

## **Sit-Tight Syndrome And Tenure Elongation In African Politics: Implications For Regional Development And Security**

Abiodun, Temitope Francis<sup>1</sup>, Nwannennaya, Chukwunyerere<sup>2</sup>, Ochei, Bukola Odesiri<sup>3</sup>, Ayo-Adeyekun, Ifeoluwa<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, & Doctoral Researcher in Peace & Security Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, Lagos Office, Nigeria & Doctoral Researcher in Peace, Strategic and Conflict Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup>University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria & Doctoral Researcher in the Department of Public Law, Faculty of Law, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

<sup>4</sup>Postgraduate Student, Department of Political Science, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

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**Abstract:** The phenomenon of sit-tight syndrome and tenure elongation in African politics has been traced to the history of leadership in Africa right from the era of independence till date. The post-independence politics of African countries has been dominated by the phenomenon of sit-tight African Heads of state and government who had acceded to office by election or coup d'état. This paper examines this recurring problem in post-independence African politics by examining its general and specific causation, features and consequences; among the factors of: power intoxication, illiteracy, corruption, fear of arrest by the ICC, weak public opinions and others. Building upon extant relevant literature, it presents "fresh empirical reflections rather than major new theoretical constructs" on the sit-tight syndrome and tenure elongation as two strands of the subversion of the constitution and the political process. The paper concludes with suggestions for transcending this major challenge to the political and socio-economic development of Africa.

**Keywords:** Sit-tight Syndrome, Tenure Elongation, Regional Development, Security, Politics and Power Intoxication.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The sit-tight syndrome and tenure elongation can be traced to the history of leadership in Africa right from the era of independence till date. African leaders have been known to be very autocratic even when they are elected through the ballot process. In some cases, the president interferes with the legislative and judiciary process; thereby reducing these institutions to mere government tools to suppress opposition and to enable the president remain in power for as long as he desires (Ibrahim, 2017). Democratic governance has been a major political challenge in Africa since the dawn of independence in the early 1960s. Though African democracy has shown some improvements, with elections becoming more frequent and more regular in some parts of the continent, few African states are still characterized by corruption and autocracy. In such states, the incumbent crows the opposition and exploits the power of the state to skew the electoral contest in his favour. In some other climes especially in Eastern and Central Africa, constitutional coups appear to be the new tools incumbents employ to sidestep term limits. This, they do, by amending the provisions of a national constitution to achieve tenure elongation (Abdulateef and Modestus, 2017).

The phenomenon has continuously led to various conflicts in Africa. According to Oche (2006:1), although conflicts are taken to be an inherent aspect of human relations, whether at the group, national or international levels, the prevalence of conflicts on the African continent in contemporary times has assumed the dimension of a scourge, indeed the issue has become such a serious problem that it is arguably the greatest impediment to any meaningful form of development on the African continent today. Africa has been characterized by many tenure elongation conflict situations that have resulted in the loss of millions of lives, widespread displacement and a wide array of human rights abuses. Today, Africa accounts for about 70 percent of United Nations peacekeeping operations and Africa continues to suffer from violent conflicts. In Somalia, in Sudan's Darfur region, in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the toll has been devastating. Insecurity, displacement, and destruction are the order of the day (Oche, 2006).

### **II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework for this study embodies a combination of theories – the theories of power/greed and failed state. According to Roskin (1994:1) these theories can trace their roots back to the pessimistic realism of Machiavelli in the 15th century. In any case, the man who more than any other, propagated the twin theories of power and greed was the German scholar, Hans Morgenthau (1904-80). Bringing the wisdom of Machiavelli and Clausewitz with him, Morgenthau contended that international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power (Roskin, 1994:3). Recently however, Greene (2000) in his much celebrated work, "48 Laws of Power," has taken power pontifications to unprecedented heights. For instance, he admonishes us in his law number two that: if you have no enemies, find a way to make them. In law number fifteen, he admonishes that enemies should be crushed totally, to avoid a situation whereby the enemy defeated half-way, recovers and seeks revenge. In the process, Asobie (2007:3) posits that power (read force or violence) is needed and used primarily for consolidating and expanding power; the end of power is power and the means to power is power itself. Every other thing or purpose is secondary. State power is thus all about acquiring the monopoly of the use of the instruments of violence within a particular community (Asobie, 2007:3). Conceiving politics in this manner implies the valorization of power, an acceptance of the view that might is right and makes the realist perspective a war prone conception of politics (Asobie, 2007:13). It is this power-seeking and greed perspective of African leaders who by all means want to maintain a sit-tight syndrome and ensure tenure elongation in politics that breeds political instability and violent conflicts in Africa. This is evident in some countries in Africa; Zimbabwe, Gambia, Sudan, Congo, and others.

