

Third Term Craze and Democratic Diplomacy in Africa; East and Central Africa as Case Study

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Abstract: We cannot really say democratic practice has matured in Africa the way it has in the West because in comparison to European and American countries, democratic practice in Africa is still in infancy. However, most African countries have been long enough in the game to at least move towards the strengthening of the rudimentary prerequisites of democratic practice such as: free and fair elections and high regard for constitutional provisions. Some scholars have argued that the reason for the aberrations we find in the practice of democracy is because the system of government is alien to Africa and was an imposed system. While this may be true to some extent, the question to be asked is whether a preferable system of government does exist besides democracy that really takes cognizance of the rights of the masses and imbues the people with so much freedom and power?

Key Words: Democracy, Central Africa, East Africa, Third Term Craze, Democratic Diplomacy

I. INTRODUCTION

The consciousness of democratic rule as the ideal form of government seems to have spread, and is still spreading around the globe especially since the end of Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall in the early 90's. Africa has not been left out in this new consciousness and seems to have caught the democratic bug even faster than some other continents. However, whether these democratic ideals have been well internalized is another matter altogether. That is, whether we are still on the level of Democratization- which is the process of establishment and erecting of democratic structures, or whether we have advanced to the level of Democratic Consolidation-in which democratic ideals and principles have become routine and face lesser challenges (F. Imuetinyan, 2015:13). In reality, the former is still quite peculiar to mostly developing countries especially in Africa, while the latter is the norm in developed countries, especially in the West. We cannot really say democratic practice has matured in Africa the way it has in the West because in comparison to European and American countries, democratic practice in Africa is still in infancy. However, most African countries have been long enough in the game to at least move towards the strengthening of the rudimentary prerequisites of democratic practice such as: free and fair elections and high regard for constitutional provisions (A.K. Fayemi, 2009). This is however, hardly the case in many African countries of which we shall examine a few during the course of this work. What we see rather, is the reformulation of democracy to suite authoritarian tastes.

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the system of government is alien to Africa and was an imposed system (V.G. Simiyu, 1987). While this may be true to some extent, the question to be asked is whether a preferable system of government does exist besides democracy that really takes cognizance of the rights of the masses and imbues the people with so much freedom and power? Whatever the case could be, we shall assess in the discussion of the subject matter. During the course of this work, we shall examine the development of Democratic Diplomacy generally and its effect on Africa, taking some Eastern and Central African countries as case study. We shall also examine how the leadership of those particular countries have modified democracy to suite their aspirations, especially in the guise of the craze for perpetuation of power after which we shall give a critique. Hence, the following outline shall be adopted in this work to help give a vivid insight into the subject matter:

- Introduction
- Conceptual Clarification
- Theoretical Approach
- The Rise of Democratic Diplomacy in Global Politics
- Democratic Practice in Africa: Central and East Africa as a Case Study
- Critique of Democratic Practice in Africa
- Conclusion

II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Under this topic, we shall strive to examine some crucial concepts which will aid us to give a clearer explanation of the subject matter during the course of this work. They are as follows:

Democracy: From its etymological roots, the concept of "Democracy" is derived from two Greek words: *demos*, a noun which means 'the people', and *kratis*, a verb which means 'to rule'. Hence, democracy can literally be said to mean 'rule of the people'. It must be noted that Ancient Greece which was composed of City States, is often regarded as the birth place of Western Democracy, and it was from thence, the concept derived its meaning as we have today (A.K. Fayemi, 2009). The concept of democracy however, does not have an ubiquitous accepted definition of the concept. The concept has various definitions in accordance with the intellectual temperament of the scholars involved.

According to A.K. Fayemi (2009), democracy is defined in consonance with whether the scholars are in the

minimalist or maximalist school of thought. The likes of J. Schumpeter (1950) a minimalist, will opine that democracy is not really about rule of the people, for him, it is simply “a method by which decision-making is transferred to individuals who have gained power in a competitive struggle for the votes of the citizens.” Maximalists who are mostly Neo-liberals on the other hand, have countered this narrow conception of democracy. For them, democracy that does not guarantee civil liberties is not a democracy. Hence, the likes of Robert Dahl will name three essential elements for a system to be democratic. They are: a) extensive competition by political candidates, b) political participation of the electorate in free and fair elections, and c) civil liberties in form of freedom of expression without fear of punishment (R. Dahl, 1971:221). In our opinion, it is in the maximalist perspective of democracy that democratic practice in Africa is found wanting.

