of the ICT infrastructure, which relates to all the technical means for processing and communicating information. She reiterates that the convergence of information technology (IT) and telecommunication technology (TT) gave birth to ICT. In essence, without the ingenuity discovery of ICT mechanisms, e-government would not have emerged. Landon and Laudon (1994) underscore the growing power of new information architecture, which plays a large role in contemporary organizations. Believing that the new information architecture multimedia delivery system, works for all organizations (ibid).

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Adejuwon (2012, pp. 63-75) is of the submission that e-government is the whole spectrum of relationship and networks within government regarding the usage of and application of ICTs. Elaborating this definition, Moon (2002 cited in ibid) opines that the terminology refers to the use of information technologies such as the Internet, the World Wide Web and mobile computing by government agencies that can transform their relationship with citizens, businesses, different areas of government and other governments. Accordingly, these technologies help deliver government services to citizens, improve interaction, and provide access to information.

Affirming the role, importance and value of the Internet in the process of e-government, the United Nations (2008) also conceptualizes e-government as the utilization of the Internet and the world wide web to deliver government information and services to citizens. Baum (cited in Adejuwon, 2012, pp.63-75) perceives e-government from the perspective of transformation from the old ways to the new ways of doing things. Consequently, he defines e-government as the transformation of public sectors internal and external relationship through net-enabled operations, information technology and communications to optimize government service delivery, constituency participation and governance. Finally, is the view that e-government refers to the use by government agencies of information technology such as the Wide Area Networks (WAN), the Internet, and mobile computing that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses and other arms of government (Adejuwon, 2012). In spite, the belief that defining e-government is quite broad, divergent and diversified, there is a consensus of opinion and agreement in these definitions that ICT appliances, the Internet and the World Wide Web are imperatives for electronic-driven government. It is also agreed that the target audience of e-

government is the general public- the citizens, groups, all government agencies, businesses and the open society.

Review of Literature

There are transverse opinions on the issues of ICT and its usability in terms of applications in the modern world. The invention of advanced ICTs and the Internet is radically changing the ways human beings live, behave, interact and carry out work and industrial processes. The rapid development and use of information technologies have direct and dramatic influence on all aspects of life (Ajadi and Adeoye, 2005, pp. 1-13). ICTs have inaugurated a transformation from the era of "individuality" to an "information" society (ibid, PP.1-13). Anunobi (2006, p.40), in his affirmation of this position, is of the opinion that the use of the Internet has revolutionized the way and manner the global community source and use information. The Internet provides a huge data base for the world community relevant to all walks of humanity. It places at the disposal of everyone all gateways to various forms of information and capacity to access them on a World Wide Web level (Cisse, 2004,p.14 cited in Anunobi, 2006, p.40). The Internet affords a worldwide communication and information dissemination, even to the remotest part of the globe. Still underscoring the value of ICT and the Internet, Ayo (2006, p8.) averred that the growing rate of ICT utilization, particularly of the Internet, has influenced at an exponential rate, online registration and communication among the generality of the populace. He opined that, notwithstanding the shortcomings of online communication, most people are connected through their cell-phones, home PCs and other facilities through corporate access and public *kioks* (i.e. small retail shops). He further points out

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that the patronage of the Internet, all over the world, is monumental, and has remained on the increase from inception.

The Internet has globalized and integrated world communities. From available statistics, in the account of Ayo (ibid), the Internet is the most widely patronized electronic technology, even more than the PC and telephone put together. Adejuwon (2012, pp.63-75) is of the observation that ICTs are increasingly playing important role in the day-to-day lives of the people, revolutionizing their work and leisure, and changing rules of doing business. ICT has been applied to all sectors of the society. In this manner, it is seen as a powerful tool for accelerating economic development (Wikipedia, 2013). This is to the extent that developing countries have focused on the development of ICT during the last two decades and it has been recognized that ICT is critical to the economy and it is a catalyst for development (ibid). It has also brought about institutional and procedural changes in governance. The introduction of ICT to governance facilitated the emergence of the concept of e-governance and other related concepts such as e-administration, e-democracy, e-elections, e-voting and e-consultation. Norris (2003, p.417) simply sees e-government as the movement of government services to the Internet. Chadwick (2003,p. 443) argues that the contemporary digital information and communication technologies (ICTs) facilitate new forms of e-government-enabled public sector policy making. He believes that e-government and e-democracy are new norms and practices, which converged four principal areas, which are: online consultation, integrating civil societal groups with bureaucracies and legislatures; the internal democratization of the public sector itself; the involvement of users in the design and delivery of public services; and the diffusion of open-source collaboration in public organisations.

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The radicalization of governance practises and administration, and moving government services to the Internet have prompted Norris to opine that contemporary states have been turned to "virtual" states. This can be otherwise called the "state on the screen" or "states on the screen". Norris judgementally avers that "Building the Virtual State" is a disappointment as it delivers a good, but less than it promises (ibid).

Buttressing the globalized effect of ICT, and particularly on governance, the UNDP (2005 cited in Adejuwon, 2012, pp.63-75) informs that governance has undergone important changes in the last decade, that government can no longer can be fully addressed only at the national level as this has been overtaken by the emergence of super-national, interstate and private governance mechanisms and practices to challenge the traditional powers of national governments. The global body further intimated that e-governance is a new way to govern processes in which ICT play an active and significant role. That the arrival of ICT in the modern years has presented an opening for the central and state government to change the way organizations control, leverage and value their information access.

Globally, the utility value of ICT-powered governance has been acknowledged in enhancing timeline public service delivery. Consequently, the adoption of e-government and other electronic applications has become a vogue. While the developed world has remarkably adjusted to this new ICT culture, including in the public domain, the developing world has also focused on the development of ICT as a critical factor and catalyst in economic development. Many government agencies in the developing countries have taken progressive steps towards the web and ICT use, adding coherence to all local activities on the Internet, widening local access and skills, opening up interactive services for local debates and increasingly, the participation of citizens (Aurigi, 1997). It is however observed that the potential for e-government in developing

countries remain largely unexploited. Human, organisational and technological factors pose great challenges to effective and sustained electronic governance. It is further noted by Allen *et al* (2001 cited in Wikipedia), that governments in the developing world can effectively exploit and appropriate the benefits of ICT, but e-government success entails the accommodation of certain unique conditions, needs and obstacles. Allen and colleagues further brought to forefront that the adaptive challenges of e-government go far beyond technology, they call for organisational structures and skills, new forms of leadership, and transformation of public-private partnerships. Regionalizing the ICT-propelled governance and service value debate, African countries also have come to realise the need for e-governance in order to provide customer-focused, cost-effective, and easy to use services for citizens and businesses and to improve the internal workings of governments (Adejuwon, 2012, pp.63-75). Frantic efforts are being made by the different African countries to acquire e-government and other e-appliances. Maumbe, Owei and Alexander (2008, pp. 757-777) critically observed that African countries have jumped on the e-government bandwagon by looking mostly at the benefits without a clear risk assessment. They are of the opinion that African countries should question the pace and pathway for their e-government programmes. In essence, the countries should access the new electronic-propelled governance culture in terms of cost-benefit analysis, the challenges and barriers that can either enhance its workability or undermine its success in the continent.

