

Third Termism in Africa: View from the African Cultural Lenses

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Abstract

The failure of African leaders to hand over power when their mandatory term of office is over is becoming commonplace. This scenario has painted a bleak picture of the African continent on the international scene especially in the Western World. Many reasons such as abuse of state resources and fear of prosecution, no strong opposition, lack of succession plan, deliberate refusal to step down because of despotic and kleptocratic tendencies, addiction to resources and power, amongst others have been adduced in the existing literature to explain why the practice has become too often and prolonged. This paper argues that complete transportation of Western Democracy on Africans is a potential reason for this development. Democracy is the culture of the West and therefore, represents their way of life which cannot be purely implanted on Africans who have varied and unique cultures. I argue that Africa needs to redefine Democracy.

Keywords

Democracy, Third-Termism, Culture, Development, African

1. Introduction

Soon after Africa gained its independence from its colonial masters, many of its countries that embraced democracy as a system of rule went for presidential system of government (Dulani, 2011; Tull & Simons, 2017) guided by multi-party democratic values. However, few years after this, many African countries turned themselves into one-party states. The proponents of this idea argued that multi-partism was divisive and unhealthy for Africa and therefore, saw one-party system as rather democratic and a representation of African way of life (Chazan et al., 1992). But this very system of government bore its own seed of destruction as it engendered opposition within and without which finally beckoned military

coup d'états in Africa.

The period 1960s when Africa gained independence up to the ending years of the 1980s, saw Africa practice repressive one-party system of government alongside military regimes (Omotola, 2011). From the 1990s onwards, a period that witnessed the collapse of communism and the emergence of democracy as the most popular and preferred form of government (Leon, 2011; Genyi, 2015), a period characteristically described by Huntington as the third wave of democracy (Swift, 2002; Genyi, 2015), saw a lot of pressure being mounted on African countries to embrace liberal democracy (Tangri & Nwanda, 2011).

Cardinal amongst the features of a liberal democracy is a presidential term limit (Dulani, 2011). This presidential term limit gives the longevity and how many times one can stand for president. Since it is very cardinal, African countries that embraced liberal democracy have to introduce it as part of their constitutions and the rationale for doing this is to prevent a single individual from ruling in perpetuity. However, three decades of liberal democracy in Africa, the continent is witnessing the ugly upsurge of many African presidents prolonging their tenure of office beyond the widely accepted two terms being practiced in the Western World. This practice is variously described as third-term agenda (Tull & Simons, 2017), Constitutional "Coup" (Omotola, 2011; Genyi, 2015) and sit tight syndrome (Opeyemi, 2018).

Indeed, the failure of many African leaders to hand over power when their two mandatory terms of office are over has become too common and a torn in the flesh of the continent. This scenario has painted a bleak picture of the Africa continent on the international scene, especially the western world. Various reasons have been offered by scholars such as addiction to resources and power, lack of succession plan, fear of being prosecuted, no strong opposition, difficulty in coping as an ordinary citizen, and limited career opportunities for ex-presidents in Africa amongst others (Tangri & Nwanda, 2011; Dulani, 2011; Chivanza, 2020) as the factors identified in the existing literature to explain why the practice has become too often and prolong in Africa.

With the above as the basis, this paper argues that complete transplantation of Western Democracy on Africans is a potential reason for third termism in Africa. The obvious reason is that democracy is a culture and it is the culture of the west. As a culture, it denotes the beliefs and way of life of the west and so since Africans have unique cultures different from that of the Western World, then pure transportation and transplanting of western democracy, which includes presidential term limit in its purity on Africans are not possible and would not thrive. This is because when it comes to governance and development, culture is the overarching factor and it is culture that makes all the difference (Landes, 1998) and on the basis of this, one of the world renowned Economists, David Landes opined that if there is anything for mankind to learn from the history of economic development, then it is that culture makes all the difference (Landes, 1998).

