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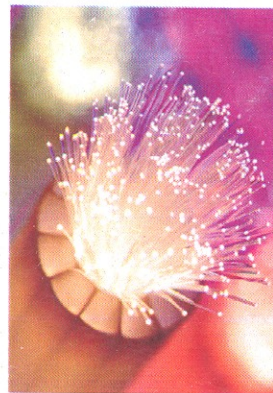
## LEAD STORY HEADLINE : 21 ST CENTURY BUSINESS PRACTICES

The process of globalization has led to an intensification of global interdependencies and the consolidation of the global as a social horizon. This has provided fertile breeding grounds for new organizations and the elaboration of existing ones.

'Globalization' is one of the defining buzzwords of our time—a term describing a variety of accelerating economic, political and cultural processes that are changing our experience of the world. This business school review provides an accessi-

ble exploration part of both the causes and affects of the phenomenon.

(Editor-2011)



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Succession Crisis In Emerging Democracies In Africa: Lessons From TOGO, GHANA And  
NIGERIA

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## Abstract

*The greatest challenge facing democracy in Africa is the problem of succession. Central to the discussion in this paper is the issue of political succession in a global world where emphasis is for countries to adopt a liberal democratic framework if they are to attain positive recognition in the international community. The politics of political succession in Africa countries since political independence has left much to be desired and, by extension, has affected the quality of democracy in the continent. The paper notes that the emerging democracies in Africa are faced with the challenge of leadership succession. It therefore gives a descriptive analysis of succession politics in Togo, Ghana and Nigeria. The paper recommends measures to bring about successful political succession in Africa. It concludes that for Africa to achieve sustainable democracy, effective transition through political succession is imperative.*

### 1.0. Introduction

The politics of succession in post-independence Africa has left much to be desired and, by extension, has affected the quality of democracy and human security in the continent. Since independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s most African states have experienced different forms of succession crises which has been rooted in both internal and external factors. The crisis generated by political succession is conflict over control of the state, where conflict is about who governs and does not usually envisage the creation of a new state. The unity of the state is tacitly accepted, by competing elites and conflict centres on control of the state and state resources (Mwaura, 1997:1).

As African countries grapple with the difficult processes of democratization and economic development and noting the prevalent long-entrenched political culture of life presidencies and premierships, the issue of leadership succession assumes greater magnitude in Africa today. It deserves critical appraisal and strategic management (Habisso, 2010:1). As argued by Odinkalu (2003), orderly political succession through the ballot box and peaceful alternation of power are the hallmarks of effective democratization which has been difficult in Africa. In short, Africa represents an area in which leadership change at the highest levels can be observed and studied.

The issue of political succession as noted by Adewale (2008:278) is of strategic importance as it affects a lot of other processes especially the allocation of resources and reward; definition of national goals and internal distribution of power. There are conditions and rules that guide political succession in every country and when these rules are followed, it allows for smooth and seamless political succession.

Central to the discussion in this paper is the issue of political succession in a global world where emphasis is for countries to adopt a liberal democratic framework if they are to attain positive recognition in the international community. Authoritarian regimes are therefore requested to open up the political space and also to adopt the free market ideology (Tenuche, 2010:232). He also noted elsewhere that compromised electoral processes resulting in prolonged civil litigations as in Nigeria and violent political conflicts as occurred in Kenya, Zimbabwe and Iran is becoming a permanent feature of emerging democracies. As the European Union rightly observed, "any administration founded on this fraud cannot have legitimacy" (Tenuche, 2009).

Of interest to this paper is an examination of those factors and forces that can be said to account for the successful consolidation of democracy in emerging democracy like Ghana as evidenced in the transitioning from the "praetorian cycle" of military rule (or broken-back state) in the immediate post-Nkrumah era characterised by unstable regimes of coups, counter-coups and instability, to initially semi-democratic but stable rule under Jerry Rawlings and later to a populist and fully functioning democratic rule (Tenuche, 2010:234). This progress is often attributed to Ghana's uninterrupted democratic rule which is now canvassed as a model for other African States to emulate.

Evidences from Togo, Ghana and Nigeria experiences confirms the position of this paper that a liberal democratic framework may likely guarantee sustainable development in Africa and other emerging democracies.

This study did reflect on the need to push the concerns about politics of succession to the front burner in Africa, and after a brief analysis of succession crisis in Africa, the article highlighted

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the constitutional summersaults which bear all the hallmarks of what ridicules Africa before the world.