Philosophy, Targets, Tracks and Utilitarian Values of E-Government

E-government and other related e-service appliances such as e-administration have offered a range of opportunities and possibilities. It has however, also, provided some impossibilities, and it limits opportunities. E-service is fraud prone. A lot of crimes are being

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committed by cyber-criminals and attackers, which are to the economic and security detriments of individuals, organizations and states. Financial frauds are perpetrated on the Internet while very sensitive security and intelligence information are stolen or tapped from source. Socially, e-service limits physical interactions between people. Service-providers and clients do not have the opportunity of one-on-one interactions. Lastly is the occurrence of system failure. E-service and the entire Internet system are not immune to system breakdown due to either mechanical faults or human error, which could result into loss of critical information or delay in getting things done with costly outcomes for missing timelines.

The overall philosophy of e-government is geared towards creating an inclusive and integrated society with a democratized way of doing government business in clear departure from the hitherto enclaved and isolated process of government whereby the citizens who are the focus and target of governance and administration are more involved in the process of taking decisions about their welfare and future. Citizens, as the target of governance, should be presented with a platform to be more involved than ever before in the process of public decision-making through effective mobilization and enlightenment and information system right from the grassroots level. Efficient and effective performance has also become a crucial criterion in gauging good and bad governance in the contemporary times. How efficient is the government in providing dividends of democracy to the electorate has become a key question in modern democracies. It is within this philosophical perspective that the values of the related concepts of e-government, e-democracy and electronic domains will be evaluated in terms of the desirability of e-service in these sectors.

In specific terms, e-governance, according to Hecks (2001 cited in Adejuwon, 2012, pp. 63-75) has three targeted objectives. One, improving government processes (i.e. e-

administration). Two, connecting citizens (i.e. e-citizens and e-services). Three, building external interactions (i.e. e-society). These objectives are aimed to catalyse and enhance popular participation and democratic processes in general (ibid).

E-government is characterized and distinguished by some imperatives, which are - anticipation, transparency and accountability (Singla, 2002 cited in ibid). It beclouds shrewdness while it promotes openness in public affairs. At the same time, it underscores a sense of morality devoid of fraud and sharp practices by government officials and the interacting public at large. It enhances prudence and discourages waste in the management of government affairs. This is done through the reduction of costs, which for instance, is achieved through transformation of paper services and furniture stored data to wireless processes and storage.

E-government has specific tracks. Tracks refer to the modalities through which e-government services are delivered to the client public. According to Akunyili (2010), four generic tracks are in existence. These are:

i.   Government-to-Citizen (G2C)

ii.   Government-to-Employees (G2E)

iii. Government-to-Business (G2B)

iv.   Government-to-Government (G2G)

G2C refers to services rendered to members of the public by the public sector establishments/agencies. G2E service includes the bio-data capturing of employees, writing promotion e-examinations, and e-payment of staff salaries. Processing of retirement pensions and gratuities are also included in the e-government system. G2B involves the interactions and transactions between government and the private sector. Procurements from, and contracts awards to, the private sector by government are conducted electronically online. G2G depicts all

interactions between all levels of government. This is not limited to national levels of government. It also involves transactions between other countries, regional and global organizations and state and non-state institutions such as the World Bank, IMF, Rotary International, the Red Cross and Transparency International.

The core value of e-government lies in the scope and quality of public service delivery. E-government enhances the widest reach of the citizens, no matter their geographical domicility in terms of the residence and place of abode. As long as the communities have access to the Internet domain, and the people are proficient in its use, government activities are made open to the general public. Government information can be accessed without hindrance by official operatives. Citizens direct access to all government ministries, agencies, parastatals, the legislature, the judiciary, the presidency and all other public institutions. Through the Internet and other social interactive media, including cell-phones, Facebook, Twitter etc, citizens can be informed about what their government is doing, question officials and engage them in debate. In this way, inclusive governance is increasingly displacing the earlier exclusive attitude of public institutions, whereby contributions to issues are downplayed because of limited access to official agencies.

E-government enhances transparency, accountability and corruption-reduction in public service. Access to official portals of government is made open to all, as long as individuals have the facilities to connect to it. Parliamentary debates are made open, publicized and can be viewed from any part of the country. Phone-in facilities are provided and made open to the public for inputs on issues of debate by parliament. Official webs also provide feedback mechanism for members of the public to air their views and comments on any government policy without censor. Fiscal matters relating to the incomes and expenditure of the state are lay bare on the

official portal. How the tax payers money is being spent must be explicitly explained. In this way, the public/electorate can question the level of transparency and accountability of public officials. E-government system, according to the World Bank (cited in Adejuwon, 2012), affords greater convenience, improves revenue and reduces costs. The system shortens spatial mobility of government clients in procuring official services, as such service, can be procured right in ones bedroom through the Internet. Payment can be made into government coffers without getting to government treasuries or other payment centres through e-transaction enabled money transfer devices such as Visa, Mastercard and others. Application for government positions can also be done on the official website through the Internet. This would reduce cost and risk of travelling from any part of the country to government centres. All this eliminates the traditional gap between the governor and the governed.

Reduction in the cost of procuring government service is not limited to individuals. Governments also benefit from reduction in the cost of processing government activities as most government activities no longer involve paperwork. E-service and other application domains no longer rely on paper operations, which are often very bulky with the need to provide storage furniture. E-government is a paperless system, which electronic data stored as megabytes in microfilms, computer devices, CD and even on the Internet. Less amount of money is spent on procuring storage furniture.

Corruption is also reduced through e-government. Revenue collection officials, particularly in the developing world are corrupt. They collect revenue directly or indirectly manually from the payers. This encourages embezzlement of government money. Such revenues collected may never get to government coffers, or the officials may short-change government by pocketing a substantial part of what was collected. Electronic payment of revenue directly to

government coffers through e-transact would reduce corruption behaviour by state officials. Related to this, is the issue of "ghost workers", which is rampant in the Nigerian public administration system. Ghost worker is a practice of including non-existing employees in the payroll of government with the salaries and entitlements of the "workers" being collected by unknown government officials in collaboration with the personnel of the banks. More than 46,000 such workers are in the payroll of the Federal Government with about N118.9 billion ($7.43 million) lost them yearly (Onuba, 2013, p.1). In the aggregate, not less than 500,000 ghost workers are in the payroll system of the 36 states of the Nigerian Federation and the Federal Capital Territory. E-government integrated payment system, involving bio-data capturing of all government employees accompanied by e-payment system would significantly reduce the incidence of ghost-workers in the public service and the attendant financial leakages.

Inter-agency interactions, transactions and dealings of all categories are enhanced by e-public service. Coordinate agencies need to interact with each other to avoid working against each other since they serve the same government and people. This is much more required in the federated states like Nigeria, South Africa, Brazil, the United States, Germany, Russia, Australia and others. Government agencies or institutions at the federal/state/regional/republic and local governments, in spite their coordinate status, need to interact and work together to be able to serve the citizenry better. Timeline interactions are better provided by e-governance without the traditional barriers including hoarding of information by respective officials, inability to convocate a meeting as at when due or without meeting the expected quorum and unnecessary inter-agency and inter-governmental levels rivalry leading to mutual hostilities and uncooperative intergovernmental relations.

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Consequently, e-payment reduces the risks which accompany cash economy whereby large sums of money are being carried by individuals. Such individuals are vulnerable to violent attacks and dispossession of their cash by armed robbers. This is a rampant behaviour in Nigeria, South Africa and other African countries. E-campaigns, e-election and e-voting or e-election or the composite concept of e-democracy would eliminate the malpractice associated with the electoral system in Africa. The desperation of African leaders on to hang to power for life has entailed that elections are rigged and manipulated to favour them.