Despite the crucial and fundamental role culture plays in a nation's history, governance and development, earlier scholars who explained why African leaders find ways and means of prolonging their tenure of office beyond the two terms, grossly overlooked or paid very little attention to Culture. This is the gap this paper attempts to fill in the existing literature as a way of contextualizing and upgrading the conversation on third termism in Africa. In this case this paper argues that no matter the number of reasons given for third termism in Africa, culture is the dominant and overarching factor.

This paper is in seven (7) parts: the first is the introduction ; the second briefly reviewed literature on democracy and presidential term limit in Africa, the third deals with the various methods and tactics adopted by African leaders to prolong their tenure of office to third term and sometimes beyond; the fourth part examines the various factors identified by earlier scholars as being responsible for the emergence and upsurge of third termism on the African Continent; the fifth part describes and discusses the cultural dichotomy between Africa and the Western world which makes it difficult to practice the pure form of western democracy in Africa of which a presidential term limit is part; the sixth part concludes that pure western democracy cannot work perfectly in Africa and so the way forward is that Africa must redefine its own democracy to suit its varied and unique culture, hence consensual democracy has been suggested as the seventh part.

2. Brief Literature Review on Democracy and Presidential Term Limit in Africa

Many Africans were made to believe that liberal democracy was the panacea to the numerous African problems. A lot of African countries embraced liberal democracy as a matter of survival, however, three decades afterwards, [Lumumba-Kasongo \(2005\)](#) argued that there are scanty results to show. This opinion is partly shared by [Gyimah-Boadi \(2015\)](#) when he observed that many African countries embraced democracy from the 1990's up to the 2000's but soon afterwards the process slowed down and even in some places there have been reversals. This became so because many governments were not accountable and responsive to the needs of their citizens as corruption became endemic. Additionally, [Zamfir \(2016\)](#) has also observed how many African countries made progress in democracy by upholding presidential term limit, but others have reversed their democratic credentials by circumventing term limits, creating mixed results in Africa.

Indeed, the main aim for introducing term limits in democracy is to prevent one person from ruling forever, indicating that no one person has the requisite qualities to rule ([Dulani, 2011](#)). Similarly, presidential term limits do not constrain one person from ruling in perpetuity but also it offers the opportunity for party alternation of power ([Maltz, 2007](#)). Notwithstanding the good intentions of presidential term limits, in Africa, the phenomenon has been deteriorating re-

flecting how corrupt the leaders, who have reduced civil liberties and thereby weakening democracy in Africa (Siegle & Cook, 2021).

Despite the worsening nature of term limit in Africa, Yarwood (2016) thinks that there is light at the end of the tunnel as opposition leaders and Civil Society Organizations oppose to such moves. On the basis of the above arguments, Reyntjens (2016) decided to test whether there is a positive correlation between presidential term limit and quality of democracy in Africa. He found that democratic quality has a determining impact on the maintenance of presidential term limit.

3. The Methods of Securing Third Term and Beyond: The African Experience

One of the cardinal principles of liberal democracy that was embraced by Africa from the 1990s onwards was presidential term limit, which prescribed the maximum term limit for presidents (Omotola, 2011) and it is mostly two terms (Opeyemi, 2018). However, elected presidents in Africa have devised a different means of prolonging power and personal rule, which is mostly referred to as Constitutional Coups or third term bid. This enabled incumbent presidents that have exhausted their term limits to still contest for elections for the third term or more, thereby reversing the gear back to the practice that existed before the 1990s.

Indeed, before the arrival and receipt of liberal democracy in Africa, many African countries were either under one-party system or a military regime. These types of governments offered the opportunity for many incumbent presidents to prolong their tenure and ruled in perpetuity. This was the evil that the presidential term limit in liberal democracy was meant to cure. However, the introduction of term limit did not change the narratives as many African Presidents also discovered a clever Constitutional means of setting aside the Constitutional term limits.

