Party Politics, Leadership Problem and Challenge of Development: The Bane of Africa and the Nigerian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines party politics, political leadership and challenges of development in Africa. The analysis of post-colonial experience in Africa focuses on god-fatherism in party politics, spate of sit-tight syndrome in political leadership and their adverse effects on development programmes. It also interrogates the methods of ascension to political office in Africa compared to some developed countries and argues that there is infectious disparaging interconnection among party politics, political leadership and development process in Africa. The study adopts approach, content analysis for discussion of the thematic issues and collects information from secondary data. Modernization theory explains the relationship between the western proposed templates on development imperatives and the strategies that post-independent African leaders patronize. The study reveals that lack of party discipline descriptive and corruption that hinges on self-interest of political leaders in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), hinders development plans and efforts. It recommends radical change in the perception of politics, leadership and development by African leaders. It also recommends the revival of the values, visions and aspirations of founding fathers of Africa by returning the continent to the path of development, in order to remain relevant in the era of revolution in modernization. Thus, democratic leadership that ensures sustainable development in Africa makes it feasible.
Keywords: Party politics, Leadership, Development, Sit-tight syndrome, Africa, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The inter-play of party politics and political leadership, including how they affect development in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has posed a new perspective in the study of African politics. It is rather incredible that over the years, the behaviour of most African leaders tends to give the impression that their political parties, ethnicity, religion and pursuit of idiosyncratic cravings, manipulate or hypnotize them to exhibit abnormal tendencies in political office. Leadership anchored on sit-tight orientation among African leaders, as well as godfatherism, which suddenly emerged in Nigeria's political lexicon since the advent of the fourth republic in 1999;seem to gain supports, relevance, patronage and sustenance from the evolving model of African party ideologies, which contradict true democratic practice. Fundamentally, congenial party politics and astute political leadership engenders development through meaningful policies and programmes. Political party activities provide the revolving doors that influence the pendulum of governance process in the direction of reasonableness and activate enthusiasm in development efforts for common good. Election ends intra-party and inter-party contests and births a phase where politicians that successfully win elective positions switchover to the business of political leadership and implementation of campaign promises. Ideally, the elected officials detach from the clandestine goals of their political parties to embrace the mandates vested in their leadership. In fact, in Africa, most especially Nigeria, there is

overwhelming tacit relationships between political parties and political leadership at different levels of government, which subsist after elections. It negates the priority that the public attach to development programmes and welfare schemes. The lack of distinction in the roles of political party and political leadership in influencing government policies and development programmes is a common problem among developing countries. The global development index grouped countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America as underdeveloped nations [1]. The attribution in Africa relates significantly to peculiar pattern of party politics, political leadership and distorted approach towards national development goals. For instance, the overbearing influences of ethnicity, religion, nepotism, godfatherism, bad leadership and sycophancy, midwife corruption and derail development. The trend does not support or encourage the practice of true democracy that ensures free and fair election, socio-economic, religious and political justice or inclusive governance but reduces politics as underdevelopment label and symbol of system fragility. In virtually all political systems, individuals and groups play politics and participate in elections for many reasons. The basic is to seek opportunities to represent cross-sections of interests or constituents and render service to the people [2]. Paradoxically, the gale of party politics and leadership in many African countries relegates public interests, which it has the mandates to carter for, in the system. By implication, it is either that the nature of party politics in Africa has fundamental problems or that the styles of leadership are colossally defective and not amenable to steering development process across the continent. The nauseating practice in Nigeria shows that bad leadership appears responsible for poor service delivery to Nigerians. It thus highlights the need to understand the nuances of leadership based on performance indicators and not from the perspective of propaganda or sycophantic innuendoes instigated by government through their agents to disguise visible failure in their administration [2]. Leadership is the ability to set goals, formulate paths to the goal and seek to actualize the goal. It explains why in every society, the followers always look up to their leaders to provide certain useful services to them [3]; hence, the correlation between leadership and service delivery. In consonance, the primary responsibility of a leader is to deliver services considered crucial to the citizenry. Every government owes it as an obligation to the duty of citizens. In Nigeria, the ability of the government to legitimately tax and govern people rationalizes its capacity to deliver range of services required by its population, which no other player will provide. Once these services and deliverables are lacking in a country, the suspicion is that the crops of leaders at the helm of affairs merely cater for their pockets and not for public good. This common trend characterizes party politics, political leadership and the persistent failure to develop countries in Africa since the post-colonial period.The twist curiously redefines what constitute leadership in African context, which remarkably deviates from the general notion of transparency, accountability, and altruism in public service. It exudes inability to utilize commonwealth judiciously in providing people-oriented and essential quality services in the state. It emphasizes greed that does not allow for development and this study interrogates the disjuncture in the orientation of leaders in Africa.