## 2.0. Political Succession and Democracy: Some Conceptual Clarification:

Succession is broadly understood to mean the process of changing leadership. It basically involves three stages: the vacating of power by the old ruler, the selection of the new, and his or her legitimisation. Periods of succession are often tense times for all regimes, even where there exists established procedures and easy legitimisation. But times of succession are even more precarious for authoritarian regimes (Adewale, 2008:801). In African region, no country has been spared the tensions and pressures associated with the succession process since the annulment of the 12 June 1993 presidential election in Nigeria

Succession according to Mohiddin (1998: 14) is a process that involves the assumption or transference of leadership from one person, or group, to another. According to him, how successful, peaceful or effective such an assumption or transference might be will depend on the relevant laws, historical experiences, norms and cultural traditions of the peoples concerned; as well as the existential circumstances. Where the laws and traditions are observed the succession is likely to be peaceful and effective. Where such observations are ignored problems are likely to occur. In general leadership succession in post-Independence Africa has tended to be a product of crude political manipulations, rebellions or military coups rather than the peaceful application of the constitutional process. This is due partly to the fact that constitutionalism is not well founded in Africa; and partly due to the primacy of politics.

Political succession in the view of Le Vine (1973:1), is the politics of leadership control over access to state power. In post-independent Africa regimes, governments and political leaders have succeeded one another in a progression remarkable both for its frequency and pace. Put another way, political succession is an attempt to capture the state through the use of political power by one group at the expense of other groups (Mwaura, 1997:4). Political succession or the transfer of power from one person, group or government to another is very important in any country because it affects the stability, survival and development of nations.

Democracy, as aptly captured in the title of John Dunn's book on the subject, is "An Unfinished Journey." It is an uneven and non-linear process of deepening and maturation of political arrangements and practices. It is also capable of stagnation and reversal. Watchfulness, close monitoring and critique are essential elements in a process of constructive engagement with democratic development (Centre for Democracy and Development, 2000:1). Democracy as a concept is one of the most striking features of contemporary politics. There are no people or nation states nowadays that do not practice democracy or claim democracy. Democracy is cherished and claimed by many all over the world. Even the die-hard dictators verbally associate themselves with democracy so as to bring some form of recognition and legitimacy to their regimes (Ekiyor, 2004:26).

According to Ajibewa (2006:263), democracy is a reflective of the political climate of our time that the word is used to signify the desirable end state of so many social, economic, and political pursuits, or else to self-designate and the and the presumably legitimate so many existing. It is the best system of government ever evolved by human being. It is a form of government in which citizens in a state have political investments of political participation and trust (Ayoade, 1998:1).

Democracy connotes a representative form of government with participatory decision-making and accountability and the guarantees of human and civil rights without whose exercise the political system of democracy could not function. It does not connote good government or efficiency of lack of corruption, except to the extent that periodic elections act as a rectifier of ineptitude or malice in government behaviour (Agagu, 2004:63). To Ogunsanwo (1994:139), democracy can be define as a whole series of processes and cultural values which relates to the election of leaders at all levels of society, the behaviour of groups and individuals vis-a-vis those who hold different views on issues under consideration, as well as the use of power by those the process placed in decision making positions.

From the socialists and Marxist school of thought, democracy is tantamount to all power belonging to the people, which can only be ensued if they collectively own and control the means of production, thereby depriving the bourgeoisie of all power. Marxist scholars argued further that the minority capitalists who own the means of production in capitalist democracies actually rule, while creating an erroneous impression that they can do a great deal, whereas, in actual fact, it is nothing more than a deceit. They (the masses) can do nothing because all the wealth, all the power of capital is in the hands of their enemies (Sadeeq, 2006:250).

Democracy, in its holistic sense, would, therefore, mean that the people not only participated effectively in the political affairs of their society, but also take an active part in the control and management of the economy. Thus, democracy refers to political and economic empowerment of the mass of the people.

### 3.0. Political Succession in Africa: An Overview

The new or emerging democracies in Africa are faced with the challenge of leadership succession (Agyeman-Duah, 2003:2). The focus on the politics of succession at this point in the history of efforts at extending the frontiers of political reforms and citizen rights in Africa represents a concrete contribution to on-going reflections on the long-term health of the polities that make up a region that has only recently begun to recover from a history of post-independence instability and violent conflicts.

Viewed in a longer historical perspective, it would be difficult not to recall the struggles over succession between and among military officers and civilian politicians that represented a key feature of the politics of governance in Africa. The transition to electoral pluralism which marked the end of single party and military rule foreclosed certain types of succession politics whilst legitimating others (Martins, 2007:3).

To be sure, leadership succession is not completely gloomy in Africa. Most countries have had repeat elections involving transitions from one elected government to another even if the transitions mostly meant the return of incumbents and/or ruling parties to power. The



succeeding generation of African leaders as noted by Mohiddin (1998:24) is faced with six major challenges.

- the freedom and ability of the individual to pursue his/her own interests, and the confidence to express one's views and question those in power are critical to both democratic and development processes. The challenge is: given Africa's notion of the community and traditional preference for consensus, how to promote individual freedom in order to release the productive energies and creative talents without posing a threat to the fabric of the social cohesion, or encouraging destructive individualism and alienation.
- utilization of the global market forces to promote growth and sustainable human development beneficial to all the people and not only the multinationals and the few fortunate African elite.
- the creation of an environment that will promote the co-operation between the different generations of leaders and facilitate the recruitment and succession of leadership.
- the promotion of the culture of constitutionalism, accountability and transparency.
- democratic principles are universal but their manifestations depend on specific historical experience and social foundations.
- The sustainability of good governance depends on not only the observation of constitutionalism but also deference to the peoples cultures, norms and traditions. The challenge is the identification of the appropriate African norms and traditions that could be grounded with the universal democratic principles.