The process of seeking a third term or more mostly begins by testing the grounds to see if the idea would go through especially when elected presidents are in their second term. When the signs are positive, then a legislative instrument is prepared and sent to parliament for the amendment to be effected. Largely however, according to Dulani (2011) the methods of amendments took the following forms. First, totally abolished term limit to enable incumbent president to contest elections in perpetuity. This is exemplified by Ayedema of Togo in 2002 and Museveni of Uganda in 2005, when they amended their countries' constitutions by dropping term limit to enable them contest elections as many times as possible. Secondly, the maximum number of allowable terms is increased. For example, if the maximum number of allowable term is two (2), then the constitution can be amended to extend it to three (3), so that it could give the incumbent president an opportunity to run for a third term. In the Comoros, president Assoumani amended the constitution to contest for a

second consecutive time instead of once that has been postulated by the constitution. Another thing is to amend the constitution and declare it as new and therefore nullify prior or previous terms served by sitting presidents and offer them the opportunity to start afresh. For example in 2016, Ivory Coast amended their constitution and for that matter president Alhassane Ouattara interpreted that as a new constitution and so he refused all advice from friends and contested the third term in 2020. In the same way, in 2019 in Togo, a two term presidential limit was re-introduced and so Eyedema has cancelled all the years he has served as a president since 2002 and contested elections in Togo in 2020. Additionally, others increased the length of the presidential term to allow for an extended tenure without necessarily removing the term limit. This was the case of Guinea when Conde extended a presidential term from five (5) to seven (7) and that enabled him contest the third term time.

As at the end of 2020, as many as twenty-four (24) Sub-Saharan countries have made final attempts to change their constitutions through parliament. Four (4) countries amendments did not go through. They include Zambia under Chuliba in 2001, Malawi under Bakili Mulizi in 2002, Nigeria under Obasanjo in 2006 and in Burkina Faso under Blaise Comptore in 2014 (Tull & Simons, 2017). On the other hand, however, twenty (20) sitting presidents succeeded their third term bid.

Even after manipulating for the constitution to be amended or changed in favor of incumbent president, for some, it is still not a guarantee that they will win the subsequent election(s) and so such presidents would resort to intimidating the opposition and manipulating the election results in their favor. In extreme cases, incumbent presidents are not prepared to hand over power even when there is enough evidence that they have lost the elections. Good examples are Ivory Coast under Lauren Gbagbo in 2010 and Gambia under Yahya Jame in 2019. Lastly, those that nursed the ambition but both external and internal opposition constraints them, would quickly step down and appoint a successor to still enable them control affairs from the background and a very good example is Rawlings of Ghana in 2000, when he was compelled to step down and quickly appointed Mills as a successor.

4. Factors that Account for Third Termism in Africa

Many reasons or factors have been given by Scholars to explain the emergence and growth of third termism in Africa. They include but not limited to the following (Table 1):

Abuse of state resources and possible prosecution together with their allies (Omotola, 2011; Tangri & Mwand, 2011). Many people have argued that some African presidents have abused power and state resources and for that matter they are afraid that if the step down for someone else, then they and their allies may be prosecuted by the new regime and because of this, they want to stay in power till they die or they want to stay longer to clear the mess. In some cases, it

Table 1. Presidents who have made formal attempt to allow them run for elections for third term or beyond getting to the expiration of their term limit in Africa from 1990S-2020.

Those who succeeded a third term bid = 20	Those who failed third term bid = 4
Burkina Faso Campaore, 1999	Burkina Campaore, 2014
Burundi Nkurunziza, 2015, 2018	Malawi Mulizi, 2002
Cameroon Biya 2008	Nigeria Obassnjo, 2006
Chad Deby, 2005	Zambia Chuluba, 2001
Comoros Assoumani, 2018	
Congo-Brazzaville Sassou Nguesso, 2016	
Djibouti Guelleh, 2010	
Gabon Bongo, 2003	
Guinea Conde, 2001, Conde 2020	
Ivory Coast Quattara, 2016	
Namibia Nujoma, 1998	
Niger Tandja, 2009	
Rwanda Kagame, 2015	
Senegal Wade, 2012	
Sudan Albashir, 2005	
Togo Ayedema, 2002, 2019	
Uganda Moseveni, 2005	

Source: Tull & Simons, 2017 & African Centre for strategic studies.

is those people who derive some benefits from the system as results of that president being in power, they put the pressure on the president not to step down. In very pure African settings, the chief or leader is an embodiment of the people and their culture. His powers are many and abound: he is the first gentleman of the land and his instructions are final; he is the commander in-chief of the living and at the same time a link between the living and the ancestors; all the resources of the state are entrusted to his care and he holds them in trust of the community. From this cultural background that African leaders go beyond the bounds most especially when pressure is being put on them by their ethnic group.