The Conceptual Review

Party Politics

There are divergent views about the term politics. [3], states that politics is the process whereby a group of people, whose opinions or interests are initially divergent, reach collective decisions, which generally bind the group, and enforced as common policy. Similarly, [4] contends that politics is the process

whereby groups of individually rational people try to make collective choices that will in some sense, be binding on the members of the group, and where the choices target actions, which aim at solving collective problems. In other words, politics revolves around struggle for political power for the purposes of authoritative allocation of values; hence, politics is all about who gets what, when and how, in a society [5]; [6]; [7].There are those who suggest that politics is the art of finding peaceful resolutions to general societal conflicts through compromise and the building of consensus [8]. Failure of consensus in politics hinders the conduct of party politics and civil governance. It sometimes results in military coup and other kinds of violence. Thus, a political leader is that person who holds public office with the mandate of making authoritative and binding decisions on behalf of those who bestow such privilege upon him/her [9]; [10].These different perspectives coalesce to denote politics and the role it plays in a society. Politics in this sense is the activity in which individuals seek to influence decision-making in society either for their own personal gain or to the advantage of group interests that they represent. In most African states, politics is usually a self-centered game. Essentially, party politics refers to politics and activities that involve members of political parties and different from the activities of non-members. Its exclusive nature reflects the strict adherence to the policies and principles of political parties and the binding force it has on the members. It is under the umbrella of party politics that candidates contest elective offices to represent the larger members of society whose interests transcend narrow party interests. In this context, political representatives hold offices with expectation to uphold the terms of social contract without deleterious allegiance to their political parties that sidelines accountability and development. This has long eluded African states, where the practice of party politics erodes the age-long held norm that sovereignty resides with the people in a democracy and where development programmes is the priority of those entrusted with power.

Political Leadership

The crucial role of political leadership in the development of a country cannot be over-emphasized. Scholars have continued to ponder over the divergent nature of leadership generally and political leadership in particular but they are yet to clearly distinguish and resolve the seeming disagreements on the varied indicators. In other words, there is great confusion about the different types and styles of leadership, such as functional leadership, bureaucratic leadership, charismatic leadership, group-centered leadership, reality-centered leadership, leadership by objectives, relational leadership, self-leadership, and volunteering leadership, etc [11]; [12]; [13]. The different types of leadership, results in inability of scholars to synthesize their common operational ground in political system. In essence, political scholars, management practitioners and public policy analysts usually reinforce the contradictions inherent in the concept of leadership, which is amenable to varied background, indicators and interpretation. Lester Seligman describes the confusion under a theme, "Politics of Leadership" [14]. Thus, politics of leadership is one of the distinguishing features of the 20th century and it appears to subsist in the contemporary time with the ever-increasing complexity in the activities of states, coupled with the challenges of economic development, environmental sustainability and systematization of party politics and governance. In other words, leadership styles in Africa illustrate the omnibus perspective evident in party politics.Having noted the daunting hurdles that ambiguity in the concept of leadership poses to scholars, attention shifts to empirical implication of leadership in a