The term "failed state" is often used to describe a State perceived as having been unsuccessful at some of the essential responsibilities of a sovereign government. A failed state is one that has shattered social and political structures (Anyanwu, 2005). It is characterized by social, political and economic failure. Common characteristics of a failing state are when a central government is so weak or ineffective that it has little practical control over much of its territory, non-provision of public utilities or services, widespread corruption and criminality; refugees and involuntary movement of populations, and sharp economic decline (ibid). Anyanwu (2005) notes that failing states are invariably the product of a collapse of the power structures providing political supports for law and order, a process generally triggered and accompanied by anarchic forms of internal violence. It is the collapse of state institutions, especially the police and judiciary

with resulting paralysis of governance, a breakdown of law and order, and general banditry and chaos. Not only are the functions of government suspended, but its assets are destroyed or looted; and experienced officials are killed or flee the country. In the sit-tight leadership and tenure elongated states, there is absence of law and order and some or even all constitutional provisions are suspended to favour the leaders' selfish interests.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The method adopted in this research is content analysis, using mainly secondary data. The secondary data employed include existing literature on the topic obtained from such sources as the internet, books, journals, newspapers, magazines and conference papers. In the course of the research, the researchers consulted the African Union and ECOWAS Reports.

#### **Overview of Sit-Tight Syndrome and Tenure Elongation in Africa Politics**

Over the past decade, more than 30 African countries have witnessed a direct or indirect presidential election that resulted in a change of leaders. Fifty six heads of state relinquished power, while nine died in office and 13 stepped down after a coup or uprising. Through elections, leaders of 15 countries have remained the same over the past 10 years. They include Angola, Burundi, Algeria, Cameroon, Chad, DR Congo, Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Rwanda, Sudan, Togo, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Aside Liberia's Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, 14 of the leaders took office before 2006 (Ibrahim, 2017). Below, is an outline of African countries that have not changed leadership in the last ten years or more:

**Angola:** Jose Eduardo dos Santos (75 years old), has been President of Angola since 1979, when the country's first post-independence president, Agostinho Neto, died. After a peace deal signed in 1991, Mr Dos Santos beat UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi in the first round of Angola's first contested presidential election in 1992, but Savimbi rejected the result and resumed guerrilla war. While some have praised the septuagenarian for leading the country to recovery after the end of its 27-year civil war in 2002, others accuse him of authoritarianism, overstay in office and failing to distribute the proceeds from the oil boom more widely. Critics accused him of being increasingly authoritarian when he appointed his daughter Isabel as the head of the state oil firm, Sonangol (<https://www.pressreader.com>).

**Equatorial Guinea:** Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, 75, has ruled the small oil-rich nation for almost 38 years, amid persistent accusations of corruption and electoral fraud. In 1979, he seized power from his uncle Francisco Macias Nguema, who was the leader at independence and whose rule prompted a mass exodus and thousands of deaths. Obiang was re-elected in 2009 with 95% of the vote in presidential elections. Officials reported similar results in the December 2002 elections. His son, Teodoro 'Teodorin' Nguema Obiang, who is also the country's second vice president, was charged, in January 2017 in France, with spending millions in state funds to feed an opulent lifestyle of fast cars, designer clothes, works of art and high-end real estate (<https://www.pressreader.com>).

**Cameroon:** Paul Biya, 84, has been in power since 1982. Before that, he had spent his entire political career in the service of President Ahmadou Ahidjo, becoming prime minister in 1975. With Mr Ahidjo's resignation in 1982, he assumed the leadership and in 1983 accused his predecessor of organising a coup against him, forcing the former president to flee the country. After the country's parliament in April 2008 passed a controversial amendment to the constitution enabling Biya to run for a third term, the octogenarian won a new seven-year term in the October 2011 election, in a vote that observers said was marred by irregularities. The Cameroonian leader, who has spent 35 years in office, is believed to be among the highest paid African presidents, earning 359 million Central African Francs (359m CGA-£397,019), according to International Business Times UK, quoting Africa Review. Africa Review compared his salary to what an average Cameroonian earns and found the leader's annual income is about 229 times more than the average salary (Abolurin, 2012:33).

**Uganda:** Yoweri Museveni, 73, became Uganda's president in 1986, and was involved in rebellions that toppled Ugandan leaders Idi Amin and Milton Obote. With five presidential terms in office, Museveni claims Uganda is one of the most democratic countries in the world. In 2005, the constitution was changed to allow him to extend his time in office. Museveni was re-elected in 2016 in an election overshadowed by arrests of politicians and allegations of rigging. Police are reported to have carried out multiple arrests of opposition activists, including his closest rival, Kizza Besigye. In an apparent show of power, he made a surprising cabinet appointment in June 2016, by naming his wife and first lady, Janet Kataaha Museveni, Minister of Education and Sports and has recently utilized the machinery of constitutional amendment to ensure the removal of the age barrier in the country which would have disallowed him from vying for president in 2021 (<https://www.latestnigerianews.com>)