Secondly, it is also argued in the existing literature that some incumbent presidents think they are indispensable and that their countries cannot do without them (Tull & Simons, 2017). Examples of presidents who thought this way were Sam Nujoma of Namibia, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. The African presidents thought this way because they felt that they had played a lead role in the liberation struggle of their countries or they had brought their countries out of economic doldrums to an appreciable level that they would want to stay longer to consolidate it. This thinking is perfectly in line with the African way of leadership. Normally in Africa, leadership is entrusted to personalities who have distinguished themselves or displayed extra-ordinary qualities or sterling performance in certain areas of life. In this case, the most preferred people for leadership in Africa are those who have shown bravery by leading their states in wars or saving them from a calamity or have worked so hard and become very rich as a sign that they are capable of attending to societal needs. This means in the African cultural context, leadership is not for trial, rather leadership is meant for those who already have a performance track record. It is from this cultural background that some African leaders think that they had achieved enough for their countries as either liberation fighters or economic messiahs and they deserved to be allowed to stay longer in power instead of trying others who probably had no proven records of performance.

Addiction to power and resources (The Africa Exponent, 2021) is yet one of the factors accounting for third termism in Africa. In reality, some African leaders are so obsessed with power and resources and find it difficult to leave all these and step down to live as ex-presidents. But more importantly, it has also been argued that lack of succession plan or fear of instability and leadership vacuum is also to blame for the failure of some African leaders to step down when their mandate expires (THE CONVERSATION, 2016; Chiwanza, 2020). However, this is a tacit admission of failure on the part of African leaders who refuse to step down because there is no body competent to take over. If handing over was part of their agenda, certainly, they would certainly nurse someone to take over. It is because they are not prepared to hand over and that explains why they don't mentor anyone to succeed them. In fact, for such leaders anyone who shows ambition to succeed them in future is crushed and for this reason oppositions from the other side of the political divide are seen as enemies who must be

destroyed and flashed out and that explains why in Africa, most often than not the opposition is too weak to wrestle power from or put pressure on erring presidents to step down. In the western world, whilst the opposition is seen as opponent, in Africa the opposition is seen as enemy. Culturally, the African traditional leadership has no official opposition as compared to that of western Democracy.

Lastly, deliberate refusal to step down because of despotic and kleptocratic tendencies from African leaders ([THE CONVERSATION, 2016](#)).

Whilst, this paper agrees with the above, it is the opinion of this paper that, the idea of third termism in Africa has not been properly looked at within the African cultural settings.

Culture refers to the way of life of people and in this case, it is a set of attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviors shared by a group of people and which is transmitted from one generation to the other ([Matsumoto, 1996](#)) which distinguish the members of one group of people from another ([Hotstede, 1994](#)). In another dimension, it is a set of basic assumption, orientation to life, beliefs and values, policies and procedures, behavioral conventions that bind a group of people together and which enables them interpret the behaviors of others ([Spencer-Oatey, 2008](#)).

From the above definitions, it is clear that culture shapes people's understanding of the world and how they go about with things. It is on this premise that David Landes clearly stated that the reasons why some parts of the world experience growth and wealth, while other parts stagnate and wallow in abject poverty is as a function of culture. To Landes, factor endowment can influence the development of a country but the overarching determinant is culture. To him, culture makes all the difference ([Landes, 1998](#)).