politicalsystem. [12] argues that effective leadership is instrumental in influencing a focused, reasonable, goal conscious and result oriented administration. The organizing principle around which leadership measures it purpose and compliance with rules of engagement is the ability to develop concise and comprehensive administration blueprints that address the whole aspects of institutional rules, theenforcementmechanisms,compensation and punishment structures and perhaps, the feasibility of adaptability to changing situations. It portends that the political system is a dynamic process that demands flexibility in administration and it stunts when leadership is not only weak but also significantly inarticulate. In consonance, [14] posits that there is lack in leadership in Africa; all we have is ruler-ship, at best manager-ship. Such ruler-ship or mis-leadership often carries along with it the excess baggage of more innocuous problems for the continent. This plague is rife everywhere in Africa; hence, there are traces of leadership ineptitude from Abidjan to Djibouti, Lagos to Johannesburg, Freetown to Kinshasa, Darfur to Kampala, etc. Thus, goal-oriented and astute political leadership especially in era marked by advancement in technology and competitive edge in statecraft presents a new challenge to Africa. No nation adapts to this era except there is overhaul of leadership machinery, which is pathway to adopting global best practices in party politics, state governance and development strides.

Leadership and Party Politics

Literature illuminates three issues that present themselves in leadership, which are relevant to analysis of party politics and political leadership especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. The subdivisions include, Leadership Ascension, Leadership Operation and Leadership Succession [15]; [16]; [17]; [18]. Other scholars espouse this further by describing the roles that political actors vested with state authority play at each level of transition in leadership, which also form the hub of this discourse. First, Leadership Ascension implies the means and methods of aspiring to and eventually gaining political leadership positions. In this case, the role of party politics and the intrigues involved is pivotal in understanding African perspective [19]; [20]; [21]. One of the core roles of a political party is to elect officeholders under a given label, whether the election is flawless or flawed. In western tradition, dissimilar to common practice in Africa where democracy wobbles, political parties train and prepare candidate for elective positions and observe internal party democracy in the selection of candidates, other than imposition. Importantly, political parties undertake voter education/sensitization, and go further to mobilize, recruit/employ and compensate those that work for them. While political parties in Nigeria play some similar roles, they are mainly in the opposite of the expectations. They are more visible in internal rivalry among members, scheming to scuttle opposition, impose candidates, and compromise electoral process. The negative manifestations of these developments usually metamorphose into vote buying, and monetization of electioneering as reported during the governorship elections in Edo and Ondo States in 2020. It ridicules the integrity of franchise, election management and decay in political orientation in Nigeria. The desire to gain control of government is the overall goal of political parties. Thus, ascension to leadership through party politicking in Africa is such that requires lots of influence, intrigues and means on the part of the candidate or their godfathers that wield such needed influence. In other words, it is capital intensive to partake in elections, especially in Nigeria, where the process is both contentious and competitive. Few examples suffice. In the build up for

2019 elections, APC Presidential Nomination Forms cost N45m, that of PDP N12m. APC governorship forms went for N22.5m, and that of PDP dropped to N6m. During the last Edo and Ondo governorship elections in year 2020, Expression of Interest Form by each APC candidate attracted N2.5m, while a Nomination Form went for N20m per candidate. Both categories attracted N1m and N20m respectively in the PDP [22]. Meanwhile, issues of disqualification, suspension and expulsion across party lines accompanied this fierce competition for party tickets. It shows either a deliberate ploy or policy of exclusion in the electioneering at the party level where they impose some candidates because of money that exchanges hands, to the displeasure of other members sidelined or shortchanged in the process. In fact, only those with money or those that have godfathers as sponsors can contest election. Thus, the process of ascension to political office is normally a serious gambit affair that incubates and triggers election vices such as hooliganism, thuggery, blackmailing, backbiting, fighting, maiming and killing, character assassination and other unconventional means to outwit the opponent. Nonetheless, Leadership Operation is concerned with the activities of leadership. In an ideal democracy, leadership operation is seen in the functions and functioning of the organs of government, including the legislature at both national and sub-national levels, executive and judiciary. The Press remains the Fourth Estate of the Realm that monitors and reports the activities of the aforementioned branches of government without bias. However, most African countries suffer predicaments of having a ruling political party in government that controls majority members both in the legislature and in the executive, with their party indirectly influencing the operations of the judiciary, thereby whittling down the roles of political parties in opposition. Where this is the case, the party in power mismanages political leadership; it makes development programmes a secondary concern and apparently elusive.