The enigma of succession politics is a major conflict-inducing factor in almost all African countries, including collapsed states. Little is known, let alone understood, of the relationship between leaders and political parties and we do not know whether succession crises are political party driven or a reflection of nationwide leadership crises. Some few countries are fast establishing themselves as good examples of peaceful and orderly leadership change. Orderly successions have taken place in South Africa, Botswana, Senegal, Ghana, Mali, Zambia

and more recently, Kenya. Even then, most of these pacesetting countries have tremendous challenges in sustaining the novelty (Agyeman-Duah, 2003:5). As argued by Adewale (2008:802), the politics of succession has, for two basic reasons, clearly become worthy of closer scrutiny both from a policy dimension and the kind of follow-up research work that would need to be undertaken. Firstly, succession politics is, by definition, central to the quality of civil rule and its long-term sustainability. Secondly, the ramifications of the succession process are integral to the apparent disconnect between the actual practice of democracy as experienced across West Africa and the democratic aspirations of the bulk of the citizenry.

Succession politics in West Africa's democracies as noted by Martins (2007:1) for instance, played out on at least six levels as follows:

- One level has involved the scope which has emerged for the alternation of power within and between political parties/coalitions of parties.
- Another level has centred upon inter-generational shifts in power crystallized into discourses about the need for the old guard to make way for a younger generation of politicians within political parties and the administrative system.
- At a third level, the process of governing the succession process between the military and elected civilian government was not always given in all of the countries where prolonged military rule formed a part of the old order, or where politics had become intensely militarised as a result of prolonged armed conflicts.
- Fourthly, the case has also been made for gendering politics both to increase the participation of women and to assure them a role in the succession process.
- Fifthly, concern has been raised about the role of electoral agencies and the judiciary as credible arbiters in and governors of the succession process.
- The sixth and much more contested issue in the succession process has been the push on the part of incumbents to amend existing constitutional provisions, alter party rules and procedures, and engage in gerrymandering either to perpetuate themselves in office or anoint a successor whom they hope to control. In some instances, incumbents have positioned their own sons to succeed them and have undertaken repeated

reshufflings of the political system to increase their chances of achieving their objectives.

This latter component of the politics of succession in West Africa merits closer attention as it has manifested itself in different ways across the sub-region with adverse consequences for the health of the political order (Adewale, 2008:804).

The transformation that occurred on the West African political topography from the early 1990s were broadly seen as symbolizing a new era in the political development of the sub-region. After all, West Africa, with its succession of military *coups d'état* and the political violence associated with the single party systems that proliferated, had developed a reputation as one of the more volatile and unstable belts on the African continent. While *de jure* and *de facto*, rules of succession were clearly in operation and there were a number of outstanding examples of legal succession, the unpredictability of change, the rate at which it happened, and the resort to illegalities that accompanied it constituted the foundation on which West Africa's reputation for instability was anchored (Adewale, 2008:803).

Corrupt African leaders, who are often among the most afflicted by these conditions, masquerade as champions of Africa, but instead they are effectively reversing the gains of the liberation struggles and striving to become masters over their own people, in their fictional nation-states. The most extreme form of this was the Central African Republic's (CAR) Bokassa who, in September 1976, abrogated his country's constitution and declared himself 'the imperial majesty' or 'emperor'. Today, the CAR continues to be afflicted by the lack of sustainable peace. African dictators and pseudo-democrats overtly and covertly operate as agents of the new forms of colonialism, by continuing to allow the penetration of their economies and societies (Odinkalu, 2003:30).

Another aspect of leadership succession that is emerging in Africa is that presidents step down from presidential office but remain leaders of their respective political parties—for example, Joachim Chissano in Mozambique, Sam Nujoma in Namibia, Bakili Muluzi in Malawi Olusegun Obasanjo in Nigeria. This has led to increased power struggles within the political parties, and in

one case, that of Malawi, has resulted in national Party Structures and Internal Organization political instability. It is therefore not unlikely that control over the political parties themselves will become more important for national political power as well. While this could potentially be a good thing, it also opens up the possibility of power struggles that can threaten the break-up of parties and governments.