Central Africa: Central Africa, which is alternatively referred to as ‘Middle Africa’, a term quite peculiar to the United Nations categorization of that area, comprises of countries such as: Angola, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo (Zaire), Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Sao Tome and Principe. The population combined in that region is about 120 million. Democratic Republic of Congo seems to be the most populated with an approximate population size of 71, 712, 867, while Sao Tome and Principe is the least populated (World Map, 2012).

Middle Africa is predominantly inhabited by the Bantu people while the common languages in that area include Chadian and Nilo-Saharan. The common religion of Central Africa is Christianity. However, it is not out of place to find the practice of traditional African religion and Islam. The region was predominantly colonized by the French, but some parts also fell under British and Belgian influence. Their major economic activities include farming, fishing and herding (World Map, 2012). Like most parts of Africa, Middle Africa has also been faced with its own political challenges which can be primarily traced to an improper integration and internalization of democratic ideals and principles. The political condition of some countries in that region will be examined during the course of this work as a way of case study in order to give a clear view of the subject matter.

East Africa: There are indeed opposing views as to which countries constitute East Africa apart from the three traditionally recognized countries *ab initio*. The three traditional countries include: Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya. The precise geographical location of countries such as Rwanda, Zimbabwe, and Burundi has been disputed (E.Chigozie, 2013). However, we shall adopt the official list adopted by the United Nations for the purpose of this work. The countries that constitute Eastern Africa according to this list include the following: Burundi, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Djibouti, Comoros, Madagascar, Somalia, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Seychelles, Reunion, South Sudan,

Mayotte, Malawi, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Mauritius (E. Chigozie, 2013).

In terms of the modern history of man, Eastern Africa bears a lot of relevance to anthropological insights to human evolution and development. It is purported that the first group of modern man *Homo Sapiens* first lived in the area now called Eastern Africa. This is partly due to the discoveries of fossil and early tools used by the ancestors of modern man made at the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania. In terms of their colonial history, many of the countries share the same colonial masters. Some of the colonial imperialists that held sway in the Eastern African region include: Germany, Britain, Portugal, Belgium and France (E. Chigozie, 2013). East African countries are also well known for their cultural and religious diversity. This fact which is something to be proud of has sometimes degenerated into violence even to the point of ethnic cleansing and genocide, such as the case of Rwanda in 1994. Another salient factor is the volatile political climate of some of the countries which shall be examined later during the course of this work.

III. THEORETICAL APPROACH

Some scholars have expressed the intransigencies involved in the application of conventional theories in International Relations to peculiar contexts such as Africa. The conventional theories seem to cater only for relations among domineering countries who are well established in the international system. The smaller countries are often overlooked, and presumed to be only pawns in the game of international diplomacy (E. Meierding, 2010; Lemke 2003). This assertion seems to be extended also to the various approaches involved in the study of foreign policy. However, a critical look at the approaches will reveal that there are indeed points of convergence that can be applied to the African political climate. The major approach we shall be examining for analysis which has a strong relation with the subject matter is the “Domestic Structure Approach” propagated by Henry Kissinger.

The approach essentially argues that the structure and internal dynamics of the domestic order, in terms of the affairs of sovereign states, plays a primary role in the way such states would behave in the international system. States with a well-organized internal administrative/bureaucratic and leadership structure have a higher tendency of having a more stable and coherent foreign policy than states whose foreign policy is left to the whims of a few individuals and often based on exegetical occurrences (H. Kissinger, 1966: 503-506). Kissinger proceeded to explain the two major factors that influence foreign policy within the domestic order—the administrative structure and the leadership style of which the latter seems to wield a lot of influence. Under the leadership style, Kissinger also identified three various types which are: the Bureaucratic/Pragmatic type, the Ideological type, and the Charismatic/Revolutionary type (H. Kissinger, 1966: 518-

524). The type which is most suiting for our analysis is the ideological type of leadership.