Development

[23] view development as the process in which any human society strives to reach self-sufficiency, self-reliance, technological advancement, justice and equity. In the modern sense, it focuses on "human development", measured by the wellbeing and living standards of people in reference to access to basic needs, per capita income, literacy levels, mortality rates and poverty indices among other factors. It implies that development does not only mean capital accumulation and economic growth, but the condition which people in a country have adequate food, job and where income inequality among them is greatly reduced [24]. Development is all-inclusive phenomenon in a political system.Buttressing the omnibus nature of development, [25], [26] enumerate other indices of development in a system. They include not only economic growth, but also some notion of equitable distribution of resources for justice and fairness, provision of quality healthcare, education, housing, water, electricity and other essential services. The essence is to improve the individual and collective quality of life. This shows that there is organic relationship between party politics and political leadership, which are catalyst for the development indices that exist in other climes but relatively scarce in Africa.In fact, development (both as tangible materials and intangible services that measure values in human society), attracts many international organizations and domestic institutions that focus on identifying the indices, ranking countries by their levels of manifestation in the system, doing comparison among various nations, and determining the consequences for each state. In most rankings released by IMF, World Bank, Transparency International, Civil Liberty Organization, etc, Africa has continued to be on the edge. Africa

ranks the highest in mother-child mortality rate, poverty syndrome, unemployment, decayed infrastructure, low life expectancy leading to high death rate, corruption prevalence, human right abuse, insecurity, sit-tight leadership, undemocratic institutions, fragile, pariah or failed state status.

Theoretical Framework

[27], states that the theoretical framework for understanding party politics, political leadership and development in Africa, revolves around several well-defined approaches. These approaches include the modernization, dependency, statist, and lately, integrative approaches respectively. Among these explanatory frameworks, modernization theory appears encompassing, with characteristics of dependency, statist and integrative tendency in the expositions. The major assumption of modernization theory with respect to third world societies and African states in particular, is that African countries are obliged to adopt the western model of development blueprints for development and transformation of their states. The theorists contend that efficiency and scientific logic must take preeminent position in African politics and leadership to replace crippling traditional values and beliefs that hinder progress and integration needed to achieve development in a diverse society. There are many perspectives to modernization that apply to this study. Economically, modernization means rapid industrialization and growth. Socially, the goals of modernization imply encouraging individual and labour mobility on one hand, and establishing procedures for fair allocation of resources on the other hand. Politically, modernization refers to expansion and rationalization of government apparatus. It also implies power concentration, some level of political participation and an augmentation of capacities to meet growing demands [28].Modernization provides foundation for African states to achieve some level of stability and autonomy and an eventual pattern of convergence with the industrial states. In modernization, politics plays the role of creating conditions for equal level of growth.