**Zimbabwe:** Robert Mugabe, 93, was considered the world's oldest national ruler. He had been President of Zimbabwe since 1987, after he led the country as Prime Minister from 1980 to 1987. Despite growing concerns over his frailty and deteriorating health condition, he showed no sign of quitting politics. At his lavish 93rd birthday party, Mugabe, who had been in power for 30 years said he had no plans to step down. In a speech that was broadcast on state radio and television he is reputed to have said: "People who are busy forming their own groupings, saying 'Mr Mugabe must go'; I ask myself where should I go?" He was eventually forced out of power by the military forces that ensured that he resigned in 2017 ([www.archive.au.int](http://www.archive.au.int)).

**Chad:** Idriss Deby, 65, took office in 1990 in a coup and has faced several attempts to oust him by similar means. He won a fifth term in presidential elections in April 2016, securing 62% of the vote. His closest rival, Saleh Kebzabo, garnered 13%. But opposition parties said the vote counting lacked credibility. He won the country's first post-independence presidential election in 1996 and was re-elected in 2001. In 2005 he won a referendum allowing him to stand for a third term. Deby survived a bid to topple him in April 2006, when rebels attacked the capital, and again in February 2008, when they were beaten back by government forces backed by French warplanes and troops.

**Sudan:** Omar Al-Bashir, 73, is Sudan's seventh president. He has held power since his 1989 coup when the country was in the midst of a 21-year civil war between northern and southern parts of the country. Al-Bashir won consecutive elections in 2010 and 2015. Despite an international arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court, he has made diplomatic visits to Egypt, Saudi Arabia and South Africa.

**Eritrea:** Isaias Afewerki, 71, has occupied Eritrean presidency, since the country's independence in 1993. He led Eritreans through most of the 30-year war with Ethiopia that culminated in independence. But the country has never held an election. A Presidential poll, planned for 1997, never materialised. Eritrea is a one-party state, with the ruling People's Front for Democracy and Justice the only party allowed to operate. Mr Afewerki has been criticised for failing to implement democratic reforms. His government has clamped down on its critics and has closed the private press. The northeast African country is mired in poverty and repression with thousands of its youths fleeing the country, through the Sahara desert and the Mediterranean, to seek better life in Europe ([www.peaceau.org](http://www.peaceau.org)).

**Republic of Congo:** Denis Sassou Nguesso, 74, extended his 32 years in power, after he won the 2016 presidential elections. The long-serving leader is accused by critics of rampant corruption and nepotism and of stifling democracy. The country descended into political tensions in the mid 1990's. Though Nguesso became president following conflict in 1997 and prepared to allow a return to democracy, however, renewed fighting by rebels led to the collapse of that effort in 1998. The timber-rich Congo has been on edge since the January 2002 constitutional referendum that ended a two-term limit on presidential mandates, allowing the 72-year-old former paratrooper colonel to run for office again ([www.archive.au.int](http://www.archive.au.int)).

**Algeria:** Abdelaziz Bouteflika, 80 years old, is the fifth President of Algeria. He won a fourth term as Algeria's leader, receiving 81.5 percent of the vote in the 2014 election boycotted by opposition leaders. Bouteflika won the presidency in the 1999 polls and secured landslide election victories in 2004 and again 2009. He rarely appears in public after suffering a stroke in 2013. But he has managed to

strongly hold onto power and has avoided the democratic changes prompted by the Arab Spring uprisings in neighbouring North African countries.

**Djibouti:** Ismaïl Omar Guelleh, who has been in office since 1999, secured a fourth five-year term after a landslide victory in the April 2016 election criticised by opposition parties and rights groups. He won 87% of vote, which critics complained was preceded by political repression and restrictions on basic freedoms. The 70-year-old leader also won the 2011 election with 80 percent of the vote after the country's parliament amended the constitution to allow him to extend his rule. Guelleh rules a nation troubled by longstanding ethnic hostilities. The internal troubles led to political discord, which eventually resulted in the two main opposition groups boycotting the 2005 presidential election.

**Rwanda:** The sixth and current President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, took office in 2000 when his predecessor, Pasteur Bizimungu, resigned. He spearheaded the launch of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) rebel movement, which took power in Kigali to end the 1994 genocide. The country's constitution was amended in the 2015 referendum to allow Kagame to run for a third term of seven years at the end of his current tenure in 2017. The newly amended constitution reduced a presidential term from seven to five years, however, it will come into effect when Kagame's third term tenure of seven years comes to an end. This enables him to run for another two terms of 5-years each under the amended constitution, making it possible for the 60-year-old leader to rule until 2034 ([www.archive.au.int](http://www.archive.au.int)).

