

REMINISCENCES OF SELF-SUCCESSION BID IN THE NIGERIAN POLITICAL TERRAIN

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Abstract

This paper attempts to show the prevalence of self-succession crusade that most African leaders, particularly, their Presidents or Head of juntas had engaged in. In the case of Nigeria, I traced the selfish interest of incumbents in elongating their stay in office. This was the case of Generals Yakubu Gowon, Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida and then, Sani Abacha. Unfortunately, the civilian regime of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo attempted to elongate his tenure through Constitutional amendment, but failed woefully. The "state" resources were wasted. Hence, this paper concluded in part that, Nigerians should continue to resist any attempt of any forthcoming administration to bid for self-succession with the aim of exceeding their tenure in office.

Introduction

Most African leaders that we have witnessed are often unwilling to vacate their political leadership positions as when due particularly the chief executive leadership position otherwise known as Head of State or the President. The rationale for this reluctance could be attributed to the attractiveness and juicy incentives attached to this position. These attractive incentives have been built into this political leadership position by the political elites themselves for their personal benefits. Such attractiveness ranges from jumbo salary, various types of allowances such as housing, wardrobe, food, quality education for their children, free health care services for themselves and their entire family members, numerous overseas trips with unbelievable very high allowances called estacode, tight security outfits and so many other benefits all at the expense of the tax payers. In addition, to all these, there are unquantifiable friendship that will be courted by other political elites within and outside the country which they do not wish to loose for obvious reasons.

In view of the above scenario, African leaders particularly the chief executives find it apparently difficult to think of relinquishing power when the time to do so is ripe. Consequently, we have witnessed "sit-tight" syndrome common among African leaders. Political succession therefore, is made very tense and difficult and becomes a life and death situation. Instances of sit-tight African presidents are abound in the

African political leadership landscape. Some of the worst cases of the self-elongated tenure are presidents of Angola over twenty six (26 years) in office, Guinea over twenty five (25 years), in office. Republic of Cameroon over twenty three (23 years) Malawi over eleven (11 years) Chad, over fifteen (15 years) Sudan, over sixteen (16 years), Djibouti, over twelve (12 years) Gabon, over forty five (45 years) Swaziland, over nineteen (19 years), Zimbabwe, over twenty five (25 years), Uganda, over nineteen (19 years) Gambia, over eleven (11 years), Tunisia over eighteen (18 years), Libya over thirty Six (36 years), and Egypt, over twenty four (24 years) (Olurode, 2006:2).

It is however pertinent to note that there were few African leaders who willingly left office as when due. Such patriotic and nationalistic leaders include late Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Nelson Mandela of South Africa who vowed that he will not run for his country's presidency a second time despite numerous appeals made to him to run for at least a second time. Mandela, for the love of his country relinquished the position to Thabo Mbeki. These are few examples of people who were very zealous and committed to the transformation of their countries' socio-economic situations for the benefit of the entire masses.

For the purpose of illustrating the self-centeredness of African leaders in sitting tight to power, the case of late President Guassingbe Eyadema who came to power in Togo in 1967 and remained tight to power until death took him away in 2005, meaning that he was in office for thirty eight (38 years). His son was hurriedly sworn into the Togolese presidency by the military despite protests and controversies. Yoweri Museveni having seized power in Uganda in 1986, later manipulated his way to amend the Ugandan Constitution so that he could qualify to run as the president for a Third Term. Obviously, the worst of the worst case is that of Robert Mugabe, who is getting close to over eighty-five (85) years old and yet still fighting tooth and nail to remain as Zimbabwe's President.

(2) Reminiscences of Self-Succession Bid in the Nigerian Political History

At this juncture, there is a need to visit memory lane to periscope at attempts that have been made by successive regimes particularly during the military regimes to unnecessarily elongate their tenures beyond the stated or stipulated time frame.