This it does by providing for social serenity and affable government.However, the protagonists of the theory and many pro-west scholars argue that African states have failed on this path of modernization. They also argue that this theoretical perspective is the acceptable explanation for African problem and a template for achieving good governance and development in the continent. They imagine that African leaders usually claim to practice a type of political system, leadership and constitution, which are operational in their model countries but most times, they appear hesitant to adopt modernization paradigm for their development aspirations. The failures of African states to adopt the blueprints from the modernization theory and or comply with the conditionality of the development partners have remained the bane of economic woes that disingenuous political leadership creates. It finds expression in the inherent contradiction in their systems of governance and incubates ethnocentric enablers. It also reinforces incapacitating political culture, engendered by the type of party politics, economic structures and leadership styles.The prevalence of misplaced priorities in their development plan, including misguided political, ethnic and religious propaganda, promotes division. It extends to destructive conflict among competing goals that crisscross different class/cleavage, with failure to defeat cultural setbacks that bedevil African states. It prevents leaders from pursuing development as national values and goals. Thus, this western-styled theory tends to task African political leaders to dispassionately focus on inclusive governance and vigorously pursue the path of progress and greatness in African party politics,

political leadership and development plans. Politics does not only express the reality of disagreement and conflict in society but one of the ways we know of how to address and potentially patch up the disagreements that characterize our societies without recourse to illegitimate coercion or violence [28]; [11]. It requires deemphasizing the dividing lines along ethnicity, sit-tight leadership, unwarranted hegemony, discomfiting religious bigotry, social inequality and penchant for corruption among others. Modernization theory condemns the sociological factors that afflict the genuine objectives of healthy party politics, inclusive political leadership and general development programmes in Africa. The theory proposes the trend of party politics and leadership in other climes, how they elude Africa and the implications for their development.

Party Politics, Leadership and Development in Africa

Party politics in Africa has mosaic colourations. It is more so in recent time with specter of parochial leadership and the thorny issues of development that witness negligible attention. From the perspective of party politics, which is the pedestal for ascending unto leadership positions, we find out that internal party democracy is in lack. The cases of hijack of party machinery/structure, imposition of candidates based on selfish interests, prevalence of gangsterism and godfatherism that breeds unwarranted loyalty to persons in positions of authority/influence, other than party supremacy and discipline, are common occurrence in Sub-Saharan Africa. It has continued to hinder development efforts of government in power. In the case of Nigeria, the type of modern leadership has not been able to engender any meaningful national development, in spite of her huge resources endowment [29]. Aside Nigeria, Africa in general faces problems that undermine efforts to create a nation out of the amorphous entities amalgamated by colonial elements to form states at independence. It birthed challenge of coping with divergent views on the best strategy for promoting dynamic party politics and achieving even and sustainable development in Africa. Each country in Africa suffers controversy and disagreement on the methods that politicians adopt both in the conduct of party politics and in leadership. Sectional politics exerts overbearing influence over leadership and biased leadership retards development. For instance, the crisis of socio-economic development, induced by the political administrative elite, is the most serious problem facing Nigeria [29]. On this account, the country has remained largely underdeveloped despite the presence of huge mineral and human resources. It starts with cases of socio-cultural, religious, political and economic injustices in the system that perpetuates exclusion and division among the elites. The Africa Infrastructure Development Index [6] indicates that only Libya, South Africa and Congo recorded the highest improvement in the ranking for provision of ICT, transport, power, water and sanitation, exceeding 3 points. Many other African countries ranked low, and recorded a decline in the overall performance index. They include Cabo Verde, 1.49; South Sudan, 0.34; and São Tomé and Príncipe, 0.24. In terms of ranking, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Rwanda and Uganda saw the biggest drop. The bottom ten countries in the rankings include Central African Republic, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Niger, South Sudan, and Somalia. The report corroborates negative consequences of party politics and bad leadership in Africa, whereby most of the countries in the category that was ranked low are fragile states or/and emerging from conflict. Others not in war suffer from insecurity, human right abuse, economic deprivation and extreme poverty, which Nigeria is the capital [30].African leaders are exposed to various development

plans, which serve as both diagnosis and remediation instrument. There are three options of this model, namely: the indicative model, which was a western-styled development plan; the centralized or the imperative model, commonly referred to as the socialist mode, and the third option being a merger of the capitalist and socialist model [31]; [5]; [32]. However, egocentric politics and bad leadership has made none of the aforementioned models of development plans to provide soft landing for Africa. In the case of Nigeria, the emerging elite divide between north and south and sometimes along religious and ethnic lines forecloses unity that is required for cohesive leadership and integrated national development plans, devoid of exclusion, marginalization and agitation. It is argued that powerful initiatives from within the political elite groups are critically important for national development [31]; [33].The implication is that without unity among the ruling class in many African states, its development aspirations will continue to remain elusive.