Recent cases of succession-driven constitutional crisis in Africa can be divided into four categories. These according to Mohamed-Salih (2009:9) are:

- cases where a coalition between opposition political parties, civil society and even opposition within the ruling coalition and parliament was able to thwart a president's ambitions to amend the constitution in order to extend their term of office (President Muluzi in Malawi and President Olusegun Obasanjo in Nigeria);
- cases where the opposition parties and their leaders failed to stop the incumbent presidents from amending the constitutions (President Yoweri Museveni in Uganda and President Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe);
- cases where the succession issue engendered a constitutional crisis fuelled by ethnic rivalry, resulting in a military coup, electoral fraud, civil unrest and the subsequent division of the country into South and North, each under separate political leadership and military command (Côte d'Ivoire); and
- the case of Togo, where the succession crisis was fuelled by the Togolese military, which subverted the constitution by appointing the son of the deceased president (Gnassingbe Eyadema) instead of the speaker of Parliament as required by the constitution. The succession crisis resulted in political instability, riots, the killing of demonstrators and the arrest of opposition leaders and democracy and human rights activists.

In 2000 Frederick Chiluba of Zambia, about to complete his constitutionally mandated two term tenure as President, got the nomination of his ruling party despite massive internal opposition, including his own vice president and several of his ministers and parliamentarians. His decision in May 2001 to respect the Constitution and not to seek a third term came only after violence

and a rare and courageous threat of impeachment by his Parliament. He then engineered the victory of his handpicked successor Levy Mwanawasa in the December 2001 elections. Ironically Mwanawasa who was presumably coming to protect Chiluba has turned around to prosecute him for abuse of office and corruption (Agyeman-Duah, 2003).

In April 2003, President Bakili Muluzi of Malawi sacked his entire Cabinet just two days after announcing that the Cabinet and the ruling United Democratic Front politburo had anointed Binguwa Mutharika, an outsider, to be his successor for the elections scheduled for May 18, 2004. For the past year or so Muluzi had tried but failed both in court and in public opinion to amend the Constitution to allow him a third term in office. In frustration, he has decided to do a Chuluba in Malawi by handpicking Mutharika as successor. Muluzi's succession maneuvers in Malawi are still evolving and it may be too early to predict the outcome. However, two possible scenarios are obvious: either handpicked Mutharika would become a John Major or an Mwanawasa after the May 2004 elections. Either way, unless he has stayed "clean" as a leader, he would have questions to answer once out of office. Also, in Nigeria, when Olusegun Obasanjo failed in his third term as President, he picked Late Musa Yar'adua as his successor.

Leadership succession could be problematic depending on whether there is a succession strategy and incumbents are prepared to respect it. We find interesting differences between succession in Western countries and that of African countries. While Thatcher was seemingly concerned about getting a successor who will secure her legacy and take her policies forward, Chiluba and Muluzi appeared to prefer a successor who would protect rather than take forward a legacy.

Chiluba and Muluzi represent just a few examples of real or attempted perpetual incumbency in Africa. Indeed, the "life president" or "perpetual incumbency" syndrome is uninhibited even in some emerging constitutional democracies in Africa. In Namibia, for example, the constitution was amended in 1998 to extend Sam Nujoma's tenure as president beyond the prescribed two terms. The syndrome is more evident in regressive democracies such as Zimbabwe. Since becoming an executive president in 1987, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe has

won every election but not without controversy and violence. Into his twenty-second year of rule, Mugabe defied all the norms of electoral decency to win yet another election victory in 2002. The persistent tendency of leaders to hang on to power once they attain it has often raised the stakes in electoral politics in Africa.

#### **4.0. Succession Crisis in Africa: A Descriptive Analysis of Political Developments in Togo, Ghana and Nigeria**

The politics of succession at this point in the history of efforts at extending the frontiers of political reforms and citizen rights in Africa represents a concrete contribution to on-going reflections on the long-term health of the polities that make up the region that has only recently begun to recover from a history of post independence instability and violent conflicts (CODESRIA-OSIWA, 2007).

The Republic of Togo is located between Ghana and Republic of Benin in West Africa with a population of 5.5 million. After attaining independence from France in 1960, Sylvanus Olympio ruled the country until Gnassingbe Eyadema seized power in a bloodless coup in 1967. Following the coup, he dissolved all political parties and governed unchallenged through the military, which he kept loyal through a system of patronage, for almost three decades. Torture and extra-judicial killings were common under Eyadema, and an estimated one million Togolese left the country since he came to power in 1967 (Adewale, 2008:805). There can be no doubt that Eyadema refracted the trajectories of the destinies of at least two generations of Togolese. According to Englebert (2005:176), Gnanssigbe Eyadema, Africa's longest ruler suffered a major heart attack and latter died of cardiac arrest on February 5, 2005. Gnassingbe Eyadema's short profile revealed that, he assumed power on the 13th of January 1967; proclaimed president 14 April 1967; elected president 30th December 1979; re-elected 21 December 1986; 25 August 1993, 21 June 1998, and 1 June 2003.

Togo under Eyadema can simply be described as a 'police state', where disagreement with the incumbent has always been seen as political vice or crime since the country's flag independence. This has made violence omnipresent in Eyadema's Togo and, by implication,

succeeded in undercutting the activities of groups and individuals with antiestablishment or alternative views (Adewale, 2008:814).