What we discover in most African States is that the leadership personality seems to be more influential than the so called administrative structure. In fact, the person in power translates whatever data is made available to him in the manner that suites his plans for the conduct of foreign policy. In many African States, including those under the spectrum, the bureaucratic/administrative structure in the conduct of foreign policy is not yet fully matured. In fact, the leadership seems to hold a monopoly of power on decisions regarding international diplomacy. Hence, what we see in many African states is the one-way domineering influence of the persons in power. The ideological type of leadership which though was more in reference to Communist countries such as Russia and China as explained by Kissinger, still remains very relevant to the countries under case study. The premise of Kissinger that ideology which is often an objective norm to which leadership must conform, and which plays a major role in the determination of the foreign policy of those countries, may not be applicable to the African countries under the microscope. In those African countries, if there is any existence of an ideology, it is basically that of the individual on the seat of power which makes it subjective.

The part of ideological leadership which is very relevant to the African political climate is the explanation of Kissinger as regards the behaviour of leaders in such domestic climates whose ultimate interest is the acquisition of power at any cost. This often leads to the elimination of any perceived threat to their aspirations. Human rights are violated, while any peaceful protest is often viewed with suspicion leading to killings and maiming of individuals by the government and seat of power. The leaders appear to be unemotional and insensitive to the wishes of the people, and their only driving force is how to acquire power unchallenged (H. Kissinger 1966: 521). This description fits the conduct of politics among the case study countries in Africa. In most of these countries, the respect for human rights is at low ebb, while elimination of opponents and any perceived threat is the norm. The lust for, and the addiction to power is a rampant mentality among most of the leaders. This explains why power is extremely centralized and why the bureaucratic structure is not given the space to mature because if it does, that could hamper the claims of the leader to absolute power. This approach shall therefore be the basis for the analysis of the foreign policy of the countries involved.

IV. THE RISE OF DEMOCRATIC DIPLOMACY IN GLOBAL POLITICS

Democratic diplomacy in reality was not a novel development in global politics before the end of Cold War. It was indeed the norm in most European countries (Western Europe precisely, because Eastern Europe before the end of Cold War were shifting towards Communism) and in the United States of America (E. Toyor, 2000). In actual fact,

most countries who did not embrace Communist ideals fell under the influence of Democracy, including smaller states in the international space. The spread of democracy as an ideal form of government was partly aided by the predominance of Colonialism/Imperialism at least, before the wave of Independence swept across colonized countries. The spread of Democratic Diplomacy can however, be traced to the end of the Cold War which saw to the collapse of Communism and the consolidation of U.S.A. position as a world power (A.K. Fayemi 2009). In fact, the phenomenon in the field of International Relations is described as the fall a Bipolar world system and the rise of a Unipolar world system. The phenomenon, according to Mittleman (quoted by M. Abutudu, 2000), is also associated with the process of 'globalization' which he describes as "an emerging worldwide preference for democracy and the evolution of a global civil society which are pointers to the emergence of a consensus of standards in the international political sphere".

This phenomenon was also well endorsed and perpetuated by scholars such as F. Fukuyama who declared that liberal democracy has emerged victorious and it was in fact the end of human history because this for him marked the end of contending ideologies and the dominance of liberal democracy (F. Fukuyama, 1992 : xv). In his opinion, the industrial development of the world followed a particular pattern of which the leading capitalist states were the harbingers. He further argued that the process set in motion would eventually lead to the homogenization of the world; a uniform conformity to Capitalist and democratic ideals as the standard of economic and political development irrespective of race, culture or ethnic affiliations. He further stated that all states undergoing economic modernization must increasingly bear semblance with one another in terms of the replacement of traditional ideals with economically rational ones based on function and efficiency. Hence, attributes such as Urbanization and Centralized States must be *sine qua non* to development in any state under the influence of liberal democracy and capitalism (F. Fukuyama 1992: xiv).

What we have observed since the late 90's is an increased preference for democratic rule as the ideal form of government, even among hitherto Communist diehards. Hence, hitherto Communist regimes in Eastern Europe were speedily dissolved in favour of anti-Communist governments. This happened in countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary. Meanwhile, the Gorbachev regime speedily dismantled Communist structures, especially the Communist Party influence in Russia, and encouraged the erosion of Communism in other Soviet countries, including their clients in Africa, Asia and Latin America, therefore, bringing an end to the Warsaw Pact (V.V. Aspaturian, 1992:144). However, irrespective of these happenings, we cannot say Russia has whole heartedly embraced the Democratic process as government still remains highly centralized and authoritarian. Notwithstanding, we see some democratic elements at play irrespective of the hostilities towards opposition by the Putin government. At least, we can

say that the prior emphasis on Marxist-Leninist ideology as the guiding principle in Communist Russia has gradually become comatose (V.V. Aspaturian, 1992:146). One can therefore conclude that the universal consciousness towards democratic ideals is already formed, though we cannot say it has been consolidated and totally accepted in all parts of the world. This leads us to the next sub topic which brings Africa under the radar.

V. DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE IN AFRICA: CENTRAL AND EAST AFRICA AS A CASE STUDY

Since the beginning of the early 90's, democracies swept across the African continent like a tidal wave. This was basically due to some prevailing factors, mostly beyond the control of the leaderships of those countries. The International Economic Agencies somewhat aided in the democratization process in Africa by making the adoption of such a system of government a prerequisite for the reception of economic aid. Coupled with this was the intolerance of the West for the autocratic and dictatorial regimes predominant in Africa as at then, with the wanton disregard for human rights. In past years, the preoccupation of European and North American countries in their relations with Africa were basically about trade and politics, but these changed with the collapse of Communism and the end of the Cold War (S. Wright, 1992:351). Some of the monumental events that took place during the period of the entrenchment of democracy in Africa included: the Algerian riots of 1988, the release of ex-president Nelson Mandela of South Africa in 1990, and the annulment of the 1993 presidential elections in Nigeria. These events aided in no small measure in the shaping of democracy in Africa (A.A. Adegboye, 2013).

The factors that led to the spread of Democracy in Africa can be grouped into internal and external factors. Internally; within the continent, the most evident factors included issues relating to poor leadership such as administrative inefficiency, political corruption, economic mismanagement and social decay in terms of poor infrastructure and decaying social amenities. These further undermined the authority of autocratic regimes, spurring a somewhat rampart call for democratic rule (A.A. Adegboye, 2013). Externally, the speedy overhaul of dictatorial regimes was instigated by pressures from international organizations and superpowers that began to lay emphasis on the universal rights of human freedom and dignity. This was facilitated by the promise of improved bilateral relations with African countries who embraced democracy and toppled dictatorial regimes (A.K Fayemi, 2009). These factors to a large extent aided in the preponderance of democracy in Africa. Paradoxically, we cannot say the adoption of democratic ideals has simultaneously led to the development of most African countries. The democratic terrain in Africa is so uneven that it swings like a pendulum from promising democracies such as Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, Mauritius and South Africa to quasi-democracies such as Chad, Gabon and Burkina Faso. Of course it does not mean these countries have

attained perfection in democratic practice, for they are also bedeviled with various challenges, but in comparison to some other countries such as Zimbabwe, DR Congo, and Burundi, they indeed seem to be faring well (A.A. Adegboye, 2013).

For the purpose of this work, we shall be taking a look at some countries in Eastern and Central Africa to see how well democratic principles have indeed been internalized. We shall basically be focusing on the issue of the craze for 'Third Term' and the 'Cling-on' to power that is predominant among leaders of some countries in those regions. Precisely, the countries we shall be looking at include: DR Congo, Zimbabwe, Burundi and Rwanda in order to help streamline our scope of enquiry for a more profound analysis. These countries shall now be examined one after the other.

VI. THE THIRD TERM ISSUES IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Kabila, who has been in power since the assassination of his father in 2001 was due to hand over power in November 2016, but to the expectation of the populace, he decided to stay on in power for no viable reason and this has sparked so much dissent within the polity.

A report by the Amnesty International released on 26th of November 2015 report activities of the Kabila regime geared towards the elimination and silencing of opponents through the instrumentality of the National Intelligence Agency (ANC). The report alleges the indiscriminate arrests of opposition and those who openly criticize his ambition to remain President. It also accuses the President of the wanton violation and disregard for human rights concretized in the unfair manner opponents are treated and actions geared towards the suppression of freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. Some of the reasons provided to this allusion, according to a researcher, Sarah Jackson (quoted by F. Oluoch, 2015) was the fact that a controversial bill was passed before the National Assembly that same month which was about the carrying out of a census exercise which would extend beyond November 2016. Many perceived the bill to be a subtle way to delay legislative and presidential elections in November which was actually the case as Kabila obstinately refused to hold elections in December 2016 after the expiration of his tenure. Since 2017, pressure has been mounting on Kabila to step down honourably, thereby, plunging the region into crisis of which approximately one million people were displaced in the first half of 2017 (The Economist, Jan, 2018). On New Year's Eve in January 2018, about seven people were killed in protests against the government and it went on to culminate into the burning of one of Kabila's numerous properties in North Kivu (The Economist, Jan, 2018). Despite pressures from International Bodies like the United Nations and the apparent weakening of his grip on power, President Kabila has simply refused to budge, preferring to see out his collapsing hold on the affairs of the country.