Post-Independence Experience

At independence, most African leaders opted for the centrally controlled development planning to operate within a mixed economy where both the public and private sectors played substantial roles. However, some states decided to adopt a purely socialist approach where the state controlled the economy with respect to who produced what and in what quantities. This was the model adopted in Tanzania under Julius Nyerere, Mozambique under Samora Michels, Libya under Muammah Ghadafi and Guinea under Sekou Tore [34]; [35]. The factors that influenced approaches to development in Africa situated around the Cold War politics that provided options of alignments and non-alignments to African leaders. It created the options of either identifying with the traditional African socialism on an ideology of non-alignment or embracing capitalism[35]; [11]; [36], which lacked supportive infrastructure to minimize dependency.Thereafter, other successive African leaders faced the challenge of raising the standard of living of the citizens of their respective states in terms of providing basic needs, and evolving favourable environments that guarantee security of life and property. Declining economic growth and national wealth persists because none has learnt the goal of continuity in implementation of development plan, to reduce the barrage of abandoned projects that litter every state in Africa. They waste resources, suppress agriculture, which provides food and some measure of foreign exchange for a nation, and continue to service the battered rent economy inherited at independence, which was mostly alien to them. Foreign companies or firms that operated in the colonial economy deepened their dominant roles in the economy. By implication, the indigenous small (domestic) private sector lacked capacity for competition. This was because the African entrepreneurs could not raise enough capital to support the economy. The lack of enough capital and small domestic industrial base, made African government to seek alternatives that took two forms, namely to set up state owned and state controlled enterprises in the forms of parastatals. Government established them with the aim of kick-starting local industrialization programme, with initial emphases on banking, transport and telecommunication, manufacturing and marketing ventures. However, politics that underlay the management of these ventures suffered neglect by regime members, who turned the positions in the management cadre into objects of reward for cronies and family members. The beneficiaries became political financiers, advisers and sycophants of the ruling parties and the result was that at about the early 1980s, most of the enterprises collapsed due to heavy losses. With the collapse of the enterprises, it became expedient to explore other alternatives. Thus, the

challenge that confronted African states and leaders at independence are many and it never occurred to them that it needed political leaders with both vision and informed objectivity to solve the problems [3]; [37]. This trauma still subsists among the present leadership in Africa.