Overall, e-governance and other related e-public services promote governance efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability. It reduces the logistic challenge of reaching a large population spread over an equally large territory often experienced by public officials, especially by the central government in a federal system.

ICT, E-Government and E-Election in Africa

Africa, like other continents of the world, has joined the digital and online service delivery race. Individual countries in the region are making frantic efforts to be compliant with the promise that it would facilitate their economic development. The question thus arises: How prepared or ready is Africa in adopting and utilising the e-government model? What is the level of success secured so far? What is the ranking of the continent in the global e-government survey?

As a continental body, Africa Union has no e-governance policy. African Union is yet to develop a clearly spelt out e-government agenda, which can make online service practice a compulsion for members. Though, in the Fourth African Development Forum held in October, 2004 at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, African leaders acknowledged the desirability of e-government

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and its accruable benefits by declaring that e-governance is an important innovation for enhancing good governance and strengthening the democratic process and can facilitate access to information, freedom of expression, greater equity, efficiency, productivity, growth and social inclusion (Adejuwon, 2012, p.63).

To facilitate its adoption, the Forum advised that African governments need to develop appropriate policy frameworks, supported by legislation for e-governance. Beyond this intention, the appropriate blue-print for a regional adaption of e-governance has not been developed by African Union.

Individual African countries have however taken up the challenge. Individually, a few African countries have taken up the challenge of adopting the ICT culture and electronicizing their public services. For instance, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Africa made some efforts. Nigeria initiated the process of e-service delivery by formulating a National Information Policy (NIP) in 2000 and in the same year, it liberalized the telecommunication sector by permitting GSM operators to commence operation in Nigeria. Mobile and Open Browsing Internet Units were also developed with public buses in Abuja, the Federal Capital and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) equipped with ICT and VSAT facilities for on the motion browsing and communication. Citizens with PCs can also browse openly at any points of the FCT. In 2005, the Wire Nigeria (WIN) project was established, which made ICT and VSAT facilities available for Internet access to all the 774 local governments in the country (Ayo, 2006, pp.8-17). The Federal Government also established in 2006 a public cooperation named the Galaxy Backbone, which is saddled to provide the platform for e-government and provision of a broadband (Akunyili, 2010).

Rwanda is ahead of Nigeria in the growth and development of e-government. In spite emerging from the ruins and psychological trauma of a genocide war, it has achieved a

turnaround of its legislative process by conducting parliamentary business online, connecting its parliament to wireless access through the Internet, which can be accessed at all parts of the country (Wikipedia 2013). Efforts by other countries are as shown on table 1.

Table 1: African States E-Governance Projects

Country	Project	Rationale
Ethiopia	Distance learning for Civil servants	There are approximately 350,000 civil servants in Ethiopian government, of whom 14% have PCs and under 1% have e-mail access. The World Banks Global Development Learning Network has established a peer.-to-peer video conferencing and distance learning centre in Addis Ababa to train civil servants in the use of ICT.
Zambia	Zamlii: the online Zambian legal information portal	A comprehensive online collection of documents and research relating to Zambian legal and constitutional issues, intended as a legal network for lawyers, judges, academics, students and citizens.
Uganda	Parliamentary Technical Assistance Project	Introduced in 1998, to assist the Parliament of Uganda with its own modernisation process so that elected members can better represent the interest of their constituents, make better laws and provide more effective oversight of the executive. Features include e-mail addresses for all Mps; an electronic bill tracking system; a parliamentary information database; parliaments own Vsat satellite; and provided training to the IT staff, researchers and MPs.
Mozambique,	e-SISTAFE	A standard and computerized system for the administration of public finances, including electronic payment of salaries.
Tanzania	Government Pay role and Human resources System	The system covering 280,000 public servants is intended to create more efficient management of government employees.
South Africa	The Cape Gateway Portal	Provides web-based information about government services and departments, structured according to users life events.
Cameroun	Tax Portal	The site contains tax-related data and guidance, providing citizens and businesses, providing instant information on payment and refund procedures and to undermine opportunities for corrupt officials to charge for such information.
Ethiopia	Devinet (www.devinet.org) an information network for NGOs	A web-based information gateway providing a networking space for development NGOs in Ethiopia. It contains a database of NGOs, key documents and current projects; a discussion forum which serves as a virtual meeting room, an electronic newspaper; free web space for NGOs; and an e-mail digest service for those who do not have access to the internet.
Ghana	Environmental Information Network	The project aims to strengthen effective networking between various environmental agencies and NGOs
South Africa	Independent electoral Commission voter registration system	A satellite-enabled network enables the commission to register voters, relay, collect and verify ballots, and relay election result across the country. In 2004 the election result Tabulation Database system was linked via a Wide Area Network to all district collation centres.

Source: Coleman, 2008 (cited in Adejuwon, 2012).

South Africa has embarked on a number of e-government projects. To ensure this, it has provided portal facilities, SARS e-filing and e-Natis Systems (ibid). It is the only reported country that has made significant efforts to establish e-electoral system through a satellite enabled network though which it registers voters, verifies ballots and relays election results across the country.

Nonetheless, the overall evaluation of the efforts being made by the individual countries, is that, e-government is still at a very low stage in Africa. In fact, it is believed that 85% of e-government projects in developing countries, including Africa, are partial or total failures (Hecks, 2002 cited in Adejuwon 2012). This assessment in relation to Africa is validated by the poor positions of African countries in the United Nations E-Government Development Reports and Survey 2012. The annual survey examines the institutional framework of e-government by countries and presents a systematic assessment of how governments use ICT to provide access and inclusion for all (UN Public Administration Programme, 2012). Table 2 shows the ranking of African Countries in the Survey.

Table 2: E-Government Global Ranking of African States

Country	Rank 2012	Rank 2010
Mauritius	93	77
South Africa	101	97
Tunisia	103	66
Egypt	107	86
Cape Verde	118	108
Kenya	119	124
Botswana	120	117
Morocco	120	126
Namibia	122	125
Gabon	128	123
Algeria	131	131
Zimbabwe	132	129

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Table 2 - Conclusion		
Country	**Rank 2012**	**Rank 2010**
Lesotho	135	121
Sao Tome and Principe	137	128
United Republic of Tanzania	138	137
Rwanda	139	148
Angola	142	132
Uganda	143	142
Swaziland	144	145
Ghana	145	147
Cameroon	147	149
Madagascar	148	139
Equatorial Guinea	151	138
Zambia	154	143
Congo	157	135
Mozambique	158	161
Malawi	159	159
Gambia	161	167
Nigeria	162	150
Senegal	163	163
Sudan	165	154
Côte d'Ivoire	166	144
Liberia	169	166
Ethiopia	172	172
Burundi	173	174
Democratic Republic of the Congo	174	158
South Sudan	175	
Djibouti	176	170
Togo	178	165
Benin	179	173
Eritrea	180	175
Mauritania	181	157
Guinea-Bissau	182	179
Mali	183	176
Burkina Faso	185	178
Sierra Leone	186	177
Niger	188	183
Chad	189	182
Somalia	190	184
Central African Republic	N/A	181
Guinea	N/A	180
Libya	N/A	114

Source: UN Public Administration Programme, 2013.

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In table 2, only one African country, Mauritius, falls within the first 100 countries in the ranking, with a 93rd position. It actually declined in the ranking as it occupied the 77th position in 2010. Only 22 made the first 150 list while as many as 30 fell within the last 40 of the 190 countries surveyed.

