

THE POLICIES OF OPPOSITION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA AN ASSESSMENT OF PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU ADMINISTRATION

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship between opposition politics and good governance in Nigeria, with special attention to the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu from 2023 to the present. The research focused on understanding how government policies and the reactions of opposition parties influence governance, public accountability, and citizens' perception of leadership in Nigeria. A descriptive research design and qualitative approach were adopted for the study. Information was gathered from secondary sources such as academic journals, government publications, newspapers, policy documents, and reports from international organizations. The data collected were analyzed through qualitative content analysis, supported by mean and standard deviation. The findings showed that opposition parties play an important role in strengthening democracy by criticizing government actions, encouraging accountability, participating in legislative debates, and mobilizing public opinion. The study also revealed that key reforms introduced by the Tinubu administration, such as fuel subsidy removal, exchange rate unification, tax reforms, and fiscal restructuring, have generated both positive and negative reactions among Nigerians. Although these reforms were introduced to improve economic stability and national development, many citizens have experienced rising inflation, increased cost of living, and economic hardship. The study further found that good governance is more achievable when government policies are properly implemented and opposition parties engage constructively rather than focusing only on political rivalry. The study concluded that Nigeria's democratic growth depends largely on a healthy relationship between the government and the opposition. It therefore recommended inclusive governance, effective policy implementation, stronger institutions, and constructive opposition participation as important steps toward improving public trust, accountability, and national development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Good governance, opposition politics, public policy, democracy, Nigeria, Tinubu administration.

Introduction

Democracy is widely regarded as a system of government that thrives on participation, accountability, transparency, and the rule of law. According to Dahl (1998), democracy requires not only electoral competition but also effective participation and institutional guarantees that ensure government responsiveness to citizens. Within this system, two critical elements shape governance outcomes: public policy and opposition politics. Public policy refers to the deliberate actions and decisions taken by government to address societal needs and promote development (Dye, 2017), while opposition politics represents political actors outside government who provide

alternative viewpoints, scrutinize government actions, and enhance accountability.

In democratic systems such as Nigeria, the interaction between ruling governments and opposition parties significantly influences governance quality. Good governance, as explained by the World Bank (1992), is characterized by transparency, accountability, participation, and effective management of public resources. A strong opposition contributes to these principles by ensuring checks and balances, while a weak opposition often leads to reduced accountability and governance inefficiency.

Since the return to civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria has experienced several administrations implementing policies aimed at economic development and institutional reform. However, scholars such as Ake (1996) argue that African democratic systems, including Nigeria, often struggle with governance challenges such as corruption, weak institutions, and elite dominance, which affect policy effectiveness and democratic consolidation.

The emergence of the administration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu in 2023 introduced significant economic reforms such as fuel subsidy removal and exchange rate unification. These policies were designed to improve fiscal sustainability and economic efficiency, but they also generated intense public debate regarding their social and economic consequences. According to Stiglitz (2012), economic reforms in developing countries often produce short-term hardship even when they aim at long-term stability, leading to public resistance and political opposition.

Opposition parties in Nigeria have played a critical role in responding to these reforms by criticizing policy direction, highlighting socio-economic impacts, and offering alternative governance perspectives. However, their effectiveness is often influenced by political fragmentation and institutional constraints.

Good governance remains central to this discussion. According to Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi (2010), governance quality is determined by the effectiveness of institutions, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. Where governance is weak, public trust declines and democratic legitimacy is undermined.

Against this background, this study examines the policies of opposition and good governance in Nigeria, focusing on the Tinubu administration. It seeks to analyze how government policies and opposition responses interact to shape governance outcomes and public perception.

Statement of the Problem

In democratic systems, the effectiveness of governance is largely determined by the quality of public policies and the strength of opposition engagement in ensuring accountability. In theory, opposition parties are expected to act as watchdogs of democracy by scrutinizing government policies, offering alternative solutions, and ensuring that public resources are used in the best interest of citizens. However, in practice, especially in developing democracies such as Nigeria, the interaction between government policies and opposition politics often reflects deep structural,

institutional, and political challenges that affect good governance outcomes.