This paper argues that Liberal Democracy, of which a presidential term limit is a cardinal feature, is the culture of the west and so it is not possible to practice it in its purity in Africa since Africans have varied and unique cultures. In the African context, leadership is for life and it is mostly but not always bestowed on the most senior and assisted by a council of elders who represent various constituencies. He/She is seen as a father figure and his powers transcend the living and the dead. All state resources are held by him in trust and there is no opposition to wrestle power from incumbents. If there is any opposition, it is meant to put pressure on the ruling class to improve the system for all but not for a section as always been the case in liberal democracy where the winner takes all. Such a unique is the power of the African leader in that during colonial rule, the British in dealing with the West Africans, the powers of the traditional leaders served as a legitimacy on which colonial authorities depended ([Spear, 2003](#)).

5. The Cultural Dichotomy between the Western World and Africa in Terms of Politics

There is a huge cultural dichotomy between the western world on one hand and the Africa on the other with reference to politics and public life. Due to this huge

cultural difference, it is not possible to transport and implant pure Western Democracy on Africans and that is a possible reason why some African presidents find it difficult to respect presidential term limits since it has never been part of African cultural leadership.

The differences between the cultures of the west and that of Africans when it comes to holding public office include but not limited to the followings.

First, whilst the west sees themselves as one people within a state, Africans are divided by ethnicity within the same state. For example, Americans are all Americans and natives of Britain are all British, but same cannot be said about African states. Though Ghanaians are classified as Ghanaians, they are further divided along Akans, Ewes, Dagombas and so on. In Nigeria, citizens are classified as Hausas, Yorubas, Igbos and the like. Ethnicity has a strong influence on Africans because ethnicity is the basic political unit within the state (Wiredu, 1995) and for that matter most African presidents are forced to do something for his kinsmen when in office. Most often, these kinsmen that put pressure on sitting presidents not to relinquish power even when his tenure of office comes to an end.

In the west, all people who attain eighteen years and above are considered matured to live independent life, in Africa, maturity and experience is associated with old age. The qualification for leadership in Africa is seniority in age, wisdom, sense of responsibility and logical persuasiveness. All these qualities are often united in the most senior (Wiredu, 1995) and so, as the president keeps longer on the seat, he gets wiser, better and more experience to deliver.

Whilst in the western world, there is a term limit for their leaders; there is no term limit for the traditional African leader. His or her leadership is for life (Wiredu, 1995) and this is the cultural environment in which African leaders operate and this probably explains why some African presidents find it difficult to step down.

In African traditional environment, there is no known official opposition to African traditional leadership and even if there is, that opposition is not there to wrestle power from those ruling but to put pressure for those ruling to improve the system for all to benefit. In west, there is official opposition positioned to wrestle power and form an alternative government. Westerners see politics as differences in ideas regarding how the state should be organized and therefore see opposition as opponents but not enemies. Since, culturally, there is no known opposition; many African leaders see their opponents as enemies and therefore sometimes find it difficult to step down and hand power to them.

Whilst the people in the west enter public office to serve the state, the people of Africa enter public office to see what the state can do for them. For those in the west, they enter into public office because they feel they have something special to contribute to the advancement of their nation. This does not mean they don't get paid for it but that is always not the driving force. For this reason, recruitment into the public service is driven largely by merits, and in this case if a

public servant fails to perform or has finished contributing his quota to the state, he/she steps down for others to continue. This is not the case in Africa as many people enter into public offices with the sole aim of bettering their lives, but of course one cannot blame the ordinary African so much since survival has become so difficult as a result of endemic poverty. Recruitment into public offices is hugely influenced by clientelism and cronyism and those who cannot perform are not willing to step aside because if they do, how are they going to survive? This may be one of the reasons why some sitting presidents would still want to stay in power beyond the acceptable period for the state to continue to serve them for them to also be able to serve their relations.