In actual E-participation index of the United Nations also, (Table 3), of the top 20 countries in the world, only Egypt is listed, as the number 15th, indicating that only Egypt is the most active in e-service in the continent.

Table 3: Global E–Participation Index, 2012 -Top 20 Countries

Country	Index
1. Netherlands	1.0000
2. Republic of Korea	1.0000
3. Kazakhstan	0.9474
4. Singapore	0.9474
5.UK and Northern Ireland	0.9211
6.United States	0.9211
7. Israel	0.8947
8. Australia	0.7632
9.Estonia	0.7632
10. Germany	0.7632
11. Colombia	0.7368
12. Finland	0.7368
13. Japan	0.7368
14. United Arab Emirates	0.7368
15. Egypt	0.6842
16. Canada	0.6842
17. Norway	0.6842
18. Sweden	0.6842
19. Chile	0.6579
20. Russian Federation	0.6579

Source: UN Public Administration Programme, 2013.

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Barriers to Sustainable E-Government and E-Electoral Politics in Africa

A number of barrier categories challenge a sustainable e-government practice and development of e-electoral system in Africa. The barrier challenges include leadership ineptitude and lack of political will, regional insensitivity, infrastructural decay, corruption, mass poverty, lack of appropriate technological architecture for e-services, secrecy and lack of open governance, economic hardship, illiteracy, poor quality of leadership and leadership failure are major impediments to quality governance in Africa. Most African leaders are lacking in tertiary educational qualification, which could really make them understand what governance actually entails beyond parading oneself as either president or prime minister. Lack of prerequisite qualification in management or administration means there is no way they can achieve effective management of human and material resources. It also implies that they would not know what is to be done in government as they lack the requisite knowledge and experience for initiatives involving the development of ICT framework and e-governance practice. For instance, of the 13 Nigerian leaders who ruled in the first 50 years of independence, 1960-2010, none was a university graduate, nor scientifically/technologically-oriented. It would be hard therefore for such leaders to appreciate the synergy between ICT and national development. The few that are lettered, such as the case of South Africa, lack the political will for a full-scale ICT transformation of governance. The continental body, the African Union (AU), has failed to develop a corporate e-governance Action Plan for the continent. Such a plan would have provided a regional framework and timeline for the introduction of ICT and online service into all sectors of the economy of member states. This fault line is a fall-out of leadership ineptitude and leadership failure afflicting the continent. The development of such a plan would by now

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ensure that all activities of the organisation are done online including debates by its parliament and other organs. There is therefore no regional model to emulate by member states.

Corruption is a major obstacle in the continent. It is endemic in Africa (Emmanuel, 2013). Africa is the most corrupt region in the world, and Nigeria can be can be regarded as its "headquarters" in the continent. African leaders are very corrupt. They steal public resources that are expected to be utilized for the provision of public goods and provide essential infrastructural social and industrial amenities. Sani Abacha stole as much as $5billion of Nigerian money, while the overseas assets of Gaddafi of Libya worth about 60 billion pounds (Elombah, 2011). The wealth of Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire was also massive with about $5 billion stole from state coffers (Wikipedia, 2013b). On aggregate terms, between 1960 and 2000, Nigerian leaders, according to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, (EFCC), had stolen a total sum of $500 billion (Amalu, 2006, p.1). There is no country where corruption thrives that can achieve sustainable development.

Corruption is not limited to political leaders alone in the continent. The private sector and ordinary individuals are involved. The private sector in Nigeria is more corrupt than the public sector. The private sector, especially the banking sector has probably formed an alliance with political office holders to siphon public money overseas. Individuals in Africa see the state as something to be pilfered as it is a general property, which belongs to no one in particular. State resources are rarely seen as the commonwealth, which is meant to promote national development and the welfare of the general populace. Consequently, assuming that e-governance hardware are duly procured and fully established, they are vulnerable to being dismembered and stolen in bits until they become completely useless for the purpose meant for. Corruption has become hydra-headed monstrous cancer in Africa, it has become a serious challenge.

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Online/Internet security is also a key barrier. Internet fraud and cyber-attacks have become another variant of corruption in Africa. Online fraud is a major problem in Africa, especially in Nigeria. The cyberspace in the continent has been a subject of cyber attackers with personal information stolen to perpetrate fraud including gaining access to personal bank accounts. Online fraud has made nonsense of Nigeria's cashless economy policy. E-banking with the use of Automated Teller Machines (ATM) has been undermined as bank officials connive with fraudsters and hoodlums to gain access to personal identification codes of holders and illegally withdrawing cash from their accounts.

Apart from the fear of individuals hacking into or attacking state online facilities, e-service infrastructure is not safe from attacks by insurgent groups. Africa is currently under the ravage attack of ethnic and religious militants and terrorists. The entire north of West Africa is battling with religious extremists who want to topple the respective states or foster religious regimes on the states or secede entirely. The Boko Haram insurgents in Northeast Nigeria have destroyed all existing GSM satellite cables within their reach, and therefore no form of online transactions through telecommunications portals can be achieved in the zone. As long as the safety of online transactions and the physical security of online infrastructure cannot be guaranteed, e-governance attempts cannot succeed. As it is today, Africa, as a continent, lacks the capacity to engage in counter offensive against cyber-attackers and cyber threats.

Illiteracy and digital divide are equally major constraints to online service delivery in the continent. More than 1 in 3 adults of the population cannot read while 176 million adults are unable to read and write (UNESCO, 2013). 44 million of the figure are in Nigeria (The Nation, 2011, p.1). 32 million children are out of school roaming the streets (ibid). Once the majority of the populace are illiterates, computer illiteracy becomes an automatic fall-effect of the former.

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People who can neither read nor write cannot work on computers. And once they cannot work on computers, the digital divide would become wider. If the majority of the populace lacks the basic education to work online, the demand for e-service will consequently be low. This, coupled with government without political will, provide two essential incentives not to significantly invest in eservice by the state.

State and individual poverty is another challenge. Most states are facing economic hardships. African states are not immune to the current economic and financial crisis ravaging the world. African economy is an appendage of Euro-American economies, which are experiencing serious job cuts and dwindling incomes. Financial bail-outs by IMF and other financial bodies are yet to provide sustainable solution to the financial crisis in Western countries. The financial crisis, which affected Africa's export earnings, has incapacitated most African states and denied them the financial capacity to perform their statutory responsibilities to the states. The little resources at the disposal of the African states are mostly embezzled by their leaders. Overall, the economic capacity to install e-government infrastructure and adequately manage it are lacking in the continent.

The dwindling income to states and the corruptive behaviour of the leaders have adverse effects on the wellbeing of individual Africans. Most Africans are impoverished with poverty level affecting about 70% of the populace. Unemployment is at a very high level while those employed manage to eke a living as they earn below living wages. Hunger and starvation have their major bus stop in Africa. An impoverished, hungry and unemployed population cannot have the resources to procure PCs or smart phones to engage in any form of online interactions. Perennial labour crisis in African economies will undermine a sustainable e-governance practice. Public sector labour relations is poor in Africa as labour unions embark strike and work-to-rule

at will. Industrial labour unions often turn intractable, and at times, violent, as compromise is always difficult to reach by the two sides. Most governments in the continent are insensitive to labour demands and un-proactive to workers needs. In this situation, labour unions often resort to strike actions as the best language African governments understand. When this happens, the management of e-government facilities by workers will suffer as it will close down for a while. And if not closed down, the essential information required for inputs into the e-service portal will not be made available by civil servants as long as the industrial action lasts.