(i) General Yakubu Gowon's Regime

As a result of the counter coup in July 1966 by some Northern military officers of the Nigerian Army who sought redress due to the well known lopsided nature of January coup 1966, General Ironsi was killed and General Gowon (then Lt. Colonel) took over the mantle of leadership of the Nigeria state at the young age of thirty one (31 years old). When it came to the issue of transition to civil rule, Gowon announced that he would hand over power to a democratically elected civilian

administration within two years. His nine point agenda or tasks for the return to civil rule included preparation and adoption of a new Constitution, creation of more states, conducting a national population census, organisation of elections and installation of popularly elected governments in the states and at federal level as well as organisation of governments in the States and at federal level as well as organisation of genuinely national political parties (Kirk-Green, 1978:473).

In line with Gowon's promise to hand over power to civilian regime, he mapped out a programme that was aimed to ultimately return the administrative powers to democratically elected civilian government and promised to relinquish power in the year 1976. To the nation's surprise, Gowon in a speech during the celebration of the country's 14th Independence anniversary reneged on his earlier promise to handover power and dismissed the 1976 date as unrealistic (Agedah, 1993:22). Gowon reviewed the situation that informed his postponement to an indefinite date in the following statement:

Four years ago when I gave 1976 as the target date for returning the country to normal constitutional government, both myself and the military hierarchy honestly believed that by that date especially after a bloody civil war there would have developed an atmosphere of efficient stability. We had thought that genuine demonstration of self-control in pursuing sectional ends in the overall interest of the country would have become the second nature of Nigerians (Agedah, 1993:22).

This indefinite position of Gowon's administration on his transition to civil rule could not have been interpreted otherwise other than the administration intended to perpetuate itself in power and probably self-succession after being in power for almost nine years.

Aside from not fulfilling the promise to handover power, Gowon reneged on his promises to appoint new federal commissioners, redeploy the incumbent State Governors, and appointed new ones to replace the old ones. He continuously found reasons to defer their implementation. All these inconsistencies strengthen the fear and suspicion of the general public that Gowon's ambition was aimed at remaining as the President of the nation for life (*ibid*:22). It was then not surprising when on the 29th July, 1975 Gowon's administration was over thrown by another military coup.

The government of Murtala Mohammed who led the new government quickly drew up and announced a five stage programme designed to ensure a smooth transition to civil rule between (1975-1979). Unfortunately, the counter coup of February 13, 1976 took the life of General Mohammed and left General Obasanjo who (will be recalled) reluctantly took over as Head of State. Obasanjo kept strictly to the time table left by his predecessor and timely handed over to an elected civilian administration on October 1st, 1979.

Offiong, O. J. Ph.D

(ii) Ibrahim Babangida's Seemingly Attempt at Self-Succession

The rationale for the military coup that brought Babangida into military leadership of the country was based according to Babangida on the leadership style of the Buhari-Idiagbon administration whose governance was accused of lack of consultation, accountability, consensus, justice and high-handedness and of course, the obnoxious Public Officers Protection Accusation Decree No. 4 of 1984. The coupists also complained of lack of economic and political reforms and the indication of appropriate time frame to embark upon issues as a condition for returning the country to civil rule. In the maiden speech of Babangida, he made the following comments concerning Buhari's administration:

Major-General Muhammadu Buhari was too rigid and uncompromising in his attitude to issues of national significance. Efforts to make him understand that a diverse polity like Nigeria required recognition and appreciation of differences in both cultural and individual perceptions, only served to aggravate these attitudes. Major-General Tunde Idiagbon was similarly inclined in that respect. As Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, he failed to exhibit the appropriate disposition demanded by his position. He arrogated to himself absolute knowledge of problems and solutions, and acted in accordance with what was convenient to him, using the machinery of government as his tool (Babangida, 1989:22).

Having severely criticised the Buhari's regime as seen on the above quotation, Babangida followed a transition trend similar to that of Murtala/Obasanjo regime with the most elaborate timetable to disengage after four years (1986-1990), but thereafter extended to six years and later shifted to January 1993. Summarily, Babangida spent eight (8) good years as military president without handing over power to civilian government.