**Democratic Republic of Congo:** Joseph Kabila, 46, took office in 2001 ten days after the assassination of his father, President Laurent-Désiré Kabila. He reached the end of his constitutional two-term limit in December, 2017, but has refusal to step down. Polls were not held because of what the government said were budgetary constraints, sparking violent protests subsequently in which security forces killed at least 40 people. Although, Kabila has stated that he intends to stay in power till December, 2018 to account for delays in voter registration, however, critics say Kabila has deliberately delayed elections in order to remain in power (<http://www.aljazeera.com>)

**Burundi:** Pierre Nkurunziza, 53, became the first president to be chosen in democratic elections since the start of Burundi's civil war in 1994. His election by parliamentarians in 2005 was one of the final steps in a peace process intended to end years of fighting between Hutu rebels and the Tutsi-controlled army. His re-election to a controversial third term in 2015 followed a disputed elections boycotted by the opposition. Burundi's constitution limits presidents to a maximum of two terms in office. But the constitutional court ruled in favour of his argument that his first term does not count, as he was elected by parliament and not by the entire electorate, and was thus eligible to stand again ([www.breakingtimes.com](http://www.breakingtimes.com)).

**Togo:** Faure Gnassingbe's family has ruled the small West African country for half a century. The 51 year old took over presidency in 2005 after the death of his father, Gnassingbé Eyadéma, who died after 38 years in office. Prior to his election, he was appointed as Minister of Equipment, Mines, Posts and Telecommunications, serving from 2003 to 2005. The 2005 elections, which brought Mr Gnassingbe to power, were overshadowed by fraud allegations and violent protests which left at least 400 people dead. Faure was re-elected for a third term in the April 2015 elections after opposition protests failed to bring about constitutional changes limiting the president to two terms in office in 2014 (<https://sunnewsonline.com/togo-at-crossroads/>).

**The Gambia:** In 2017, Gambia's Yahya Jammeh was forced to leave office after he had refused to step down following his defeat in the December 2016 election. He went into exile after a last minute diplomatic push and threat of military invasion by ECOWAS troops. Others include; the ugly precedence in Cote D'ivoire which was set by Felix Houphouët-Boigny who was President of the country for 33 years. At his death, he was the longest-serving head of state in the world (African Union Report, 2017).

#### **Causative Factors Responsible for Sit-Tight Syndrome and Tenure Elongation in Africa**

The sit-tight syndrome and tenure elongation in Africa is caused by the following causative factors:

##### **Power Intoxication**

A by-product of leadership is power and the danger of power is its intoxicating nature. Like wine, the more you have, the more you desire. This is the reason why the term 'power drunk' is used to describe leaders who abuse their office or position. It is evident in Africa that nearly all the Presidents and Heads of Government become power-drunk while in office; a prime example of this is the ousted Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. Power intoxication leads to a situation whereby leaders would rule indecently and autocratically and eventually become despotic (Abiodun, 2016:47). African history is rife with leaders who are obsessed with power. Even when they are elected through the democratic process, they tend to manipulate some vital democratic institutions such as the judiciary, legislature and the executive arms of government to enable them satisfy their personal and selfish interests.

##### **Corruption and Poverty**

Corruption is regarded as the abuse of public office for private gain and it is most evident in countries where leaders have a sit tight attitude to governance, Crabtree (2017) posits that the main indices of corruption are theft or embezzlement of public funds, giving bribes particularly for electoral support or support of the mass media, acceptance of bribes such as backhanders for awarding government contracts to companies and independent contractors, giving positions of power to family and friends, extortion, graft and nepotism. Some African leaders like: Presidents Bongo of Gabon, Biya of Cameroon, Chiluba of Zambia, Muluzi of Malawi, Moi of Kenya, Mugabe of Zimbabwe and others have used their political position to embezzle economic resources – a process which often involves the mass pauperization of their 'subjects' and the deepening of their dependence on the patrimonial favours of the 'ruler' (Khalil, 2005). Also, the leaders use the foreign aids from international organizations and government for their own personal interests at the expense of their nations. This leads to a distortion of public priorities, channeling of investments into projects where the rewards are largest and easiest to conceal, breach of trust between the people and their elected leaders (Beetham, 2005).

##### **Lack of Domestic Leadership Education and African Mentality**

Africa is not poor, rather, Africa has a leadership problem. For any society to prosper, it should have an endogenous system of identifying, training and caching its future leaders. Some African leaders are illiterates and are yet to learn or imbibe the modern governance culture in all its ramifications. The leaders' mentality in terms of leadership and governance is at low ebb. The 'African mentality' is to rule, embezzle, use power as they like, amass wealth and regularly have "their toes licked" by their subjects. However, leaders like Yoweri Museveni of Tanzania believe that the style of sit-tight ruling and tenure elongation is succeeding in other countries, as such, he adopted such in his domain ([www.breakingtimes.com](http://www.breakingtimes.com)).