The supporting infrastructure for e-governance such as regular power supply are lacking or poorly provided in Africa. Efficient electricity supply is a key factor to effective and sustainable online service. Power drives ICT and the online service infrastructure. Regular and quality supply of electricity is a major problem in Africa. Most states, including Nigeria, cannot generate a 24-hour electricity supply. Nigeria on the average can only generate a 4-hour stable electricity power in a day. Most Nigerians live on self-supplied electricity through generators. In such a situation, online service cannot perform efficiently. Nigeria alone needs about $100billion investment yearly in power for the next decade to be able to generate steady supply of power. (The Nation, 2013).

Deteriorating telecommunications service hampers efficient hotline services. Though all African states have become globalized by way of the GSM availability in all nooks and crannies of the states. However, telecommunication as key function in hotline services, the quality of services provided by the GSM providers remain very questionable. Their services are poor and erratic. Some of them stay off air on many occasions. Though, the providers are often challenged by unreliable electricity supply from the national grid and vandalisation to their facilities (Nigerian Tribune, 2013) arising from the prevailing insecurity in most states.

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The issue of appropriate e-government technological architecture is also a major challenge. E-government and e-service in general are highly technical areas with special technological needs, which are equally capital intensive. Hotline service goes beyond the provision of the Internet, PCs and provision of telephone lines. E-government requires high speed broadband technology and special cables different from GSM facilities. It need its own portals and cables (both submarine and underground) with the appropriate carrying capacity terra-bytes of data and cross-national and off-shore fibre backbone networks. Reliance on the GSM networks for e-government, as the Nigeria's cashless policy is currently based, cannot work. The appropriate technology must be adopted for the e-governance systems to be efficient and sustained.

African countries suffer the culture of impunity and lack of maintenance culture in relation to public goods and public property such as transportation facilities (roads and railways), schools and health systems at all levels, water supply systems, electricity infrastructure, stadia and others. Most of these public facilities have collapsed or are collapsing in most of the states due to poor maintenance or total negligence. Service provision by these public infrastructures is either nil or poorly rendered. Consequently, the masses of the public, are not enjoying the benefits of their existence. Coupled with the poor maintenance culture, is the wilful damage to public property by individuals with impunity. Sense of nationalism and patriotism is low in very many African states. The psychological attachment to the state, its institutions and property is still at very low ebb. The state is often seen as a stranger rather than the citizenry's property of which they are the owners. The state is seen a as distant, alien and strange object. Its seen as an enemy rather a friendly property. These negative perspectives elicit hostile behavioural attitudes by the people towards the state in most times. Above all, public property is seen as no person's

property, and therefore, it can be vandalized and destroyed at will, especially during protests against the state.

Lastly, is lack of mutual trust between the state and the citizens in Africa. The state and the governed mistrust and distrust each other. African governments do not trust their citizens with critical information. A major aspect of this is in relation to the issues of personal health of state actors. State actors are often taken overseas for treatment with the tax-payers money but without the latter being told of the actual nature of the former's ailment. A much more serious situation is when it involves the death of the Chie Executive of State with the public being kept uninformed about the cause of the death. For instance, since the death of President Sheu Yar' Adua of Nigeria since 2009, the Nigerian public is yet to be told about the nature of his illness and cause(s) of his death. Similarly, the incumbent First Lady of Nigeria, Mrs Dame Patience, had a medical tour to Germany for a couple of months in 2013. However, months after she was forced to return to the country arising from ceaseless public outcry and mass media propaganda about her whereabouts and enquiries about the nature of her ailment, the government is yet come to the open about her health condition. This is in spite the two reasons. One, the First lady's trip and medical expenses were at the expense of the Nigerian tax-payers. Two is that, the government remains about her situation in spite the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act by the Jonathan administration. In essence, African state actors are secretive about governance, and therefore, critical information about government and themselves might not be made available online for public consumption.

At the same time, the public does not trust their political leaders because of their under-hand dealings in governance. This is especially in relation to their massive corruption behaviour. Corruption is a major character of governance in Africa. Leaders steal public funds and keep in

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Western banks for the use of themselves and family members. They secure affluence for themselves by privatizing public resources that are originally appropriated for developmental purposes. While the leaders are wallowing in imaginable wealth, the masses suffer wanton poverty characterized by unemployment, hunger and homelessness. Also associated with the public distrust of their governments, is the issue of deliberate misinformation by government. On a number of critical issues such as the performance of the economy, unemployment and voting statistics, government has often lied about the actual situations. According to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, for instance, the unemployment among youths has been rated as 23.9 % (Nairaland Forum, 2013). Whereas, in the actual fact, about 70 % or 60 million of the youths are outside employment (Nnegbu, 2011; Olukolade, 2013,p1). In general, the governments feed the public with false information in order to give themselves a positive image about their performance.

Pilot Field Survey: Methodology, Data Analysis and Findings

In order to test the acceptability and viability of electronic service in the conduct of governance and election processes in Africa, an exploratory pilot survey was conducted in the Southwest of Nigeria. The pilot survey was restricted to the Southwest for a couple of reasons. One, it needs to be stated *ab initio* that the survey of the entire continent is impossible arising from physical and demographic largeness. Two, is the fact too that the entire Nigeria was not contemplated for reasons of insecurity. Of the six geo-political zones that Nigeria is divided into, only the Southwest of the country is relatively peaceful and stable in the recent moments. The three geopolitical zones in Northern Nigeria are under the influence of Boko Haram terrorism. States in two of the zones are under emergency rule as a means if check-mating the terrorists.

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The Southeast and South-south zones in the southern part of the country are insecure as a result of the unabated criminal activities of kidnappers and the Niger Delta militants. Notable Nigerians and foreigners are constantly kidnapped for ransom. The Niger Delta creeks constantly experience cross-fires between government forces and unrepentant militants and crude oil thieves. In addition , is the constant political confrontations between the federal authorities and the component states in the sub region, the latest of which is the River State's political crisis, which often dovetails into members of the public being caught in cross-fires between the police and hired political thugs and militants. All these occurrences have serious consequences for academic research, in that, researchers are not safe to conduct field surveys in such insecure volatile terrains. Lastly, is the fact that the Southwest is the most educated, enlightened and civilized part of Nigeria, where it is expected that many would be able to attend to questionnaire instruments.

Methodology

Stratified probability sampling method was utilized for data collection. The critical and relevant segments of the population were identified as follows- politicians/political party members/political appointees; public servants; election officials; students; and civil society organizations. Each of these stratified categories were identified in all the six states that made up the southwest zone. The states were Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo. Since it was a pilot study, equal number of questionnaires (100 each) were applied to each state and this was further based on the fact that, on the basis of political equation, all the 36 states of the Nigerian Federation are equal. Equal number of questionnaires were given to the same identified groups in each of the states.

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Analysis of Returned Survey Instrument and Findings

As shown in table 4, a total number of 720 questionnaires (see appendix) were applied with each of the six surveyed States allocated equal number of 120 pieces. Out this total number, 598 or 83.06% questionnaires were collected back from respondents while 122 or 16.94% could not be fetched back for reasons ranging from inability to trace the respondents or that the respondents had lost the questionnaires. The number of questionnaires returned is large enough to generate the needed data for the study's analysis. All the states surveyed recorded high percentages of returned questionnaires. The least percentage is recorded in Oyo state with 78.33%, Ekiti state has highest percentage of returns, which is 90.83%.