As soon as Gnassingbe Eyadema was confirmed dead, Togo's military high command reportedly announced Faure as his father's successor as new president of the Republic. The military elite, led by Gen. Zakari Nandja achieved this feat by immediately suspending the constitution and swearing allegiance to Faure as the president. Furthermore, and in a quick move to undercut diplomatic pressure and to give their illegal political maneuverings a semblance of fair political game, efforts were made to 'legitimize' the process. Probably worried by the thought that military intervention in African politics has become old fashioned and unacceptable to the African Union, the Togolese National Assembly suddenly convened and began the process of retroactively legitimizing the installation of Faure Gnassingbe.

Though the opposition in Togo was expected to take up the gauntlet and confront the state over the illegal assumption of office of the president by Faure, yet it was initially doubtful if the opposition alone could do the job. A cursory reflection on the State-opposition relations in Togo shows clearly that the opposition has virtually been decimated over the years. This reality is deeply rooted in the political history of the country.

Faure's decision to step down paved the way for the appointment of Mr. Abass Bonfoh, the vice president of the National Assembly as the interim president. The choice of Abass Bonfoh was contested by the opposition, arguing that the return of the exspeaker was relevant to the process of restoration of the constitutional order. But Faure's decision to step aside was not anyway indicative of the end of his political ambition to succeed his father as well as rule Togo. In yet another contriving circumstances Faure in tandem with Togolese elite quickly engineered a special congress of the ruling Rally of the Togolese People (RPT). During the congress in Lome, he emphasized the need to silence the quarrels between the older members of the party, known as barons and the youth. He also ensured that the over 3,000 delegates also endorsed him unanimously, by a show of hands as the party's candidate during the presidential election.

Eyadema's re-election in 2003 was also described as an assault on the integrity of the democratic process, a sham of an election, an embarrassment. His victory lends credence to critics of African democratic practice who are wont to dismiss the system as an institution of traditional rulers where sit-tight is a normal syndrome (The Guardian, June 13, 2003:16). From the fore-going it has become obvious that the main opposition in Togo have not been actively involved in electoral contest since late-1990s. The reasons for the boycott range from state-induced violence, to intimidation and fraudulent handling of the entire processes. Thus it is possible to conclude that the agenda for 'Eyadema Dynasty' may have been in the pipeline longer than the political events and succession tension of February 2005. It is therefore important to notes that succession crisis is not over yet as the struggle straddles the continuing manipulation of geo-ethnic divide in Togo.

A peep into Ghana's political history reveal that the state attained independence from the United Kingdom on 6th March 1957 and on July 1, 1960 asserted its complete autonomy from Britain and became known as the Republic of Ghana. Ghana's political life has been marked by a series of alternations between authoritarianism and attempts to democratise the political system. There were three periods of elected government and three of military rule between 1957 and 1992. In contrast to the First Republic under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, the interludes of civilian government under the Second (1969–72) and Third Republics (1979–81) were short-lived, unable to endure for longer than 30 months (Crawford, 2004). Thus, until 1992, Ghana's multiparty experience was interrupted repeatedly by the drift towards dictatorship. The perceived failures of the governments of the day and their mistaken policy options led to repeated military interventions in 1966, 1972, 1978, 1979 and 1981.

Dr. Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah, a leading African Nationalist was the first Prime Minister and later the president of Ghana. As is the character of postcolonial States, Ghana inherited an over-developed bureaucratic structure complemented with a strong military structure. Nkrumah, a strong advocate of the developmental State canvassed for the strong State in the economy. His political party, the Convention People's Party (CPP), also had a nationalist and even Pan-Africanist outlook unlike the ethnic based parties that characterised the initial parties



in neighbouring Nigeria. At independence in 1957, Ghana when compared to most sub-Saharan countries was in a relatively prosperous financial situation (Tenuche, 2010:239). The subsequent military coups in Ghana cited corruption and decay in the bureaucracy, declining social values and social infrastructure as basis for the coups and sort to legitimise their regimes by canvassing a need for change.

Jerry Rawlings, in June, 1979 executed a coup and embarked on a house cleansing exercise that only slightly fell short of a revolution. With the support of a disenchanted public, Rawlings set two objectives;

- to rid the country of corruption and
- to hand over power to a popularly elected government.

Ghana under Rawlings used the division between the military elite and the rank and file to commence the transition to civil rule that appear to have endured, the question is has this created the required base for sustainable development. Ghana under Rawlings was forced to adopt constitutional rule in what Luckham (1998) termed a “co-opted” transition in which an existing autocratic regime used the benefits of incumbency to win contested elections and liberalise her rule in a carefully pactured extrications of the military regime from power with the military controlling the agenda.