##### **Willingness to Sustain Government Policies**

A number of political scientists participating in the Namibia workshop in 1992, found it necessary to point out that the concepts of democracy and governance were interrelated, but were not the same. They indicated that "good governance entails the efficient and effective reciprocity between rulers and the ruled, with the incumbent upon government to be responsive to the popular masses. Most of the leaders strive hard to elongate their tenures in their belief to sustain the good democratic principles and legacies already laid. In Nigeria between 1999 and 2007, various efforts of good governance were made by the then former President Olusegun Obasanjo; introduction of GSM, foreign debts cancellation, establishment of some democratic institutions and others. In view of these, Obasanjo strived hard to have a third term rule in Nigeria though thwarted by the National Assembly (Mac Godsons, 2015:32).

##### **Ethnic Hegemony**

The leadership in many African countries, with their ethnic diversities, is characterized by ethnic bias and favouritism. African states' leadership tussle is aggravated by practices of ethnic bias and favouritism that have consistently violated the principle of the impersonality

of political and socio-economic agents, caused resentment among the marginalized ethnic groups, fuelled conflicts and retarded development on the continent. It is established that ethnic bias has led to the situations whereby a particular ruler remains in power for several decades at the expense of other ethnic tribes in the country. Moi became president in August, 1978 on Kenyatta's death. He was confronted by the Kikuyu ethnic tribe who had tried to prevent his succession. Since Moi's Kalenjin's tribe or supporters believed it was their turn to "eat", Moi had to replace Kikuyu with Kalenjin (Hiroyuki et al, in Ethnic Diversity and Economic Instability in Africa (Khalil, 2015).

#### ***Disregard for Public Opinions and Political Warning Signals***

Notably, flagrant disregard of public opinions, ignoring advice/admonitions from well-meaning Africans and groups, paying no attention to political and socio-economic concerns expressed by the people as well as undermining institutions are but vivid examples and reasons for the sit-tight syndrome and tenure elongation in African politics (Jerome-Mario, 2018). From Zimbabwe to South Africa, Sudan to Uganda, Kenya down to Nigeria and others, the story is the same: penchant for ignoring advice, warning signals and inability to read the political handwriting on the wall. No doubt, prominent among the reasons for this flagrant disregard of political warnings is a barefaced illusion on the part of African leaders.

#### ***Influence of Colonialism***

It has become a tradition having tyrannical rule in existence in the continent of Africa; this was made possible as a result of colonial legacy. The impact of colonialism and its concomitant ally, imperialism on the African state is observed that the present role of African leaders in political, socio-economic dominance in the continent is borne out of the long years of colonial dominance, exploitation and imperialism. Consequently, on attainment of independence by most African state from their colonial overlords, it was extremely very difficult to disentangle from the colonial shackles; giving room for undue political dominance and tenure elongation (Ocheni and et al, 2012).

#### ***Sycophancy, Nepotism and Mediocrity***

This is evident of the sit-tight African leaders. During the reign of Eyadema of Togo, he took the sit-tight madness to a glorious height. He was president of Togo for 38 years. He came through a coup d'état and refused to leave until his death. He ran Togo as a personal estate. He made his mother the mother of the nation and made her birthday the national day. Under him, Togo was militarized; an entourage of 1000 beautiful women used to sing his praises everywhere, as did highly-indoctrinated school children (Abdul-Mahmud, 2016).

#### ***Fear of Arrest by the International Criminal Court (ICC)***

The African Union in 2013 ended a Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with the congregation of Heads of African states resolving tacitly on immunity for any sitting African Heads of state. With both Kenyan and Sudanese presidents facing ICC cases, African leaders have long complained the Court unfairly targets them. In the Addis Ababa meeting, the African leaders asked Kenya to write to the UN Security Council seeking a deferral in the ICC case against President Uhuru Kenyatta, who faces charges of crimes against humanity. They unanimously passed a resolution that "no sitting African Head of State should appear before an international court" (Timawus, 2013).

#### ***Non-willingness to Relinquish Power to Opposition***

In a bid to hang on to power unduly, all the democratic institutions are suspended. In the past, the late President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana was a typical example. Nkrumah did not only lead his country to independence from Britain in 1957, he contributed immensely to the liberation of other African countries from the colonialists. He was elected Ghana's President in 1960. Unfortunately, when the bug of unwillingness to relinquish power bit in 1964, he declared his party CPP as the only legal party to participate in elections (Timawus, 2013).

#### ***Suspension of Constitutional Provisions***

Most of the leaders in African nations met their countries with already abrogated constitutional provisions while other get it suspended while in power in order to elongate their tenures unduly. For example, Joseph Kabila when he took over of government of Congo from his father, all the constitutional provisions of the country had been suspended or abrogated, therefore giving him opportunity and chances to extend his tenure beyond two terms (Abiodun and Akogun, 2016).