It is pertinent to mention here that Babangida had the most elaborate transition framework and also costly transition programme. This write-up cannot elaborate on them but suffice to state that his administration forced on the people two political parties, the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) after banning and un-banning certain category of politicians. He successfully conducted local government and state elections as well as federal legislative Assembly elections (Offiong & Idise, 2002:26). The Presidential election which was the last stage of the over-stretched transition programme, was successfully conducted and considered overwhelmingly the most free and fair election in the Nigeria political history by local and international observers. This acclaimed successful Presidential election held on June 12, 1993 and from incomplete results released by the then National Electoral Commission (NEC), the SDP candidate, Chief M.K.O. Abiola (now late) was clearly leading in votes and in number of States won.

The inevitable victory of the SDP was later confirmed by the results released by the pro-democracy movements based on the tabulations from electoral officers, party representatives and the National Electoral Commission. Unfortunately, on the 26 of June 1993, General Babangida announced the annulment of the election claiming that, the politicians were intimidating the judiciary, that they had spent too much money on the campaigns, had dubious foreign connections and that the government owed them money and so forth (*ibid*: 27). As would be recalled, the annulment caused very bitter and unprecedented reactions within and outside the country. Countries such as Canada, United States of America, United Kingdom and the European Community imposed some limited sanctions on Nigeria, particularly on the military sector.

A typical illustration of the frustrated reaction to the annulment by a Jos-based Nigerian business man, Samson Nedo is quoted below:

The politicians are just wasting their time. They ought to have known that Babangida is dribbling them. Nigerians are wasting their time going to vote. When he initiated the transition programme, he knew he was just using tricks. Where was he when they were doing the primaries? Was he not in Nigeria, if he was sincere, why didn't he stop the primaries then? I will be the biggest fool on earth if I go out to vote in another election

The above cited reaction is just one of the several comments made against Babangida's annulment of the Presidential election of 1993, which convinced many people that his administration had a "hidden agenda", and that the transition was a mere farce to buy time and continue to rule the nation indefinitely.

Arthur Nzeribe's ABN Role on Babangida's Transition to Civil Rule

Many Nigerians inside and outside in foreign countries, questioned the role of Nzeribe's Association for Better Nigeria (ABN) with the presidency of Babangida, as an association sponsored and funded by Babangida to propagate for his regime to remain in power at least for additional four (4) more years and probably succeed himself as a civilian president. In spite of the courts rulings on the illegality of ABN and despite the fact that such campaign clearly contravened the transition to civil rule decree, ABN was never harassed by the security operatives or brought to order by same Babangida's government.

Secondly, ABN, an unregistered and illegal organisation was allowed to challenge the holding of the 1993 presidential election contending that, the two candidates Tofa and Abiola were corrupt Nigerians and could therefore not qualify to contest for the presidential election. It was widely believed that the court, influenced by the government and its connection with ABN, granted injunction restraining National Electoral Commission (NEC) from conducting the elections. However, it

would be recalled also that, despite the court's ruling, NEC, with Professor Humphrey Nwosu at the helm of affairs went ahead to conduct the election. The court in turn declared the elections null and void because of NEC's ignored its injunction (*ibid*:30). The deduction that could be undoubtedly made from all these scheming is simply that, Babangida was interested in remaining in power beyond the eight (8) years he had already spent at Aso-Rock, the seat of the Presidency at Abuja, the nation's capital.

(iii) **General Sani Abacha Self-Succession Bid**

On assumption of office by Abacha as Head of State he gave the impression of a brief stay in office and avowed to return the country to civil democratic rule in which officials of the military government will not be participants. Therefore, Abacha abolished the then two existing political parties, the NRC and SDP. A new electoral commission called National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) under the chairmanship of Chief Summer Dagogo Jack was formed. He then inaugurated five (5) new political parties he hand picked, and funded these parties with state money. These five (5) newly formed political parties were the United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP), Grassroots Democratic Party (GDM), Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN), National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN), and Congress for National Congress (CNC). These parties later became appendages for Abacha's self-succession bid (Emordi & Audu, 2006:19).