In the west, those in public offices see their positions as trust and feel that they owe it as an obligation to serve their people. African leaders enter public offices as masters to lord it on their citizens. So, some sitting presidents can amass a lot of wealth to themselves while majority of their citizens are swimming in abject poverty and for fear of being prosecuted, some ruling presidents would want to stay longer in office even after their tenure of office has expired in order to cover up or clean the mess.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Scanty Results to Show after Three Decades of Democracy by Africans

No doubt, democracy is considered a default system of rule (Lumumba-Kasongo, 2005) and has been accepted as the most suitable form of government. However, Africa has a peculiar case, and that is, after three (3) decades of liberal democracy. Africa has a very scanty result to show, even though the same process has produced better results in other regions. In fact, the pure practice of western democracy in Africa is not possible because democracy is the culture of the west which is very opposite to the varied and unique cultures of Africa. Indeed, given the high level of underdevelopment in Africa, and the peripheral and the parasitic nature of African image on the international scene, it is fair to suggest that Africa needs to invent a democracy that would function as the hub of social progress and development (Lumumba-Kasongo, 2005). Certainly, at the onset of the 1990s, Africa was yearning for democracy as a matter of survival (Ake, 1996; Lumumba-Kasongo, 2005) and if after three decades, Africans are not getting the needed results, then, Africa must redefine and reinvent its own democracy.

6.2. Democracy Must Evolve

This is because democracy as a system of government has to evolve practically, taking roots from the traditions of its people, nurtured and watered by its cultures (Sarpong, 1996). It is important to note that the current form of western democracy as we know it now was not same when it started in Athens. It has grown and evolved over the years and shaped by the culture of its practitioners

(Sarpong, 1996; Swift, 2002). Indeed, for Africa to develop better, it must redefine democracy to suit its cultures. The reason is that, the issues that drive economic development which are so key to Africa do not lie in economic logic but rather in the culture and history of the people (Boettke, 2000). To be sincere, the call for Africa to redefine its democracy to suit its peculiar cultures has been long overdue. This is so because Africans can witness the fact that China, one of the World's Economic giants, has redefined democracy to suit the culture and customs of Chinese with the introduction of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics (Xi, 2017; Boer, 2021) and they are good to go. The Chinese people pay much attention to what is functional and workable as cultural confidence represents a fundamental and profound force that sustains the advancement of a nation (Peters, 2019). In fact, they have evolved their democracy to the extent that presidential term limit is not an issue but rather on performance. As long as any sitting president of the Chinese Communist Party is capable of delivering what the Chinese people want, he can contest for the presidency as many times as he wants, after all, the original aspiration of the Chinese community is to seek happiness and prosperity for the Chinese people to be able to rejuvenate and develop China (Xi, 2017). Since the year 2000 up to 2021, Vladimir Putin of Russia has changed several forms as a leader of Russia and has been in power up to date, Russia has not stagnated and does not depend on others like that of Africa. Some may argue that the Chinese and Russian way is not the best, but the issue is that all over the world democracies are never perfect nor finally democratic as they invariably fall short of democratic values or criteria in some areas (Dahl, 2008). Certainly when democracy began, especially in the middle of 1800s, it was seen as a dangerous movement associated with barbaric mob rule targeted at destroying civilized cultures. Initially people without property were not allowed to vote and it was in the twentieth century that women were given franchise to vote. More interestingly, Africa was not matured enough to rule itself according to the Western World until after World War One (Swift, 2002). This tells us that democracy went through stages to get to the level we know it now. For this reason, it is good to start something and see how to improve on it in future. So, there is a serious call on Africa to go back to the drawing board to see where she faulted and that would enable her to fashion out a democracy that is imbedded in the history, traditions and cultures of its people.