Some of the actions taken by the Kabila government which show increased intolerance for opposition and activists who openly declare their lack of support for Kabila's perceived intention for a third term include: the case of one Jean-Bertrand Ewanga, a member of parliament and the secretary general of the opposition party named Union pour la Nation Congolaise (UNC) who was arrested and sentenced to one year imprisonment for insulting the President, Prime Minister, and the Presidents of the Senate and National Assembly. Another instance were the cases of Jean-Claude Muyambo and Vano Kiboko who were actually a part of the ruling coalition but were actually hooked for speaking out against any third term ambition by the President. The trial of Muyambo is ongoing while Kiboko was sentenced to three years imprisonment in a trial, according to eyewitnesses, riddled with irregularities (F. Oluoch, 2015). Even the judiciary seems to have been bought over, as they are openly used by the government to convict their perceived enemies. If all organs of the state who are supposed to champion the cause of citizens become biased, what hope is there for the *hoi polloi* (common masses)?

VII. THE CASE OF BURUNDI

Early in the month of May 2015, the constitutional court of Burundi ruled that the incumbent, President Pierre Nkurunziza was certified to run for a third term. This ruling did not go down well with the populace and there were protests across the country. Also, the deputy president of the court who fled to Rwanda before the ruling had named the court decision as unconstitutional, violating the provisions of the Arusha Peace Agreement (A. Kajee, 2015). The protests against President Nkurunziza which started in the major urban areas of Burundi in places such as Bujumbura, led to the death of about 20 persons while about 50,000 persons fled the country for fear of the crackdown on opposition and protesters by the government. The arrests carried out by the government also showed a great disregard for human rights principles. In fact, it was alleged that the youth wing of the ruling party had become a viable weapon in the hands of the government to carry out its atrocities against the poor and helpless masses. The youth wing of the ruling party named *Imbonerakure* had been alleged to use tactics which are oppressive in nature to deal with opposition (A. Kajee, 2015). The police had also been accused of using unorthodox methods in dealing with uprisings in the country.

The reports that were provided and given to the United Nations Security Council contain testimonies of how the Nkurunziza administration has systematically and silently been eliminating opposition since 2010. The report gave evidence of how about twenty-two opposition leaders in Burundi have been assassinated since 2010, and the transformation of the *Imbonerakure* into a group synonymous with a militia force. It was alleged the members of the group had been sent to Democratic Republic of Congo to be trained in the use of arms, and have been increasingly armed by the Nkurunziza government to perpetuate the wishes of the

government (A. Kajee, 2015). The question that comes to mind is what would inform the transformation of a supposed political party to a strike force? This is obviously an aberration in the political process of democratic integration. It shows a gross lacuna in the understanding of true democratic ideals among many African leaders.

The masses in most of these African countries have however, continuously shown their distaste for dictatorial tendencies and their commitment to democratic norms. In Burundi for example, there was an attempt by the military to seize power from Nkurunziza in 2015 while he was attending a meeting in Tanzania and hand over government affairs to a transitional government. This military coup attempt by former chief of army staff, Godefroid Niyombara though was greeted with jubilation by Burundians, but was not able to hold out as a result of rival factions within the army, especially those loyal to Nkurunziza (A. Kajee, 2015).

The latest development by Nkurunziza to strengthen his grip on his hold to power is his attempt to initiate a new draft constitution in this month of May, 2018 of which the citizens are bound to vote in a constitutional referendum. If this constitutional draft is accepted, President Nkurunziza may have been given the leeway to stay on till 2034 (Muvunyi, 2018). Despite Nkurunziza's obstinacy in holding on to power, the fortunes of the country do not seem to improve, as the country remains one of the world's poorest, lacking foreign exchange, food and fuel. Approximately 20% of the country's population (about 3.6 million people) is in need of humanitarian assistance (Muvunyi, 2018). One may therefore ask the question – 'What benefit does Nkurunziza's holding on to power serve to ameliorate his country's problems?'