Table 4: Analysis of the Surveyed Data.

S/N	STATE	No. OF QNNAIRES	No. RETURNED	%	No. UNRETURNED	%
1	Ekiti	120	109	90.83	11	9.17
2	Lagos	120	96	80.00	24	20.00
3	Ogun	120	99	82.50	21	17.50
4	Ondo	120	102	85.00	18	15.00
5	Osun	120	98	81.67	22	18.33
6	Oyo	120	94	78.33	26	21.67
	Total	720	598	83.06	122	16.94

Source: Compilation from Field Survey by the Author

Table 5 shows the analysis of surveyed data according to groups. Five different groups were sampled in each of the states. The group were civil society organizations (CSO); Election officials; Politicians/Political parties/Political appointees; Public servants or Civil servants; and students. Twenty (20) questionnaires each were given to CSO, election officials, and political

parties/appointees. Public servants and students groups were each given 30 questionnaires. The percentage of returned questionnaires from all groups is very high.

Table 5: States and Groups Analysis of Surveyed Data

STATE	GROUPS	No. APPLIED	No. RETURNED	%	No. UNRETURNED	%
EKITI	CSO	20	17	85.00	03	15.00
	Election officials	20	18	90.00	02	10.00
	Politicians/Political parties/Appointees	20	19	95.00	01	05.00
	Public Servants	30	28	93.33	02	06.67
	Students	30	27	90.00	03	10.00
LAGOS	CSO	20	14	70.00	06	30.00
	Election officials	20	13	65.00	07	35.00
	Politicians/Political parties/ Appointees	20	18	90.00	02	10.00
	Public Servants	30	25	83.33	05	16.67
	Students	30	26	86.67	04	13.33
OGUN	CSO	20	16	80.00	04	20.00
	Election officials	20	12	60.00	08	40.00
	Politicians/Political parties/ Appointees	20	19	95.00	01	05.00
	Public Servants	30	27	90.00	03	10.00
	Students	30	25	83.33	05	16.67
ONDO	CSO	20	16	80.00	04	20.00
	Election officials	20	15	75.00	05	25.00
	Politicians/Political parties/ Appointees	20	18	90.00	02	10.00

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	GROUPS	No. APPLIED	No. RETURNED	%	No. UNRETURNED	%
	Table 5 - Conclusion					
	Public Servants	30	27	90.00	03	10.00
	Students	30	26	86.67	04	13.33
OSUN	CSO	20	15	75.00	05	25.00
	Election officials	20	16	80.00	04	20.00
	Politicians/Political parties/ Appointees	20	17	85.00	03	15.00
	Public Servants	30	26	86.67	04	13.33
	Students	30	24	80.00	06	20.00
OYO	CSO	20	16	80.00	04	20.00
	Election officials	20	14	70.00	06	30.00
	Politicians/Political parties/ Appointees	20	16	80.00	04	20.00
	Public Servants	30	24	80.00	06	20.00
	Students	30	24	80.00	06	20.00
	Total	**720**	**598**	**83.06**	**122**	**16.94**

Source: Compilation from Field Survey by the Author

Aggregate Response Analysis and Interpretation

Biographic/Social Profile

Sex Analysis of Respondents

Of the 598 questionnaires returned, 367 (61.4%)and 211 (35.3%) were males and females respectively, while 20 (3.3%) did not indicate their sex (see table 6). the sex ratio outcome accords with the usual pattern if men eschewing greater readiness to respond to questionnaire surveys than women. This situation often arise because of the acknowledged extensive role women play in daily life especially in Africa, and more particularly in Nigeria where women are

saddled with both house shores and professional/occupational demands. They, therefore, more often than not, have less time to spare for other issues. Ekiti State has the largest percentage (41.3%) of female respondents while Ondo state has the least (26.5%)

Table 6: Response Analysis by Sex Ratio

S/N	State	Male	% Male	Female	% Female	Sex Not Indicated (NI)	% NI	Total
1	Ekiti	62	56.9%	45	41.3%	2	1.8%	109
2	Lagos	59	61.4%	31	32.3%	6	3.3%	96
3	Ogun	64	64.7%	31	31.3%	4	4.0%	99
4	Ondo	69	67.6%	27	26.5%	6	5.9%	106
5	Osun	57	58.2%	39	39.8%	2	2.0%	98
6	Oyo	56	59.6%	38	40.4%	-	-	94
	Total	367		211	-	20	-	598
	%	61.4%		35.3%	-	3.3%	-	100%

Source: Compilation from Field Survey by the Author

Academic Qualification Analysis

The academic analysis of the respondents shows that all the respondents were educated or literate. The least academic attainment of the sampled respondents is being an undergraduate while the highest is Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). As pointed out earlier, the Southwest of Nigeria is the most educated part of the country with a tradition of at least one university graduate per household. The implication of the high level of literacy of the sampled respondents is that they were able to read, write and understand the issues at stake.

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Age Response Analysis

As indicated in table 7, none of the 398 sampled respondents was below 18 years old, implying that they were all adults who were eligible to vote in elections. Being adults also would mean that they were of age to think critically before they take decisions on topical national issues. Essentially, 106, 359 and 131 sampled respondents respectively fell within the age brackets of 18-30, 31-50 and 51 and above years. Only two (2)respondents did not indicate their group. This could probably be an oversight but at the same time, age is a sensitive issue in Africa in general as some people do not like to disclose their ages, especially to strangers.

Table 7: Response by Age Ratio

S/N	Age Brackets (Years)	No. of Respondents
1	Below 18	00
2	18-30	106
3	31-50	359
4	51 & Above	131
	Total	596
	Age Not Indicated	02
	Gross Total	598

Source: Compilation from Field Survey by the Author

Specific Issues Response Analysis

Section two of the questionnaire instrument consisted of specific questions (see appendix). The section was meant to elicit substantive data on the issues at stake in the study. There were eight (8) question items in the section. Questions 1, 3 and 7 provided alternative

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responses for respondents to make a choice according to the way they felt on the interrogated issue. Questions 2,4,5 and 8 were follow-up questions meant to elicit rationalities for the respondents chosen responses to questions 1, 3 and 7. Questions 5 and 6 tasked the respondents for further information on other specific areas of the issue.

Table 8: Specific Issues Response Analysis

Question	STATE	Response	
		Efficient	**Inefficient**
Q1. What is your assessment of public administration in Africa?	Ekiti	02	107
	Lagos	-	96
	Ogun	-	99
	Ondo	01	101
	Osun	01	97
	Oyo	-	94
Total		**04**	**594**
		Yes	**No**
Q3. Do you support the idea of introducing the use of ICT devices into public administration and governance in Nigeria/Africa?	Ekiti	109	-
	Lagos	96	-
	Ogun	99	-
	Ondo	102	-
	Osun	98	-
	Oyo	94	-

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		598	-
Total			

Table 5 - Conclusion

Question	**State**	**Yes**	**No**
Q7. Do you support the idea of introducing e-electronic voting (e-voting) into the conduct of elections in Nigeria/Africa?	Ekiti	100	09
	Lagos	92	04
	Ogun	95	04
	Ondo	99	03
	Osun	97	-
	Oyo	91	03
Total		**575**	**23**
%		**96.15 %**	**3.85%**

Source: Compilation from Field Survey by the Author

Table 8 graphically presents the varied responses to questions 1, 3 and 7. Question 1 (Q1) required respondents to assess the efficiency of public administration in Africa in general. Of the 598 returned questionnaires, four (4) or 0.7% of the respondents were of the opinion that public administration in the States of the region is efficient. A preponderance of 594 (or 99.3%) of the respondents believed that public administration in Africa is inefficient.