Rawlings handed over power to Hilla Limann in 1979 after the house cleansing exercise to rid the country of corruption. However, the Limann regime was cut short on 31st December, 1981 because the institutionalised corruption that first brought Rawlings to power had again reared its ugly head. Ghana has had a fair share of this experience. This is evidenced in the praetorian rule, (the civilian to military and back to civilian rule) in Ghana prior to the rule of Jerry Rawlings in Ghana already alluded to.

Arising from this development, despite the popular position of Rawlings to establish a government that will serve the people, the state adopted the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in April, 1983 with the robust financial support of the World Bank and the IMF (Tenuche,

2010:241). Kwei (2000) observed that the implementation of SAP in Ghana was adjudged to be the most successful in Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite this success story, SAP did not impact positively on the living standards of the larger majority of the citizens especially in the rural areas; neither was the programme able to place Ghana like other African States that embraced the programme on a sustainable path to development.

Ghana, no doubt has experienced some growth when compared with other African States. In the World Bank ranking and development index 2009, Ghana is ranked amongst countries with medium human development. As already indicated, countries in this category include China, Turkey, Tunisia, South Africa, Morocco, Egypt and Togo among others. The successful succession processes in Ghana gives signals of a bold move to consolidate the democratic process however it has not translated to economic transformation of the Ghanaian economy (Tenuche, 2010:246). The relative autonomy status of African States places on them the burden of addressing the contradictions that exist in their economies of which they are a part within a liberal democratic framework. The issue of stability in Africa becomes largely problematic. Any country that is therefore able to engender stability as Ghana has been able to demonstrate becomes a good laboratory for close examination.

*Major Events in Ghana's Political Trajectory: 1957 to date*

1957–1958	Attempts at political pluralism
1958–1964	Elected Civilian Regime
1964–1966	One-Party System (CPP)
1966–1969	Military Regime
1969–1972	Elected Civilian Regime
1972–1979	Military Regime
1979–1981	Elected Civilian Regime
1981–1992	Military Regime
1992–1996	Political Transition
1996 to date	Emerging democracy

Source: Zounmenou David, 2009:2

Ghana's 2008 general elections ushered in 'the country's second peaceful change of government since its return to multi-partyism in 1992. This happened against a background of generalised anxiety and distrust about electoral processes in Africa, where elections have often

been depicted as sources of tension and threats to national stability. The peaceful transfer of power in Ghana stands in sharp contrast to the frequent setbacks to the democratisation process elsewhere in West Africa. In Mauritania, the political transition process has been halted abruptly by a military coup; in Guinea Bissau, the emergence from domestic political conflict has been interrupted by the assassination of the president and army chief (Zounmenou, 2009). Having held four general elections without major difficulties, it could be said that Ghana has developed political institutions capable of responding effectively to electoral challenges (Lemarchand, 1998). Nevertheless, political institutions alone, regardless of their strength, cannot explain why the prospects for democratic consolidation are brighter in Ghana than in many other African states.

Ghana is widely seen as a key United States partner in the region and as an African "success story" in light of its successful transition to democracy and attainment of substantial economic gains in recent years, albeit in the face of continuing widespread poverty rates. It is a stable country in an often volatile sub-region, and has helped to mediate several political and/or military conflicts in West Africa over the last quarter century (Nicholas, 2009:2).

Nigeria since independence has not been blessed with how one regime ends and another commences. This problem is applicable to both military and civilian regimes. Since political independence in 1960, Nigeria has had problems of political succession including the 1964 impasse, the 1966 military coup, the 1983 coup, the annulment of the June 12 presidential election and the recent logjam of the absence of the former president, Late Umar Musa Yar'adua for 65 days. The challenges to political succession in Nigeria include among other things absence of true federalism, incumbency factor, corruption, weak democratic institutions, decay in the social fabric and ineffective and compromised legislature.

Nigeria has a leadership succession problem which dates back to when the first coup was staged by the five majors on January 15, 1966. Under the military, the Decree setting up the military government never provided for how a military junta would be succeeded by another or

how a military government would transit into a civilian rule. All military officers are potential heads of state (Omoruyi, 2006).

Under the civilian regime, there is "a boundary on rulers" that we call the Constitution. The Constitution makes it clear as to how one government would begin and how it would end or succeeded by another one. This is usually through an election. Except in 2007, Nigeria has never been blessed with a democratically elected political order that ends well. We will recall how the government of Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (1959-1966) ended; we can still recall how the government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari (1979-1983) ended. The Olusegun Obasanjo regime (1999-2007) was the first successful transition from civilian to civilian. Though it has been argued that Yar'adua was imposed on Nigerians by Obasanjo. The current one under President Goodluck Jonathan has the opportunity to learn from the fate of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> democratically elected civilian governments and end in accordance with the Constitution.