VIII. CLINGING ON TO POWER OF MUGABE IN ZIMBABWE

Another amusing case is that of President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. The President has been in power since 1980, beginning as a Prime Minister, and then becoming President of the country in 1987 under the auspices of the ZANU-PF party in which he has held sway for over 36 years as leader. Despite his prolonged stay in power, President Mugabe who recently celebrated his 92 birthday sometime in March, 2016 has continued to voice his intention to cling on to power (R. Dixon, The Los Angeles Times, 2016). The reality is that Zimbabwe has continued to experience serious economic recession during Mugabe's tenure with problems such as hyperinflation in which the Zimbabwean Dollar was abandoned for the American Dollar sometime in 2009. So also, are the flimsy accusations tendered by Mugabe's government on opponents and perceived threats such as the case of one Mrs. Mujuru who was his former deputy of the ZANU-PF party, but was expelled from the party on allegations of corruption and threats of assassination on the life of President Mugabe. However, the woman seems to be building a formidable opposition against the leading ZANU-PF party by establishing her own opposition party named

‘Zimbabwe People First’ (R. Dixon, The Los Angeles Times, 2016).

Since the commencement of his tenure, Mugabe has increasingly shown his disdain for Western policies in Africa. His foreign policy towards the West has therefore not been cordial. As a result of this, the West, especially the USA, have increasingly been looking for means to sanction the Mugabe administration, describing his government as “an unusual and extraordinary threat” to American foreign policy. America has been pushing for a sanction of Mugabe administration since 2003 on allegations of human rights violations and electoral fraud (R. Dixon, The Los Angeles Times, 2016). However, these are yet to bear any tangible action taken against the government.

The Mugabe regime has also shown its lack of respect for human rights and dignity. Since the year 2000, Mugabe has continued to clamp down on any perceived opposition. These include: the arrest and torture of Trade Unionists, the seizure of farms belonging to white owners, and the destruction of property belonging to the main opposition party, MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) by the ZANU-PF supporters such as the destruction of their office building in Gokwe. He also went on to ban the various press organizations in the country such as the Daily News and the BBC. Finally, Mugabe refused to accept the election results held in 2002 in which the MDC clearly won and forced the country into an alliance government in which he still held influence (R. Grace, 2002). Mugabe continued to defy calls for his resignation in the face of his declining health and the political/economic turmoil he has plunged the country into.

The end eventually came for President Mugabe in November, 2017 when in a peaceful military *coup d’etat* supervised by Head of Military, Constantino Chiwenga, he was silently removed from power and placed under house arrest by the military while the former Vice President, Emmerson Mnangagwa, who Mugabe had fired the previous year for accusations of insubordination, was placed in charge (Reuters Nov. 26, 2017). Insider reports alleged that the end came for Mugabe when he sacked Mnangagwa who had better links and connections with the military being a former security chief. Mugabe saw Mnangagwa as a threat to his wife’s aspiration to becoming the leader of the ZANU-PF party and also the succeeding President after Mugabe; a plan which many of Mugabe’s political cohorts were not pleased with. To a large extent, Mugabe was able to sustain his hold on power as a result of help from the military. Hence, dismissing Mnangagwa meant a breach in relations with the army and this facilitated his removal (Reuters, Nov. 26, 2017).

For Zimbabweans it was a dream come true; a worthy price marked by several years of struggle for true democracy. Indeed, the case of Zimbabwe appears to be one of the few instances of the victory of democratic ideals in Africa. However, if this seeming victory of democracy remains the case in Zimbabwe, only time will tell.

IX. THIRD TERM ISSUES IN RWANDA

In a different twist of events however, the third term bid of the incumbent President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame which he eventually won in August, 2017, was alleged to be the wish of the people and not self-incited. In the beginning of the year 2016, the Rwandan legislature made some changes to the constitution that would allow the President to run for a third term in 2017 with a referendum vote. The President has been in power since 2000 of which a single term extends to as much as seven years (Y. Adegoke, 2016).