#### ***Implications for Regional Development and Security***

Tenure elongation, attendant abuse of electoral democracy, the rise of terrorism and the search for national security, political crisis, revolutions against tenure elongation, unconstitutional rule, refusal to hand-over power, open rigging and clinging brazenly to power have become common features of emerging democracies in the world today especially in Africa. Many states in Africa have become accustomed to "sit-tight dictators" or military style of leadership, with democracy being propelled by the West for their replacement (Khalil, 2015). This is at the centre of the on-going conflict in many emerging democratic nations. Agreed that democracy is the political fashion of the 21st century, the question and the problem that still remain unanswered and unsolved are: what is the value of democracy without economic prosperity? What is the purpose of democracy without institutions that will serve as pillars? One begins to wonder when Africa and other third world countries will get it right especially with regard to the transformation of their electoral processes and economies. The cases of Zimbabwe and the Gambia have shown that the effects of electoral fraud can be deeply devastating and destructive and likely result in instability, bloodshed and an immediate erosion of a new government's credibility and legitimacy (Khalil, 2015).

Where countries face political instability, unemployment rate will be high, and the country would not be able to create jobs for the people and foreign investors will be hesitant to invest; countries that are unable to create jobs for their citizens create a risky business environment. Such that investors who risk their finances in investing in such countries must take precautions against robbery and theft as people resort to desperate means to get money. Generally, people are out of work and are unable to find jobs. This leads to a depressed economy, creates social pressures, and provokes political uncertainty. Inflation in prices is measured against a standard level of purchasing power; in a country where there is political tension and instability, inflation will be higher and the investor thus have the monopoly to set their prices high and consumers would not have a choice than to buy them (Abiodun and Akogun, 2016).

In Gambia, Rwanda, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo amongst other countries in Africa, people are constantly getting killed and neighbouring countries are also affected due to conditions of political persecution, torture, and inhuman and degrading treatment and a side effect of this is internal and external displacement (Byron and Ochei, 2015). There are also issues of arms proliferation and increase in robbery and other criminal activities. People are arrested, detained, tortured and political opponents and religion leaders who canvass or preach against the tyrants in places of worship are killed. A cursory look at Zimbabwe indicates that Mugabe made the economic situation of the country worse by taking away the investors investments which was largely situated in farming which had largely been successful. Mugabe was trying to 'reclaim' land from white settlers and gave them to indigenous Zimbabwean farmers without ascertaining their ability to invest or their knowledge of farming. The resultant effect was failure and bankruptcy for a lot of them. The current situation in the country is pitiable and there was also violence which badly hurt the commercial agricultural sector "the traditional source of exports, foreign exchange and over 400,000 jobs. The once thriving nation is now reversed and has become a primarily net importer of food products (Ifowodo, 1993).

The European Union and United States of America now provide food aid on a humanitarian basis to the country. The International Monetary Fund has suspended the government's request for long-term loans as a result of the government's unwillingness to ratify reforms that could stabilize the economy. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe normally prints money to fund the budget deficit, causing

the official annual inflation rate to rise from 32% in 1998, to 133% in 2004, 585% in 2005, passed 1000% in 2006, and 26000% in November 2007, and to 11.2 million percent in 2008; as a result, within a period of four years, the official exchange rate rose from approximately 1 (revalued) Zimbabwean dollar per US dollar in 2003 to 30,000 per US dollar in September 2007". Many people in Zimbabwe are unemployed and the currency is in bad shape due to inflation. (ECOWAS Annual Report, 2017).

Zimbabwe has the second highest HIV infection rate, per capita, in the world, has experienced the breakdown of law and order, unemployment at 65%, inflation at 104%, the collapse of the economy and the health delivery system. Human rights abuses in various forms were carried out with impunity by the ruling party activists. Voicing out against basic human rights abuses was at great personal risk. It has been established that the effects of the Mugabe administration impacted negatively on the health and well being of the people through increased stress, little or no access to primary health care facilities, unemployment, hyper-inflation and a general sense of helplessness and hopelessness. Citizens of the country live a very difficult life; many people live in abject poverty and this often causes anger towards the government. The pitiable situation of the people as a result of political instability has led to crime revolutions and so on (Gbenro, 2017).

Starting from 1970s, the world witnessed four different paths to democratization. The first is relatively peaceful transition to democracy from an authoritarian regime, achieved through lengthy negotiations between the rational factions and the opposition. The second path towards democracy in the late twentieth century involved countries coming out of civil war through internationally sponsored peace agreements, such countries as Mozambique, Cambodia, El Salvador, Angola, and, recently, Sudan. The third is the forced democratization resulting from U.S and allied occupation of countries like Iraq and Afghanistan. But the major threats to the democratization of the third world countries include; sit-tight leadership with tenure elongation, intellectual bankruptcy, corruption and electoral fraud (Abdullateef and Modestus, 2017).