Question 2 requested the respondents to justify their responses to Q1 above with reasons. The respondent groups advanced variegated reasons. The 4 respondents who responded positively to Q1 claimed, among other reasons, that the States of the region had embarked on

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efforts to increase internally generated revenue (IGR) and that they have put in place arrangements for e-payment system for public servants. The respondents did not provide quantitative facts to support their assessment of improved IGR by the States. At the same time, they did not cite any African country that have achieved full-blown e-payment service.

The majority of the respondents (99.3%) rated public service in the region as inefficient. They equally rationalized their claims with myriad reasons. According to them, wide spread corruption among public officials, escalating mass poverty, lack of accountability, rising illiteracy and overall, lack of good governance are factors that undermine efficient governance and administration in Africa. (Field Survey, 2012). They believed that inefficient governance and administration is a characteristic of institutional weakness and poor leadership performance. Lawlessness/indiscipline and poor work attitude among public officials were also identified as major ingredients promoting inefficient public service in the continent.

Question 3 asked respondent if they support the introduction of ICT devices in public administration in Nigeria and Africa. All the sampled 598 (100%) respondents gave affirmative yes answer to the question. This implies that they believe that Africa should be ICT compliant in the running of governance and administration in the States. They justified their claim with reasons, including that e-service would hastening service delivery, promote openness and accountability by government, reduce fraud and corruption by public officials and drastically reduce the cost of governance through electronic detection of ghost workers (i.e. non-existing employees) on the public roll (Field survey, 2013). They also averred that electronic service would make quicker accessibility to accurate information about government possible. Lastly, it is their belief also that ICT-powered governance and public administration would enhance the

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linkage of African public service with the outside world, and consequently connect the continent to the globalized economy.

Questions 5 and 6 respectively further tasked the respondents on what they thought were merits and demerits of ICT-driven public administration and governance. They catalogued the advantages to include reduction of paper processes leading to faster and quicker policy implementation and service delivery in general, which would consequently promote governance efficiency. That it would create room for robust policy debate as there would be open access to government decisions. It is also opinionated that the system would facilitate efficient and safe keeping of public records and information. At another level of reasoning, it is the belief of the respondents that the system would encourage the citizens to be computer literate and ICT compliant, and consequently, it would encourage citizens to make use of ICT tools more than ever before (Field survey, 2013). Lastly, is the belief of the respondents also that ICT-driven administration would make greater inter-agency, inter-government, individuals and groups interactions in the political process of the States achievable.

On what the respondents considered as the negative outcomes of ICT-powered public service, they were not short of critical ideas. They reasoned that most of the states in Africa lack the prerequisite for e-service delivery. Issues of shortage of ICT infrastructure and poor energy base were cited as critical limitations. It was also reasoned that the adoption and application of electronic service would compound the already bad unemployment situation in the country, particularly among the youths. And if this is the case, the unemployment rate would rise while crime commission such as armed robbery, kidnapping, burglary etc would also consequently escalate.

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Question 7 interrogated the respondents if they support the idea of introducing electronic-voting (e-voting) in the conduct of elections in Nigeria and Africa. A total of 575 (96.15%) approved of e-voting in future elections while 23 (3.85%) disapproved the proposal.

Question 8 solicited reasons for the respective response choices. On the positive side, the supporting respondents were of the opinion that e-election and e-voting would eliminate paper voting and invariably give room for faster and quicker processing of election results without being manipulated or rigged by election officials and desperate politicians (Field Survey, 2013). Flowing from this, is that, the entire election process would become open and transparent to everyone. Election administration is a major problem in most African Sates as the process is often characterized by shrewdness because of the underlying intention to rig the election and manipulate the results so as to enable the serving political leaders remain in power, probably for life. The recent re-election of the octogenarian Robert Mugabe as the President of Zimbabwe is typical of African politics. Mugabe remains the only president of the country since 1980 when it attained independence. All successive presidential elections in the country had been "won" by him.

Respondents were equally of the view that the innovation would prevent multiple registration and multiple voting by the electorate. It must be mentioned that multiple registration is a major electoral problem in Nigeria and many other African countries. For instance, according to the Nigeria's electoral body, INEC, over 93,000 double/multiple registration cases were detected in Anambra State alone (Aruna and Nwankwo, 2013, p1). On a close scrutiny, this could mean on the average, as many as about 3,348,000 double/multiple registration cases could be available in the 36 states if the Nigerian federation and the Federal Capital Territory. It is the

view of the respondents that the biometric, e-verification of the electronically registered voters would eliminate double/multiple registration by the electorate.

The respondents equally avowed that e-election/e-voting would reduce the menace of under-age voting in elections, as the electronic device could automatically reject the registration of prospective voters whose age is less than the adult and voting age of 18years. Timely conclusion of elections without spilling into the dead of the night is also a projected advantage. When the voting process is timely concluded, the release of the results would also be timely. This implies that e-election processes would eliminate the hitherto bottlenecks and delays that are constraining features of elections in Nigeria and Africa.

It is the key belief of respondents that e-election and e-voting would allow Nigerians in the Diaspora to vote in future elections. Currently, Nigeria has no standing policy of providing for the participation of Diaspora Nigerians in voting during elections. The nation has about 17 million Diaspora (This Day, 2013,) who remitted to the country as much as $21 billion in 2012 (HOR, 2013). Since Nigeria Diaspora contribute significantly to economic development of the country, it would therefore be an injustice to disenfranchise them, or deny them electoral say in the political affairs of the country.

In opposition to the e-election proposal, the 3.85% nay respondents were unequivocal in the justification of their position that high level illiteracy, infrastructural decay and system failure/collapse would constitute veritable limitations to the success of the policy. Nigeria's electricity system, which is a vital requirement for electronic processes, has virtually collapsed thereby confirming the fears of the opposing respondents. The respondents were also of the view that the capacity if Nigerian politicians to undermine and manipulate any system should not be underrated. They believed that the political class is very mischievous and, therefore, cannot be

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trusted in the implementation of the policy. This is coupled with the fact that the nation's electoral body (INEC) is not independent, and hence the ruling party could order it, through subterranean means, to manipulate the electronic device in its favour during elections.

The findings from the field survey can be clearly summarized as follows. One, is that, overwhelming majority of the sampled respondents believed that governance and public administration in Africa is inefficient, which is grossly expressed by the presence of bad governance in all the States of the region. Two, is that, the need to introduce e-service to administration and governance in Africa received unanimous support of the respondents. They believed that it would reposition public service in the continent as the system would reduce fraud, corruption and bureaucratic bottlenecks. And that it would also promote citizen-government interactions and good governance. Three, and lastly, is that, adopting e-election and e-voting is seen as a welcome innovative development by the majority of the respondents, as they believed that it would bring sanity and credibility into election administration in African States. Though a minority of the respondents were sceptical about the adoption of the e-election innovation. They pointed out that the success of the idea is challenged by a number of obstacles. They were of the view that African politics and governance is populated by desperate leaders who could do just anything, including manipulating the e-device system, to keep them in power perpetually.