In this paper we examine the text of the 1999 Constitution relating to succession in Nigeria. Specifically, the text of Article 2, Section 1, Paragraph 5 prescribes what to do if the president is removed, dies, resigns, or is incapable or carrying out his duties. The actual text of the paragraph reads:

*In case of the removal of the President from Office, or of his Death, Resignation, or Inability to discharge the Powers and Duties of the said Office, the same shall devolve on the Vice President, and the Congress may by Law provide for Case of Removal, Death, Resignation, or Inability, both of the President and Vice President, declaring what Officer shall then act as President, and such Officer shall act accordingly, until the Disability be removed, or a President shall be elected*

The Constitution of the Presidential System since 1979 till date makes the Vice President the automatic successor to the office of the President under three conditions (death, resignation and impeachment).

Alhaji Shehu Shagari, being one of the founders of the Presidential System in Nigeria, did not see anything wrong with the Vice President succeeding him automatically in office would the unexpected, death, happened. Of course, this is not an issue in the U.S. It should be noted that

in the 200 years of the U.S history, nine VPs became Presidents when the incumbent died or resigned. It is important to note that, the nine Vice Presidents in US who became Presidents were: John Tyler (1841); Millard Fillmore (1850); Andrew Johnson (1865); Chester A. Arthur (1881); Theodore Roosevelt (1901); Calvin Coolidge (1923); Harry S. Truman (1945); Lyndon B. Johnson (1963) and Gerald R. Ford (1974).

The Nigerian circumstance as we find it under Yar'adua where the president, as was expected in the constitution, did not notify the legislature of his incapacitation or inability to perform his normal duties due to a sudden but not unanticipated health condition.

For Nigeria, available evidence does not indicate that the democratic process is yet to gain foot in the country for obvious reasons. The leadership in Nigeria is engulfed in a crisis of self confidence arising from the discredited elections. The result of the 2007 presidential elections are still a matter of litigation in Courts while the election results in about two thirds of the States in Nigeria are still been contested in courts across the country. Further to this Nigeria unlike Ghana is finding it difficult to play an active role in international politics.

Also, of particular interest to this study is an emerging trend among the political class and the elite corps in Nigeria. It is now becoming fashionable for family members of the political class, retired military officers and those of retired bureaucrats to contest and win elections into public office because they have the monumental wealth at their disposal to do so.

The democratic experience in Nigeria in the last decade cannot be adjudged as positive when compared to Ghana. The political elite in Nigeria specifically leaders of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) cite the transfer of power from Chief Olusegun Obasanjo to Umaru Yar'Adua in May 2007 after serving two terms as the democratically elected President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in May 1999 as evidence of democratic consolidation in the country. The April 2007 election that ushered in Umaru Yar'Adua as President was discredited both nationally and internationally as anything but free and fair. The International Republican Institute (IRI) said "the election fell below the standard set by Nigerian elections and international standards witnessed by IRI around the World" (Tenuche, 2009). As the European

Union rightly observed, “any administration founded on this fraud cannot have legitimacy” (Tenuche, 2009). Consolidation of political power becomes the main preoccupation of political leaders where the political processes that propel them to power are compromised.

#### 5.0. Why Leaders Cling to Power in Africa?

In Africa, history has shown that even those who rose to power with good intentions soon became corrupt. They took advantage of their position to enrich themselves and their family and friends. Then in order to protect their wealth and power, they silenced those who threatened their authority. As one injustice led to another, and as their friends became fewer, they grew increasingly paranoid and oppressive. They desperately clung to power in fear that if they lost control then they might also lose their fortunes, their freedom, and possibly even their lives” (Kaufmann, 2008). A major consequence of the absence of internal party democracy and the nondemocratic nature of African governments’ party leaders is that the latter attempt to stay in power despite constitutional provisions that restrict their office to a specific number of terms (mostly two). There is also a strong correlation between government party leaders tampering with the constitution to secure more terms than what is constitutionally permitted and the flaring up of acute conflict. Among the cases of succession-driven conflicts in the prelude to democratization are those of Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Togo and Zimbabwe.

Political succession remains contentious and highly challenging in many African countries. The privileges associated with power and the fear of being prosecuted by their successors causes some leaders to maintain control of the political process even through electoral manipulation and violence. For some years, the design of electoral systems to encourage cooperation, bargaining and interdependence between rival political leaders and the groups they represent has become increasingly crucial for the promotion of democracy in poor and divided societies. This seems to have made it increasingly difficult to hold elections without violence or protest in such settings. As political elites see elections a means to capture the state apparatus and the

resources it commands, electoral processes have come under severe threat (Zounmenou, 2009).

Be this as it may, why is leadership succession such a problem in Africa? In the view of Igbuzor (2010), the rise of Presidential system of government where the President accumulates tremendous power has led to the accumulation of power in one person who controls the political party machinery and resources of state and cling to power as long as possible. According to Habisso (2010:2), there are, of course, several reasons why leaders cling to power in Africa; some amongst the many possible ones as highlighted by him are as follows:

First is the absence of institutional framework for succession in many countries and, where the framework exists, its utter disregard by the leadership. Simply, the problem is symptomatic of authoritarian or totalitarian governance. In several such states and establishments leaders deliberately ignore this requirement and even make it a taboo to discuss succession plans.