7. The Way Forward

7.1. Consensual Democracy

On this note, I would suggest to Africa to go in for Wiredu (1995) Consensual Democracy. This was the type of democracy Africa was practicing before its contact with the outside world, if only by democracy we are referring to self-rule where the people's interests are represented. Wiredu (1995) posited that, African traditional life and governance was by consensus and that issues were discussed in solemn conclave until such a time that agreement could be achieved. In con-

sensus democracy, the main aim is to satisfy the two parties and also ensure reconciliation for unity. Reconciliation ensures goodwill and trust. Reconciliation ensures that all parties feel their point of views have been adequately taken care of in the future. In Africa, the idea of consensus mostly starts on the premise of diversity. No doubt Africa is diverse in terms of ethnicity, for example, in Ghana we have the Akans, the Mole-Dagbani, the Ewe, Guangs, Gurma, Grusi and may more. In Rwanda we have the Hutus, the Tutsis and the Twas, In Nigeria, we have the Hausas, the Yoruba, the Igbo, Ijaws, Ibibio Kanuri and many others. In Namibia, we have the Ovambo, Kavango. Damara, Herero etc. And lastly in Zimbabwe, they have the Ndebele, Shona and Zimbabweans of European ancestry. These are a few examples to show that Africans are polarized on ethnic lines and therefore consensus democracy would produce the compromises that would be acceptable to all.

In the African traditional settings, a village, town, kingdom or empire is headed by a chief or a king and in the performance of his duties; he is assisted by a Council of elders who hail from and represents their ethnic, clan or lineage. These are seasoned people chosen by consensus to represent the interest of their people and so whatever decision reached at the Chief's palace is on consensus and representative. There was no official opposition to wrestle power from those ruling. Any opposition rather was meant to improve the system for all. If we have a consensual democracy underpinned by dialogue and reconciliation, where leaders come from different ethnic backgrounds, then the government would be representative enough in terms of its membership and content of its decision (Wiredu, 1995). In this case, at the National level, all the ethnic groups that form the state would have come to a consensus as to which ethnic group should be the first to lead, follow by which one in that order until all have their turn. Since presidential term limit is a big headache for many African leaders, it could be scraped and the position would be for life, bearing in mind that after the death of the sitting president, the next president would come from the ethnic group whose turn is it to come to power. This rotational mode could also be extended to the appointment of Ministers, but at this level a reasonable term limit based on dialogue and consensus could be imposed. The regional and District level could follow same. In a district made up of only one ethnic group, then they could rely on clans or lineages within the same ethnic group. Consensus democracy is the bedrock of African life and it ensures representativeness, dialogue, inclusiveness, trust and the protection of all interest within the state. This is the kind of democracy Africans knew before the arrival of Liberal Democracy. This consensual type of democracy was not adopted by Africans for fan, it was meant to take care of our diverse backgrounds and to translate diversity into unity and therefore the introduction of multi-party democracy base on majority is alien to the African culture. Majoritarian democracy arising out of liberal democracy alienate the minority and creates a winner takes all system which has become a major source of conflicts and confusion in Africa. A

well-crafted consensual democracy would make the existence of political parties useless and elections needless. This is because the various ethnic groups represent parties and since all groups interest would be taken care of, then there is no need to conduct elections, since by consensus all ethnic groups know when it would be their turn to come into power.

7.2. Why Many African Countries Preferred Presidentialism

A very close examination of pure African leadership shows at least, that, it is closer to presidentialism and that explains why out of fifty-four (54) African countries, forty-nine (49) adopted the presidential system of Government. The reason is that presidentialism gives much power to the executive president which is similar to the African traditional leadership which wields so much power. The only difference is that, under presidentialism, there is a term limit which is alien to African traditional leadership and that probably explains why some African presidents find it difficult to abide by it. The African traditional leadership shows unity and that also explains why after independence, most African countries that embraced liberal democracy turned their countries into one-party states but this eliminated members of other parties from government, hence the unity was not achieved. Liberal democracy too could not achieve this as a few elites enjoyed at the expense of the poor majority. Liberal democracy encourages winner takes all which is alien to African societies.

Indeed, Africans embraced liberal democracy in order to survive and progress but it seems these hopes are fast fading into the thin air and so from now on, she should go in for the sort of democracy in all probability and possibility, is anchored on tangible economic and social rights and opportunities for all (Ake, 1996) underpinned by consensus and dialogue towards brotherliness, inclusiveness and unity which are the defining features of a pure African society.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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