The Politics of Stagnation in Africa

The collapse of ventures that African states looked forward to sustaining the funding of party politics, leadership and development resulted in a search for means of supplementing their fiscal budgets through Economic Aid and Official Development Assistance [32]. The essence was to access the much-needed foreign exchange that would enable them offset balance of payment deficits. It made African states to reach out to various bilateral and multilateral donors and lenders such as the World Bank, and IMF among other International Financial Institutions. This move aimed at raising more liquid capital that was important for the purchasing of capital goods that were essential for industrial activities and development. Nonetheless, the governments in power in most African countries used these monies fraudulently, and with blatant impunity in some cases. This led to the accumulation of national debts, which got to crises proportions and resulted in the African Debt Crisis of the 1980s and 1990s [38], and subsisting. Development stagnated with the disparaging cycle of African leaders who had nothing meaningful to offer to transform their countries but insist on perpetuating themselves in office through sit-tight mechanism. For obvious reasons, the prevailing subject culture, and in some extreme cases, parochial political culture that the citizens imbibed as a consequence of their systematic exclusion in governance, diminished participant culture that engaged the citizens in active politics [39]. The nonchalant attitude towards politics and governance gives the elite class the latitude to manipulate the system according to their whims and caprices.Each regime adopted authoritarian styles of government that infected every military and civil administration. It has domesticated political dictatorship in most African states and sometimes degenerated into civil wars, internal rebellion, military coups, and other subversive agitations in the society. This has been a recurring decimal in Nigeria especially since the interruption of the second republic on 31st December 1983. Several military regimes disallowed Nigerians to have access to democracy until 29th May 1999 when a former military Head of State, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo was democratically elected and sworn-in into office [40]. Nonetheless, since the birth of Fourth Republic in Nigeria (1999-date),the country suffers political instability, political violence, violent crimes, and inequality that results in social unrests, separatist agitations, corrosive corruption, sectionalism, tribalism, religious bigotry and lot of other maladies linked to virulent party politics and retrogressive leadership. Fundamentally, self-interest and party loyalty among political officeholders hinders development efforts in Africa. It emanates from lack of good governance, whereby participatory democracy, consensus party politics, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient leadership remains scarce. It implies that equitable and inclusive system must follow the rule of law. Democracy promotes the rule of law, free press, political freedom, independent judiciary and due process [11]. It means that the different countries in Africa will gradually exit the undeveloped status bracket when they practice true democracy, which is precursor to healthy party politics, leadership and development. There is no path to development when most political leaders in Africa desire to amass wealth from politics or when they perpetuate themselves in power (sit-tight syndrome) against the dictates of their national constitutions and overriding public interests. That is stagnation personified and very

unpopular in the global leadership and

Sit-tight in African Political Leadership

Prior to political independence, African elites bemoaned the prolonged colonial regimes in the continent. They accused the colonial masters of enforcing draconian laws and subverting the fundamental rights of the people by resisting the practice of democracy. Immediately after independence, the allures of political and economic power trapped indigenous African leaders. In other words, the imitation of the colonial insensitivity in political leadership by the indigenous ruling class further emboldened them to practice sit-tight regime (whether civilian or military). It turns out to be one of the greatest challenges of modern political leadership in Africa with the frequent obnoxious constitutional alterations. [41], identifies seven of Africa's oldest presidents and six of Africa's longest-serving presidents presented in tables 1 & 2 that buttress sit-tight mentality in Africa.

development index.

Table 1: Seven of Africa's Oldest Presidents:

S/N	Name of President	Country	Birthday	Age	Year
1	Paul Biya	Cameroon	13/2/1933	87yrs	2020
2	Manuel Pinto Da Costa	Sa Tome & Principe	5/8/1937	83yrs	2020
3	Alpha Conte	Guinea	4/3/1938	82yrs	2020
4	Alassane Ouattara	Coute d' Viore	1/1/1942	78yrs	2020
5	Muhammadu Buhari	Nigeria	17/12/1942	78yrs	2020
6	Nana Akufo-Ado	Ghana	29/03/1944	76yrs	2020
7	Yoweri Museveni	Uganda	15/08/1944	76yrs	2020

[41]

Table 2: Six Africa's Longest-Serving Presidents

S/N	Name of President	Country	No. of Years in Office
1	Teodoro Obiang Nguema	Equatorial Guinea	41yrs
2	Paul Biya	Cameroon	38yrs
3	Denis Sassou Nguesso	Congo-Brazzaville	36yrs
4	Yoweri Museveni	Uganda	34yrs
5	Idriss Deby	Chad	30yrs
6	Isaias Afwerki	Eritrea	27yrs

[41]