Secondly, the cultural attitudes toward leadership in Africa. On one hand, political leaders tend to regard themselves as traditional rulers and want to be treated as such. Thus, they accept and often demand royal or chiefly treatment including accolades, appellations and the payment of homage. Under the pretext of promoting the national culture, leaders turn themselves literally into chiefs: to be greeted by a retinue, drumming and traditional incantations. This kind of treatment easily gets into their heads; they begin to see themselves as the "big chief" and, as you know, chiefs rule till death do them part!

The third explanation for the problem of leadership succession in Africa is the extensive powers that either the constitution or the lack of it gives to political leaders and the resultant patronage and patrimonial systems. Besides the extensive appointive powers of most African Executives, they also dominate lawmaking, control the national purse, and supervise the huge national development program, including the award of contracts. This overwhelming concentration of power enables the leader to create and preside over a system of patronage. The power to reward or sanction that turns subjects to supplicants reinforces the leader's feeling of indispensability and impregnability.

The final explanation relates to the misdeeds of leaders while in office. Unfortunately, not many African leaders maintain good records of human rights and management of the nation's resources. There are those who murdered or tortured opponents and real or perceived enemies; those who turned the national economy into personal exchequers; those whose indiscretion caused massive individual and national losses; and those whose corrupt practices are legendary.

#### **6.0. What needs to be done?**

To sustain democracy and good governance in Africa, there is the need for strategic thinking on succession management from the political, corporate, traditional and social perspectives. Political succession in Africa should be guided by adherence to the rules and procedure of succession, the conduct of credible, free and fair elections and citizen participation in governance and development. Democratic organizations and institutions such as political parties, civil society, labour, the legislature and the judiciary have critical roles to play in ensuring smooth political succession.

The most central element in managing leadership succession in African democracies is elections and the challenge of ensuring a legitimate and credible electoral body. Elections are the first and necessary steps, the "linchpin events" as they constitute the "defining moment in any transition" toward sustainable democracy. For electoral outcomes to be credible, for the emergent leader to be legitimate, the electoral body must be seen to be independent and of high integrity. It must also be equipped adequately to conduct its business effectively. To attain the confidence of political parties and society at large, the parties and civil society should have ample opportunities to participate in the electoral process.

Strengthening democratic institutions would result in the reduction of the power of the state and the empowerment of citizens, another democratic imperative. Dominance is a major factor in leadership succession problems in Africa. Delegating aspects of state power to institutions like Parliament and through decentralization, that is, enhanced local governance would help reduce the unwieldy privileged patronage of the Executive in society.



Constitutional or democratic literacy is essential in sustaining democracy and must be accelerated in African countries. Educating citizens on the Constitution and on their rights and responsibilities, including the protection of the Constitution will minimize the tendency of leaders to take their people for a ride. Citizens should speak up against the unconstitutional and retrogressive succession plans being manipulated by a tiny cabal for selfish and parochial interest.

### 7.0. Conclusion

The concept of liberal democracy as currently propagated by WBIs' appears to have begun to gain roots in Africa. The question however is, can this translate to successful transition in the continent? The concept of liberal democracy has served as a limiting force as concepts such as freedom, fundamental rights are often used to cover the crude methods of capital accumulation by the elite, a development that is becoming entrenched in developing societies (Tenuche, 2010:248).

The emerging realities in Togo, Ghana and Nigeria as the countries adopt a democratic system under the eagle eyes of the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI), confirms the suspicion of many that the system appears unable to engender sustainable development. The success story of the developed capitalist societies derived from the economic opportunity to access resources from the colonized regions. The socialist states were able to shut out the world and using authoritarian regimes developed their economies. The "Asian Tigers" seized certain opportunities that existed at the point of their economic take off to propel economic growth (Tenuche, 2001).

Emerging democracies are no more in a position to exploit these opportunities; rather they have to develop in a globalized economy within the constraints imposed by external forces largely directed by the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI). It may however not be totally correct to lay all the blames of the inability of emerging democracies to positively propel economic growth in their societies at the door steps of external impositions given the basic character and nature of the state in emerging economies (Tenuche, 2010:247).

The absence of a strategic plan for succession, including the mechanics for transferring power, could also create difficulties and embarrassment when the inevitable happens, as it happened in Kenya. Kenyans were indeed shocked to observe how traumatic the transition process from Arap Moi to Kibaki leadership proved to be – just because officials did not know exactly what to do. Finally, it is necessary to reiterate the earlier points about the need to reduce state power, accelerate constitutional literacy and strengthen democratic institutions, including Parliament and the electoral body. Achieving these ends would create an environment that is conducive for orderly and sustainable leadership succession in Africa. And leaders who accomplish the democratic ideal of many generations will always be remembered in the hearts and minds of the African peoples.

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