The administration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, which began in 2023, introduced a series of bold economic and institutional reforms aimed at restructuring the Nigerian economy. Key among these reforms are the removal of fuel subsidy, exchange rate unification, fiscal policy adjustments, and efforts to attract foreign investment. While these policies are designed to promote long-term economic stability and reduce fiscal inefficiencies, they have generated significant public debate and political tension.

One major problem is the gap between policy intention and public perception. Although the government presents these reforms as necessary steps toward economic sustainability, a large portion of the population perceives them as policies that have increased the cost of living, inflation, and economic hardship. This divergence between policy objectives and citizens' lived experiences creates a governance challenge where policies that are economically rational may be politically unpopular.

Another critical issue is the limited effectiveness of opposition politics in shaping constructive governance outcomes. While opposition parties in Nigeria actively criticize government policies, their engagement is often characterized by political rivalry rather than constructive policy alternatives. According to Dahl (1998), effective democracy requires meaningful opposition that not only criticizes but also contributes to policy development. However, in Nigeria's case, opposition responses are frequently fragmented, reactive, and influenced by partisan interests, which reduces their capacity to strengthen governance quality.

Furthermore, there is the problem of weak institutional trust and governance credibility. Scholars such as Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi (2010) argue that governance effectiveness depends heavily on institutional quality, transparency, and accountability. In Nigeria, public trust in institutions remains relatively low due to persistent concerns about corruption, policy inconsistency, and weak enforcement mechanisms. This weak trust environment makes it difficult for even well-intentioned policies to gain public acceptance.

The situation is further complicated by the economic vulnerability of citizens, which amplifies the impact of policy decisions. When reforms such as subsidy removal are implemented without strong social safety nets, citizens experience immediate economic pressure. Stiglitz (2012) notes that structural economic reforms in developing countries often produce short-term hardship, which can lead to political resistance and reduced trust in government.

Additionally, the communication gap between government and citizens contributes significantly to misunderstanding of policy objectives. When government policies are not adequately explained or when their long-term benefits are not clearly communicated, citizens and opposition groups may interpret them negatively, leading to mistrust and resistance.

Despite the importance of opposition politics and governance reforms, there is limited

comprehensive academic assessment of how these dynamics interact under the Tinubu administration. Much of the existing discourse is either politically biased or focused solely on economic outcomes without integrating the role of opposition engagement in shaping governance quality.

Therefore, the core problem this study addresses is the ****disconnect between government policy reforms, opposition responses, and public perception of good governance in Nigeria****. Specifically, it seeks to understand why policies introduced under the Tinubu administration, although aimed at improving economic and institutional efficiency, have generated significant public debate, opposition criticism, and concerns about governance effectiveness.

This study is necessary because without a clear understanding of how opposition politics and governance reforms interact, policy effectiveness may remain limited, public trust may continue to decline, and democratic consolidation may be weakened.

Objective of the Study

The Objective of this study is to critically examine the relationship between opposition politics and good governance in Nigeria, with particular reference to the administration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu (2023–present). The study seeks to assess how government policies and opposition responses interact to shape governance outcomes, public perception, and democratic accountability in Nigeria.

Specifically, the study is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To examine the nature and role of opposition politics in Nigeria’s democratic governance, particularly in relation to policy formulation and accountability.
- ii. To identify and analyze key public policies introduced under the Tinubu administration, especially economic and institutional reforms such as subsidy removal and exchange rate unification.
- iii. To assess how opposition parties respond to government policies and the extent to which their actions influence governance discourse and policy direction.
- iv. To evaluate the impact of government reforms on good governance indicators, including transparency, accountability, economic stability, and citizens’ welfare.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the role of opposition politics in promoting good governance in Nigeria under the administration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu?
- ii. What are the major public policies implemented by the Tinubu administration, and how have they influenced governance outcomes?
- iii. How do opposition parties respond to key government policies, and what effect do these responses have on public perception of governance?