Some of these leaders have been in power for over 30 years, even when they are old and supposed to give way to others to govern. Most politicians on the continent have similar characteristics, which add to the fact that they exhibit negative characters and many of them rarely show good examples. They are culpable for nepotism, corruption, unfulfilled promises, holding on to power at all cost, seeking healthcare abroad, poor governance, disrespect for the constitutional provisions, electoral malpractice, and witch-hunt of opposition, etc. Recycling former leaders in national leadership position in Africa compromises the demands of modernity. In Nigeria, both former military heads of state, Olusegun Obasanjo and Muhammadu Buhari that transmuted to civilian presidents after so many years are typical examples. It is a similar experience in many other countries in Africa where former military leaders clinched political power after retirement. It renders leadership in Africa vulnerable to political opportunists. The consequent sit-tight phenomenon in many instances largely bears a semblance of clear lack of patriotism, loss of altruism in public service, dearth of personal discipline and lack of respect for the rule of law. It is evident that the

more power an African political leader has, the longer he/she would want to prolong the terms in office and the more corrupt the person becomes. The third term bids by

CONCLUSION

Africa, despite its abundant natural, material and human resources, has continued to bear the tags of poor and underdeveloped when less endowed countries are doing quite well and considered as developed. Resource endowment is a major factor for development and it possesses inherent potential for conversion to national wealth. The economy of Africa largely depends on raw materials before the discovery of crude oil petroleum products and other mineral deposits. These raw materials are the mainstay of industrial production in the west. Without solid foundation for competitive bargaining power in the exchange of the products, the west boxed Africa to the periphery of the center, and thereby sealed its dependency. Consequently, African leaders found solace in wasting, misappropriating and corruptly misusing the available resources or commonwealth, due to bad leadership. Leadership failure fundamentally relates to the pattern of party politics, compliance with democratic principles and good governance, which are prerequisites for sustainable development in every society. There is so much party influence over an average

former president Olusegun Obasanjo in Nigeria is an example, whereas the only exception was Dr. Nelson Mandela of South Africa.

African leader, as they in most cases, get to leadership positions through personal efforts of both party and godfathers. Hence, on ascension to office, they embark on looting, stealing and corruptly enriching themselves to be able to satisfy the interests of the party and the godfathers as well. Amid this infamy, public interests suffer and the indication is that paradigm shift in the mode and orientation of African leadership is necessary so that Africa does not continue to wallow in abject poverty and gross underdevelopment even in the midst of abundant resources. Libya and Botswana somehow, exemplified how country's leaders can achieve the expectations of their people[4]. The process starts with being submissive to call and demands of sincerity, openness and true nationalism [6]. Under the political leaders in the countries cited above, their countries were able to set development policies and went ahead to implement them as planned. More often than not, they managed to lift the quality of life of their citizens and ensured relative stability in political and macro-economic systems. These are the roles of quality leaders but many other African countries are not such visible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Development is essentially a function of leadership as determined by the political platform in place. The following recommendations for African nations require that they begin to play responsible politics that will engender even development. Present African leaders should take pains to study the legacies left behind by African founding fathers that were selfless in their approach to politics and leadership. In addition, prospective leaders in each country in Africa should undergo basic training on politics as it applies to democratic governance. There is also

need to strengthen governance institutions and lines of demarcation between the operations of political parties and the business of leadership in government. When political office is less lucrative and attractive to lure people to politics, no successful decent professionals like Medical Doctors, Engineers, Professors, Bankers and all those who could make better and more meaningful contributions to the economy than in politics would dare come into politics. This will go a long way to check the excesses of political parties and politicians. Lastly, it is

imperative to enforce stiff penalties for leaders who embezzle, steal or misappropriate government funds meant for development purposes.African leaders should draw development plans to contain short term, medium term and long-term projections and follow the implementation on the bases of priorities in the list. Each change in regime should cease to be a change in the development plan except for incremental modification at intervals to accommodate new things. It is the responsibility of a leader to offer a direction that his/her country goes, either forward or backward. Without a clear roadmap, decisive action and conscientious leadership that promotes inclusiveness, socio-economic and political justice and egalitarianism, the dream of coordinated development programmes in Africa will never be a realistic agenda by the leadership.

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