Looking at the electoral malpractice that has characterized elections in Africa which unfortunately countries like; Sudan, Zimbabwe and others symbolize, what comes to mind is: what are the factors behind this irrational quest for power and the unwillingness to relinquish same? Insecurity of life outside power, economic gain, political influence, dynasty, et cetera are some of the factors that have kept genuine democracy away from most African countries (Mac Godson, 2015). Without these and other factors, what else could have made Laurent Gbagbo of Ivory Coast cling to power until his disgraceful removal even when the whole world acknowledged that he lost re-election through free and fair election? What else could kept the Libyan leader Muammar al-Gaddafi in power after 42 years, even with his country coming under rebel attacks and having no fly zones imposed on his country by allied forces? Presidents Yoweri Museveni of Uganda who was recently re-elected for another term amid protest and Pedro Verona Rodrigues Pires of Cape Verde have each been clinging to power for the past 24 years. 85 years old Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe who had served for 30 years and was forced to relinquish power. Theodoro Mgbasogo of Equatorial Guinea has clung to the seat as his birth right for the past 31 years and the same goes to Eduardo Santos of Angola (Mac Godson, 2015). President Campaore Blaise of Burkina Faso who by means of force, has been in power for the past two decades and half is yet to think of the noble thing to do (Mac Godson, 2015).

However, President Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia spent 19 years in power just as presidents Amadou Toumani Toure of Mali and Idriss Deby Itno of the Republic of Chad also spent 19 years in power. Former president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali who dictated the tune Tunisians danced to for 23 years was deposed by the new political wave that has pervaded the Arab world and north Africa presently. Egyptians also kicked their sit-tight president Muhammad Hosni Mubarak out of office after a 30 year rule. The style of leadership in Togo and Gabon has been that of a dynasty by two self-wise families in those countries and there are numerous examples of sit-tight never quit democratic dictatorship in Africa (Mac Godson, 2015).

Unfortunately, the danger in continuing to have sit-tight leaders on the continent is that some of them grow too old and senile, thus becoming a liability to their countries. Not only do they lack fresh ideas, some of those who actually started well later lost their way. A good example is Museveni: once hailed a progressive, he is now enveloped in corruption, nepotism and intolerance of opposing views. In his recent appointments, he made his wife, Janet Kataaha, a cabinet minister, while promoting his son, Muhoozi Kainerugab – whom many believe is being groomed to take over from him – to the position of a major General in the army. African sit-tight rulers have plunged their countries into political upheaval to satisfy their selfish ambitions to remain in power, long after their constitutionally prescribed tenures had elapsed. The tenure of Gambia's Yahya Jammeh ended on January 18, 2018. He was expected to hand over power to an elected president. He has refusing to do so, and the intervention of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to persuade him to transfer power did not yield a positive response. He assumed the office of president 22 years ago when he overthrew President Dauda Jawara in a military coup d'état (ECOWAS Annual Report, 2017).

President Yahyah Jammeh, has kept himself in office by the suppression of his people through arbitrary arrests, detentions, torture, and all types of human rights violations. He organized an election on December 1, 2016, lost the poll, accepted defeat and congratulated the winner, President-elect, Adama Barrow, only to make a change his mind a week later. President Yahyah Jammeh almost plunged Gambia into a civil war rather than leave office. In Central Africa, Joseph Kabilla's tenure as president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo expired on December 19, 2016. He had ruled the country for 15 years. Rather than hold an election as demanded by the constitution, he fabricated an illegal entity as a prop to keep himself in power indefinitely. Scores of protesting Congolese citizens were killed almost daily and the opposition, fully aware that Kabilla is taking the country for a ride, is not relenting. After more than 10 years in power, President Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi stunned the world in April 2015 when he announced that he would be seeking a third term, contrary to the prescriptions of the country's constitution. Ever since, the country has known no peace (Quinnones, 2009). At least 215,000 Burundians have fled their country, hundreds have been killed, and a coup attempt, made to oust the dictator which failed, led to horrifying reprisals. It did not matter to him that a country like Burundi with a history of genocide ought to be administered with transparency and fairness.

The above cases have potentials of turning citizen protests into civil unrest or wars which could turn into catastrophes. In each instance, the economic losses emanating from the elongation of political tenures are beyond calculation. These have been largely responsible for the desperate economic state of the African continent and why it is the world's laughing stock despite its enormous natural endowments (Quinnones, op.cit). The long tenure of Mobutu Sese Seko bequeathed to the Congo, many years of civil wars, insurrections and instability which remain till this day. Africa "boasts" of men like President Teodoro Obiang Nguema who has been in power in Equatorial Guinea for 38 years and the most news-making attributes of his regime are the unspeakable corruption of the regime and the scandalous extravagance of his playboy son who is scheduled to face trial in France for money laundering, embezzlement and corruption. French authorities reportedly towed 11 luxury vehicles, including two Ferrari sports cars belonging to the young Nguema who has been described as belonging to "a small club of corrupters" (Transparency International, 2015).