In a distinct fashion from all other countries that have been examined, it is alleged that the people rather support the continuation of the President’s stay in office, citing the turnaround of the country’s fortunes since he assumed office in 2000, especially from the horrifying experiences of the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Kagame, speaking on the floor of the World Economic Forum early 2016 which had the likes of former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair in attendance, said that his decision to run for a third term was simply because he was respecting the wish the people who despite his initial refusal to the whole matter, expressed their wish to have him continue as President of the country. He said he was simply doing it for the sake of democracy (Y. Adegoke, 2016). Quoting the words of the President, he said: “I didn’t ask for this... I said maybe you need to take a risk with someone else, but they kept saying no we want you to stay” (Y. Adegoke, 2016). The West, most especially the USA was however, not in support of Kagame’s bid for a third term. Their concern is less about the influence and popular support the President has among the people of Rwanda, but more about the signal this would send to other African leaders, especially those who happen to be neighbours to Rwanda. Of course, unlike most other African countries where the Presidents are unwanted, Kagame seems to enjoy a considerable level of support from the populace. The President has however, made it clear that it is not about the wish of external bodies or countries, but it is basically about Rwandans directing their own destinies in accord with their preferred choices (Y. Adegoke, 2016). The question, however, is “Is the call to stay on in office not itself appealing to Kagame?” the likes of Nelson Mandela and Julius Nyerere were pressurized to stay on in office, but they simply declined for the sake of the respect of democratic principles. Therefore, if the thought of staying on in power was not alluring to President Kagame himself, no amount of pressure could make him yield. It appears that he himself finds the thought of it appealing.

In an attempt to conceptualize the subject matter, Daniel N. Posner and Daniel J. Young (2007), cite certain factors that may encourage the continuous stay of leaders in government. They are as follows:

- Leaders who have the perception that they are popular and well-loved by the people have the highest tendency to seek a third term. Leaders on the other hand who believe they have overstayed their

welcome in the manner the people react towards them have lesser propensities to seek a third term. The authors site the cases of ArapMoi of Kenya who stepped down in 1997 as result of perceived unpopularity, and the case of Nujoma of Namibia who decided to push for a third term in 1999 after winning 76% votes in 1994. This premise has however proved not to always be the case, as recent occurrences fault this. Examples are Kabila of Congo and Nkurunziza of Burundi who keep pushing for a third term despite their unpopularity among their people.

- The second factor has to do with the expected benefits of staying in power. It is believed, based on the research carried out by the authors that younger presidents may have a higher tendency to stay on in power than the older ones as result of the weighing of the advantages and disadvantages of staying out of power, and fear of the unknown, such as prosecutions after retirement from office. While these may be true in some instances such as that of Kabila in Congo, the reality in Zimbabwe seems to be an exception, as the President seemed to be fascinated with the of dying in office.
- The third factor is related to the level of susceptibility of a country to foreign aid or not. In the assumptions of the authors, the more likely a country is heavily reliant on foreign aid relative to their GDP, the less likely the leaders are to seek elongation of their tenures, based on the pressure from international bodies. Those who receive less attention from the West, however, are more likely to seek prolonged stay in office because the pressure from international bodies is less likely to influence their economic activities. This fact may actually be true in some instances such as Nigeria who are heavily reliant on oil and American foreign aid. The international pressures experienced from the West and the internal agitations ensured that the third term bid of President Obasanjo did not materialize. However, there is the heavy presence of expatriate farmers in Zimbabwe, this did not in any way mitigate Mugabe's quest to remain in office. He rather continued to suppress foreign investments of those who opposed him in his country.

These factors have, however, given insights into reasons why some presidents may want to continue their stay in office. Apart from these, there are deeper issues rooted in the mentality of African leaders about how the political terrain of their respective countries should be organized based on primordial conceptions of the African State. We shall examine some of these factors under the next subtopic as a way of giving a critique of the issue at stake.

X. CRITIQUE OF DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE IN AFRICA

Taking a look at the somewhat univocal occurrence of a strong expression of tenacity and will in holding on to power among many African leaders, many scholars, after series of analysis and thorough examination of the related issues, have reached a conclusion that it is an issue closely tied to the development of the political institution in Africa. In other words, there has been a difficulty in most Africans, in dissociating themselves from primordial and pre-colonial structures of government that were erstwhile in existence. While we have externally accepted Western principles in our political sphere, that physical acceptance has not been coupled with a psychological restructuring in accepting the new political dispensation.

Scholars such as Simiyu (1987) and Mackintosh (1966) have argued that pre-colonial African societies did not provide for the formalization of checks and balances on the exercise of power into actual institutions. Hence, the conventions upon which democratic principles operate in the West have no roots in the African experience of political life. Arguing further, they are of the view that colonialism did not meet a strong democratic base in Africa. What they met in existence were some forms of rudimentary democracy (such as the Igbo society in Nigeria) and some forms of despotism. In most parts of Africa, the societies were basically geared towards 'Gerontocracy' in which the society was arranged in a hierarchical manner with little or no horizontal checks and balances. The monarchs and their chiefs enjoyed unwavering obedience and respect. If there were to be checks in any manner, it was often among the royalties and chiefdoms, the commoners had little or no say. It is alleged that it is this same mentality that has been transferred to modern politics and democratic practice.