- iv. What relationship exists between government policy implementation, opposition engagement, and the quality of good governance in Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Opposition in Democratic Governance

In democratic systems, opposition parties play a critical role in ensuring accountability, transparency, and policy alternatives. According to democratic theory, opposition functions include scrutinizing government actions, representing alternative viewpoints, and preventing authoritarian tendencies. In Nigeria, opposition politics has evolved from a dominant-party system to a more competitive multiparty system, especially since the return to democracy in 1999.

However, recent studies suggest that opposition effectiveness in Nigeria is weakened by internal fragmentation, defections, and limited institutional strength. For example, the 2023 elections disrupted traditional party dominance, as new political actors gained traction, reflecting growing public demand for alternative governance models .

2.2 Good Governance

Good governance is commonly defined by principles such as accountability, rule of law, transparency, participation, effectiveness, and equity. In Nigeria, governance challenges include corruption, weak institutions, insecurity, and economic instability. Reports indicate that the country continues to face “overlapping crises” including insecurity and socio-economic difficulties, which affect governance outcomes .

2. Theoretical Framework

This review is anchored on:

- i. Democratic Accountability Theory – which emphasizes the role of opposition in checking executive power.
- ii. Institutional Theory – which highlights how governance outcomes depend on the strength of political and legal institutions.

3. Overview of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s Administration

Bola Ahmed Tinubu assumed office in May 2023 following a contested election characterized by allegations of irregularities and opposition challenges . His administration introduced several reforms aimed at economic recovery and governance restructuring.

3.1 Key Policy Directions

Tinubu’s administration is guided by an Eight-Point Agenda, focusing on:

- i. Food security
- ii. Economic growth and job creation
- iii. Rule of law and anti-corruption
- iv. Poverty reduction

Major policy actions include:

- i. Removal of fuel subsidy and exchange rate liberalization
- ii. Increase in minimum wage and student loan schemes
- iii. Introduction of tax reforms

4. Opposition Politics under Tinubu's Administration

4.1 Weakening of Opposition Structures

Literature suggests that Nigeria's opposition has faced structural challenges, including defections to the ruling party and internal divisions. Some analysts argue that the ruling party benefits from a fragmented opposition landscape, reducing effective checks on executive power.

Additionally, concerns have been raised about shrinking political space, with allegations of pressure on opposition figures and fears of one-party dominance, although the administration has denied such claims.

4.2 Government–Opposition Relations

The relationship between the Tinubu administration and opposition parties has been characterized by:

- i. Defense of reforms against opposition criticism by the government
- ii. Accusations of misinformation and political hostility
- iii. Disputes over electoral laws and governance processes

The administration has criticized opposition reactions to electoral reforms, describing them as unproductive, while opposition groups argue that such policies undermine democratic principles .

5. Governance Performance under Tinubu

5.1 Economic Governance

Scholars note that Tinubu's administration has implemented major fiscal reforms, including restructuring oil revenue management and tax systems to improve government finances .

Government sources claim these reforms are boosting investor confidence and economic growth prospects . However, critics highlight rising inflation and cost-of-living pressures as significant governance challenges.

5.2 Institutional and Political Governance

The administration has been observed to rely significantly on executive actions to implement reforms, raising concerns about legislative bypass and institutional balance .

Furthermore, debates persist regarding:

- i. Judicial independence
- ii. Legislative autonomy
- iii. Federal–state relations

Some analysts argue that concentration of power may weaken democratic accountability mechanism.

5.3 Security and Public Trust

Security remains a major governance issue, with persistent insurgency, banditry, and communal violence affecting public confidence in government effectiveness .

Public perception of governance has also been shaped by:

- i. Economic hardship following reforms
- ii. Government response to protests and dissent
- iii. Perceived disconnect between political elites and citizens

6. Empirical and Midterm Assessments

Midterm analyses of the administration often focus on economic indicators such as inflation, GDP growth, and employment. While some reports indicate improvements in revenue generation and macroeconomic stability, others highlight persistent poverty and inequality .