#### **Recommended Strategies for Preventing the Trend of Sit-Tight Syndrome and Tenure Elongation in African Politics**

The war on sit-tight syndrome and tenure elongation in Africa could be sustained if the following recommended strategies are employed:

**Clarion Call to Embark on Good Democratic Reforms:** These are indications that the sit-tight style of leadership is fast phasing out in Africa and a clarion call to countries like Zimbabwe, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Uganda, Cape Verde, Angola, et cetera to embark on a serious and truthful democratic reforms before they become casualties to latest political

upheaval sweeping across Arab world and north Africa as we have seen in Tunisia, Egypt, Ivory coast and presently happening in Libya. Democratization of the world today as being championed by United States of America, has to be a deliberate effort to build Institutions that will serve as democratic pillars before democracy can be successfully enthroned in Africa.

**Mass or Public Revolution:** As a political term, the word “revolution” received its full meaning in the two great events of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century which have remained the classical examples of what revolutions can and cannot achieve. Historically speaking, the success of the American Revolution and the failure of the French Revolution are equal in importance (Roskins, 1994). The success of public protest and revolution in Zimbabwe and Gambia has stood the test of time. Peaceful protests against tyrannical and sit-tight leadership would definitely enable the bad leaders to have a re-think for good democratic behaviour in their various states.

**Need for Effective Media and Public Opinions:** In each country, there exists good and effective media and public voices but the problem is that, they are usually pocketed and gagged by bad leaders in the state to favour their tenure elongation plans. That is why most of the media houses in Gambia and Zimbabwe are always clamped upon whenever they speak out or publish any anti-government policies.

**Interventions by International Organizations:** In line with the increased attention being focused by the international community on the dangers posed by sit-tight leadership and tenure elongation in Africa, the United Nations, African Union and ECOWAS need to be more engaged in a wide variety of activities that will both publicize the problem and initiate steps toward policy control. The resultant effect of this is that other international organizations will be spurred into becoming more involved in the fight against anti-democratic rule in Africa.

**Independent Judiciary, Non –Partisan Legislative Bodies and Independent Electoral System:** The existing arms of government in the states; judiciary and legislature not only need to be alive to their responsibilities, the executive arm of government necessarily must stop interfering in the judicial and legislative processes. The judiciary needs to be independent of the executive to give room for good and fair judicial interpretation while the legislature should hence forth cease to be a rubber stamp in the hands of the executive. Also, there is need for an electoral system that is independent; able to conduct free and fair elections and not one intimidated and cowed by the government in power.

**Reducing the Level of Poverty in African States:** The level of poverty in Africa is so high that the same sit-tight leaders who trample on the rights of citizens easily win their support during elections by offering ‘peanuts’ as incentives. The implication of this is that although the people in the state are opposed to the sit-tight leader, when given food items and money to secure their votes or support during elections, they cave in and vote in support of the sit-tight leader. The number of votes garnered by Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe against Tsvangirai during elections was always outrageous and unexpected. That is why the phenomenon of sycophancy is rampant in the continent of Africa. All these undemocratic behaviours need to stop.

**Effective Security Reform in Africa:** Recruitment of security personnel should be based on merit while the security apparatus of a state should not be politicized at will or put in the hands of presidents or heads of state. The security agencies; police, army, navy, state security service and others should be clearly separated from the whims and caprices of the sit-tight leaders in Africa as almost 90 percent of them are partisan, answering the calls of the sit-tight leaders (Mustapha, 1996).

**Strict Adherence to Constitutional Provisions and Modern Democracy by African Leaders:** There should be clear objective, resolute and strict adherence to the existing constitutional provisions of government and tenets of modern democracy by African leaders when sworn- in to power. It has been observed that most of the African leaders bitten by the scourge of sit-tight syndrome operate a primitive and crude style of ‘African democracy’; that is why they suspend or abrogate the constitutional provisions of governance in the states for their selfish interests to the detriment of the rule of law and due process.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the various recommended suggestions if adequately and strictly adhered to, would definitely go a long way in transcending this major challenge to the political and socio-economic development of Africa in all its ramifications. Africa’s large population, especially its youths, present a great opportunity to influence the current sit-tight generation of leaders who believe that they are the answer to the myriad problems of the continent, not realizing that in their bid to secure power, they become corrupted and become a problem to the people. True democracy has become a necessity in Africa and this must necessarily be reflected first of all, in leaders who must stop holding tight to power at all costs

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