Looking at the same issue from another angle, one can argue that in most Western countries, democracy as an ideal was allowed to grow and develop in the consciousness of the people as distinct from Africa. Some internal occurrences such as the Renaissance and Industrialization within European countries led to the acceptance of democracy as the ideal form of government because it is not the case that the modern West didn't pass through what some African countries are passing through. They experienced Monarchisms and some form of authoritarian rule one way or the other. Where the difference lies is that while democracy as an ideal was a concept that developed from within in the West, ours (Africans) was prematurely imposed upon us from without as a result of Western Imperialism. We did not have that luxury to determine our own political destiny. Hence, there has been a difficulty in totally abandoning the political dispensation we were used to. We are somewhat fixated, refusing to advance to the next level of political development.

While we accept the fact that democracy is an imposed system and the fact that we were not well groomed in its practice, we cannot say that because of these state of affairs, democracy should be expunged from Africa. In fact, as argued by the likes of Claude Ake (1990) and P.A.Nyongo

(1992), they opine that democracy is a prerequisite for development in Africa. They state that it is difficult to expect socio-economic development in a country where the leaders are not accountable to the people and where they think they are overlords who can do as they please. In such situations, there is bound to be mismanagement of resources to please the whims and caprices of the leaders since they possess absolute power without questioning. The question therefore is how Africa can adopt a democratic system that suits her terrain and would still yield the desired effect?

The likes of A.K. Fayemi (2009) have suggested a form of democracy he calls 'eclecticism'. This form of democracy takes into cognizance, the unique cultures and environment where democracy is been practiced. It emphasizes the need of adapting democracy to a particular socio-cultural milieu by borrowing from other cultures and also utilizing the unique properties of a particular culture in formulating a formidable and efficient democratic dispensation in a particular country. Fayemi notes that the wholesome adaptation of liberal democracies of the West cannot totally be beneficial to Africa because it is a democracy that developed in accord with their unique culture and social organization. However, we can borrow some positive elements from them, and blend them with our own unique environment. As a way of concretizing this, he suggests that some of the errors of liberal democracy which places so much emphasis on individualism and growth based on capitalist ideals such as: high GDP, competition, and survival of the fittest should be replaced with African principles based on 'Communalism' where everyone in the society is treated as an equal based on a system of justice and equality. It should be a system where emphasis on individual wealth and accumulation is totally reduced to a state of insignificance. At the same time, Fayemi endorses the adoption of some liberal democratic principles such as equality, freedom and respect for human rights and dignity. He disapproves of pre-colonial African political structures that supported authoritarianism and the oppression of the common man. It is believed that an African democracy which takes all these into consideration will be able to surmount the problems associated with democratic practice in Africa.

XI. CONCLUSION

From all that has been enumerated thus far, the following implications for the African continent can be deduced which could aid us in resolving our peculiar political challenges. Some of these include the following:

- Liberal democracy as a political ideal and as we have it in contemporary practice is basically the brainchild of the West.
- Democratic Diplomacy was embarked upon by the West in order to consolidate their domination of global politics and to sound a death knell to the advancement of Communism in global politics.

- It was almost impossible for Africa to resist the adoption of democracy as a political ideal as a result of our colonial precedents and our continuous reliance on them for foreign aid and development. Coupled with this was the failure of most autocratic and dictatorial regimes to aid the process of development among their respective countries.
- The adoption of democracy has unfortunately not led to a translation of development for most African states, while many African leaders have embarked upon a counter revolution to modify democracy to suite their interests and perceived ideals.
- For democracy to achieve expected results in the African continent there has to be a strand of democracy that takes cognizance of socio-cultural realities within the continent, and at the same time borrows from democratic ideals present in other cultures.

It is praiseworthy that despite the aberrations and abuses we see in the practice of democracy in Africa, the masses know what it truly is to be in a democratic dispensation and are geared towards the resistance of dictatorship and oppressive regimes. In fact, autocratic regimes seem to be taking a back sit and are speedily becoming anachronistic. Hence, a new wave of democratic consciousness is sweeping across Africa and the whole world, paving way for a new global political dispensation.

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