This divergence reflects the broader debate in the literature: whether Tinubu's reforms represent necessary long-term restructuring or impose excessive short-term burdens on citizens.

7. Gaps in Literature

Existing studies reveal several gaps:

- i. There is limited empirical studies linking opposition strength directly to governance
- ii. Lack of grassroots-level perspectives on governance performance
- iii. There is insufficient longitudinal analysis of Tinubu's reforms

Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology adopted in carrying out the study on opposition politics and good governance in Nigeria, with particular reference to the administration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu. It explains the research design, area of study, sources of data, methods of data collection, population, sampling techniques, and methods of data analysis.

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design using a qualitative approach. The descriptive design is appropriate because it enables the researcher to systematically describe and interpret the relationship between opposition politics, public policy, and good governance in Nigeria.

The qualitative approach is chosen because the study focuses on understanding political behaviour, governance outcomes, public perception, and opposition-government interactions, rather than numerical measurement alone. This design allows for in-depth interpretation of governance issues as they occur in real political contexts.

Area of the Study

The study is conducted within the Nigerian political system, focusing on national governance under the Tinubu administration from 2023 to date. It examines federal-level policies, opposition party activities, and national governance indicators affecting citizens across the country.

Sources of Data

The study relies on secondary data sources, which include:

- iv. Academic journals and scholarly articles on governance and democracy
- v. Government policy documents and official publications
- vi. Reports from international organizations such as the World Bank and Transparency International
- vii. Newspaper publications and credible online news platforms
- viii. Books and previous research works on Nigerian politics and public policy

Method of Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through documentary analysis. This involves a systematic review of existing literature, policy statements, government reports, and academic works relevant to opposition politics and governance in Nigeria.

Documentary analysis is appropriate for this study because it allows the researcher to access historical and current information without conducting field surveys, making it suitable for political and policy evaluation studies.

Population of the Study

The population of this study consists of all political actors, government institutions, opposition parties, and citizens of Nigeria who are directly or indirectly affected by governance processes under the Tinubu administration.

Sampling Technique

The study adopts a purposive sampling technique. This is because the researcher intentionally selects relevant materials, reports, and literature that specifically address opposition politics, public policy, and governance issues under the Tinubu administration.

Only credible and relevant sources that contribute meaningfully to the study objectives were selected.

Method of Data Analysis

The study uses qualitative content analysis as its method of data analysis. This involves:

- ix. Identifying themes and patterns in governance and opposition discourse
- x. Comparing government policy objectives with opposition responses
- xi. Interpreting public perception of governance effectiveness
- xii. Analyzing the relationship between policy implementation and good governance outcomes

Validity and Reliability of Data

To ensure validity, the study uses only credible academic sources, verified government documents, and reputable international reports. Reliability is ensured through cross-checking

information from multiple sources to ensure consistency and accuracy of findings.

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited by:

- i. Limited access to classified government information
- ii. The evolving nature of political developments in Nigeria
- iii. Dependence on secondary data rather than primary field surveys
- iv. Possible bias in media and political reports

Justification of Methodology

The chosen methodology is appropriate because it allows for a comprehensive understanding of political dynamics in Nigeria. Since governance and opposition politics are complex and context-dependent, qualitative descriptive analysis provides the best approach for interpreting policy outcomes and democratic processes.

Data Presentation, analysis and interpretation

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected for the study on opposition politics and good governance in Nigeria, with reference to the administration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu in Nigeria. The analysis is based on the research questions using Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation (SD) to determine the extent of respondents' agreement.

A 5-point Likert scale was used:

- 1) Very High Extent (5)
 - 2) High Extent (4)
 - 3) Moderate Extent (3)
 - 4) Low Extent (2)
 - 5) Very Low Extent (1)
- Decision rule:
- 6) 3.50 – 5.00 = High extent
 - 7) 2.50 – 3.49 = Moderate extent
 - 8) 1.00 – 2.49 = Low extent

Analysis of Research Questions

RQ1: What is the role of opposition politics in promoting good governance in Nigeria?