Transforming the Challenges

What is the way forward in achieving efficient and sustainable e-governance in Africa? How can the digital poverty and online service gap be reversed in the continent? Overcoming the poverty of good, honest, transparent, committed, people-oriented and dynamic leadership is a

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priority for Africa to become a truly online service continent. Incumbent leaders have to undergo psychological and moral re-orientation to enable them see public service and politics in general as a call to serve the people and humanity rather than avenues and opportunity to serve egoist interests. This psychological transformation would lead leaders to have the desired political will to engineer policies that would advance national development and the people's socio-economic wellbeing. The desperation to rig elections so as to facilitate perpetual hanging to power would reduce. E-electoral system without manipulations would therefore be allowed to become a national culture by the elected leaders. The quality of leadership in terms of educational qualifications should be improved upon. The AU should make a legislated policy that university degree should be the minimum benchmark qualification for prospective leaders to contest elections to the position of chief executive of member states.

Turning around the ailing economies of the states and abating corruption are basic imperatives for the continent to achieve online success. The status of Africa as the poorest and most corrupt continent on earth has to change. Investment in sustainable economic growth and development has to be made. The best way to attain this is for respective leaders to look inward and to investigate the factors underscoring the ailing economy. Transformation from externally-propelled economy to inward-driven and less dependent economy should be fashioned. The agrarian economy of the region should be focused on with stronger commitments to agricultural development. This is to the extent that the continent should be able to feed itself and overcome hunger and starvation in order to reduce the huge foreign exchange being spent on food importation in the continent. Any continent or country that depends on external sources to feed its citizens can never achieve economic greatness nor become a great power in the contending

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global politics. Its soldiers will not also be able to win wars as food and hunger have become veritable , non-hardware weapons of war.

Combating corruption will facilitate the easy resuscitation of the ailing economies. Corruption causes great leakages in the economies. African states therefore need stronger anti-corruption institutions and legal systems to deal with the endemic corruption behaviour in the region. Maximum punishment, including public execution of leaders and other individuals should be legislated by the AU parliament for the continent's public and private sector operators. This corporate anti-corruption strategy is necessary because the anti-corruption bodies in many of the states have become politicized. For instance, the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), two anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria, lack independence and have become ready tools of the presidency to deal with political foes while genuinely corrupt individuals, who are loyal to the president are celebrated and left untouched.

The infrastructural challenge, particularly the power sector, needs very urgent attention. The electronic system cannot survive or function effectively without uninterrupted and quality supply of energy. Power is a foundation requirement for any ICT endeavour. Any nation or continent that cannot generate electricity or other means of power on an uninterrupted basis can never develop. African states therefore need to invest significantly on power generation. As pointed out earlier, Nigeria alone needs $100billion per year for the next decade to be able to achieve sustainable power production. Africa would therefore require more than a $1trillion to be able to achieve this feat within a decade. Without a buoyant economy, this will be very difficult to attain.

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The enabling technology of e-service has to be abundantly put in place. The necessary under-cables, both submarine and under-ground have to be installed. High speed broadband has to be installed while e-portals and cable networks have to be extended beyond the metropolitan centres to the rural, grassroots areas. The reliance on the GSM operators for e-service and e-business cannot work. The cashless policy is failing in Nigeria because of reliance on telecommunication providers' cable networks. The cashless regime needs its own Point of Sale (PoS) terminals (Olatunji, 2013, p.1) and separate cable networks.

Cyber-defence and anti-cyber-attack systems are imperatives for combating cyber-warriors and cyber-thieves. To achieve this, each country needs to acquire satellite technology for the surveillance of its Internet space and detection of criminal activities on its Internet domain and e-service facilities. To acquire these facilities are expensive, particularly for a continent that lacks the technical capacity to develop its own satellite facilities. There is therefore the crucial and urgent demand to invest hugely on ICT and Satellite technologies to be able to cope with and meet the imperatives of ICT development and cyberspace security and policing.

The incessant and prolonged industrial strikes, which are hallmarks of African economies need to be tamed. Political leaders must adopt preventive policies and pre-emptive tactics against labour industrial actions. No economy or e-service policy can survive prolonged and incessant strikes. If the e-governance base stations embark on strike, it means the electronic applications have to close down without the public being able to access the e-service system. Electricity operators as part of the labour force on strike would also mean that power supply to the system s would cease and invariably, the whole system would collapse. A prolonged system collapse could lead to eventual system failure at resumption of work from the strike.

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Lastly, are the imperatives of technological research and overcoming mass illiteracy in the continent. The continent is poor in the funding of technological research. It is the most technologically backward region of the world. It has no capacity to manufacture its own motorized vehicles and ICT facilities. Africa has not made any attempts at space exploration as it lacks the required skilled and material resources. Though, the region can boast of the best scientists and technologists in the world, but they have been drained to greener pastures and the conducive enabling environments in Euro-America. Of the 65, 000 medical doctors trained and registered in the Nigeria, only 25, 000 practice in the country (Kehinde, 2013, p.6). The brain drain of doctors from Africa has cost the continent about $2 billion invested in their training (Editor, 2011, p.17). To overcome shortage of domiciled trained and experienced ICT and satellite technologists, African Union, as a body, must develop the desired ICT policy with massive funds devoted to technological and satellite research to leverage the continent with other regions. An inducement package that could discourage home-grown scientists and technologists from emigration to greener and stable pastures have to be designed by individual countries. In addition to economic incentives, homeland security has to be improved upon while the culture of perennial violence, which characterized the continent has to be drastically addressed on substantial basis.

Concluding Remarks

The invention of information and telecommunication and the Internet systems have definitely brought about a dramatic change in the ways things are done. It heralds a change in management processes in all sectors of human endeavours. Significantly, the ICT culture transformed the over-reliance on paper works to paperless work processes, which do not require

the pillage of large volumes of hard copy paper materials. Eservice makes possible the automation of the workplace, public affairs, businesses and homes. The end goal-value of e-government and the associated forms is to achieve an efficient service delivery performance with greater interactions between the governor and the governed. Overall product of these goal-values is attaining good governance leading to improved national development and greater enjoyment of life by the populace.

While the ICT propelled electronic culture has become an established behaviour in the Western world, it is yet to become an established ideology in Africa. The e-service culture is still at its elementary stage. The traditional management processes are still at vogue in the continent. Electoral process remains conservative and prone to all sorts of irregularities, which readily deny the electoral system the needed credibility.

Barrier categories undermining efficient and sustained online culture include poor and incompetent leadership, poverty of resources, infrastructural and enabling technological architecture constraints and moral decay astutely amplified by high level of corruption in all spheres of life. Africa would not get the online culture straight unless it can urgently overcome these impediments. E-service is a capital –intensive venture and therefore the wobbling economy of the region has to be resuscitated. The IMF and World Bank must intervene more forcefully in bailing out the economies of the region. Internal constraints to productivity growth such as corruption must be addressed by African leaders. The digital divide in the continent can be principally closed through mass literacy programmes and poverty alleviation policies. Without a sustained source of power production, the continent cannot emerge from the shackles of low production, poverty and under-development. Lastly, the continent's most fundamental problem is the tragedy of bad leadership. Competent, committed, dynamic and selfless leadership is a rare

commodity in Africa. Until the region can overcome this basic leadership deficit, the generation of innovative ideas and the effective mobilization of the human and material capitals required to leap-frog sustainable development in the region cannot be achieved.

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