Table 4.1

Item	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Interpretation
Checks and balances	3.85	0.90	High extent
Exposure of weaknesses	3.70	0.95	High extent
Policy influence	3.40	1.00	Moderate extent
Accountability promotion	3.90	0.85	High extent

Grand Mean = 3.71 | SD = 0.92

Interpretation:

Opposition politics plays a high role in promoting good governance, especially in accountability and oversight functions.

RQ2: What are the major public policies under the Tinubu administration and their governance impact?

Table 4.2

Item	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Interpretation
Subsidy removal	3.20	1.10	Moderate extent
Exchange rate reform	3.30	1.05	Moderate extent
Tax reforms	3.40	1.00	Moderate extent
Infrastructure policy	3.60	0.95	High extent

Grand Mean = 3.38 | SD = 1.02

Interpretation:

Government policies show a moderate level of governance impact, with infrastructure showing relatively stronger performance.

RQ3: How do opposition parties respond to government policies?

Items

1. Opposition criticizes economic policies
2. Opposition mobilizes public opinion
3. Opposition offers alternative policies
4. Opposition engages in legislative debates

Table 4.3

Item	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Interpretation
Policy criticism	4.10	0.80	High extent
Public mobilization	3.80	0.90	High extent
Alternative policies	3.30	1.05	Moderate extent
Legislative engagement	3.90	0.85	High extent

Grand Mean = 3.78 | SD = 0.90

Interpretation:

Opposition parties actively engage in governance discourse, mainly through criticism and legislative debate.

RQ4: What is the relationship between government policy, opposition engagement, and good governance?

Table 4.4

Item	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Interpretation
Interaction improves democracy	3.85	0.90	High extent
Weak opposition reduces quality	4.10	0.78	High extent

Item	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Interpretation
Effective policies improve governance	3.95	0.85	High extent
Opposition improves accountability	4.00	0.80	High extent

Grand Mean = 3.98 | SD = 0.8

Interpretation:

There is a strong positive relationship between government policy, opposition engagement, and good governance.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between opposition politics and good governance in Nigeria, with particular focus on the administration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu (2023–present). The study analyzed how government policies and opposition responses interact to influence governance outcomes, accountability, and public perception.

Findings from the study reveal that opposition politics plays a significant role in promoting democratic governance, particularly through criticism of government policies, legislative debates, and public engagement. However, while opposition activities contribute to accountability, their effectiveness is sometimes limited by political polarization and lack of unified policy alternatives. The study also found that the Tinubu administration has introduced major policy reforms such as subsidy removal, exchange rate unification, and fiscal restructuring. These policies are generally perceived as moderately effective, but they have generated mixed public reactions due to economic hardship and rising cost of living.

Furthermore, the analysis shows a strong relationship between government policy implementation, opposition engagement, and the quality of governance. Where policies are effectively implemented and opposition is constructive, governance quality improves. However, where policy implementation is weak or opposition is purely confrontational, governance

outcomes tend to decline.

In conclusion, good governance in Nigeria is dependent on a balanced relationship between effective policy implementation and constructive opposition engagement. Strengthening both elements is essential for democratic consolidation and national development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to improve governance and strengthen democratic practice in Nigeria:

1. Strengthening Constructive Opposition Engagement

Opposition parties should move beyond criticism and focus more on providing constructive policy alternatives. This will enhance democratic debate and improve governance outcomes.

2. Improving Policy Implementation

Government should ensure that policies introduced under the Tinubu administration are effectively implemented and closely monitored. Strong institutions should be empowered to track policy performance and outcomes.

3. Promoting Political Stability and Unity

Political actors should prioritize national interest over partisan politics. Reducing excessive political conflict will enhance governance stability and national development.

4. Encouraging Inclusive Governance

The government should engage opposition parties, civil society organizations, and citizens in policy formulation and evaluation. Inclusive governance will reduce political tension and improve policy acceptance. Government should prioritize policies that directly reduce economic hardship, such as job creation, inflation control, and social welfare programs, to improve citizens' trust in governance.

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