It is worthy to note, that within the framework of Abacha's so called transition to civil rule programme, and the following factors portray Abacha's self-succession maneuvering behind the scene. When the five political party leaders realised that the transition programme of Abacha was a mere ruse designed to help him transformed himself from military Head of State to civilian president, they all conspired and adopted him as a consensus presidential candidate for election which he scheduled for August 1st, 1998. The traditional rulers under the umbrella of Traditional Rulers' Forum (TRF) visited Abuja with the purpose of showing their solidarity for Abacha's self-succession bid. Alhaji Mohammed Maccido who was probably the leader of (TRF), encouraged Abacha to go ahead and run for the scheduled presidential election. In his words;

“We have carefully looked around and with all humility hasten to say you (Abacha) is the only person fully qualified to occupy the presidential seat” (*ibid*: 21). In the same vein, Mohammed Bello, former Chief Justice of the Federation suggested that, Abacha should remain in office because of the marvelous job he was doing (*ibid*). These type of opinions expressed by such prominent Nigerians obviously encouraged Abacha to feel that tenure elongation was a popular idea. It is also pertinent to note that, before the adoption of Abacha as a sole presidential candidate, the nation had witnessed an unprecedented two million march organised

by youths under the leadership of an unknown personality called Daniel Kanu within the platform known as "Youth Earnestly Ask for Abacha" (YEAA). This funny organisation formed in 1997 in Abuja was in the forefront of the campaign to actualise the self-succession bid of Abacha. YEAA's objective was similar to Author Nzerebe's Association for Better Nigerian (ABN) formed for the sole purpose of mobilising support for Babagida's self-succession bid.

In order to compensate the traditional rulers for Abacha's support for self-succession, it was alleged that he Abacha ordered with the nation's money, twenty six (26) Limousine Mercedes Benz valued at \$300,000 each, five (5) Jeeps - the latest Toyota land cruiser safari V8 imported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates at \$60,000 each. These imported Jeeps were in the names of the then Sultan- Muhammed Maccido of Sokoto white colour, Mustapha Umar Elkanemi, Shewu of Borno, Silver Colour, Mustapha Jokolo, Emir of Gwandu, Silver Colour, Umaru Sanda Ndayako (late Etsu of Nupe) black colour, and Ibrahim Saleh Hassani an Islamic cleric white colour. In the case of juicy contracts which were not executed or half way executed, they were given to close relatives of Abacha (Tell Magazine, September, 1998: 14-15, 21& 23). The has full details of these anomalies which were never challenged or refuted by anybody or even the parties mentioned above. However, Abacha kept sealed lips and never made any public statement concerning his self-succession bid. The cold hands of death which has no respect for anyone snatched him away on the 8th June 1998 and the whole ambition for self-succession obviously came to an immediate end.

(iv) **Self-Succession Bid of President Obasanjo 1999-2007**

The bid for self succession is not a new phenomena in the Nigeria political landscape as we have taken sometime to briefly show how General Gowon after close to nine years in office postponed his return of government to civil rule indefinitely and claimed that it was not realistic. In the case of General Buhari he was not in a hurry to initiate any return to civil rule programme. His administration's emphasis was to cleanse every facet of the society. Since his administration did not last long, it was difficult to draw any conclusion whether he was heading to self-succession. When General Babangida came to power, he was popularly hailed but it later became clear that he had a "hidden agenda" to stay in power longer than expected and necessary. His endless transition to civil rule programme and all other gimmicks such as phoney groups as ABN whose activities were illegal but condoned by Babangida's administration since it was campaigning for its self-succession. In the case of General Abacha, he left no one in doubt about his intention to remain in power as long as he wished. His 2010 project showed that he had a long-term view to stay in power but his sudden death brought an immediate end to this selfish ambition (Osaghae, 1998: 286).

The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which President Obasanjo swore to uphold is very clear on the tenure of the president, the governors of the states and other elected public officers. In essence, the 1999 constitution made no provisions for a third term for any elective public office. Specifically, Section 137 (1b) of the 1999 Constitution provides that "a person shall not be qualified for election to the office of the president if he has been elected to such office at any two previous elections" (1999 Constitution, Section 13 (1b): A946-947). This constitutional provision is also applicable to all the governors of the State and others. In other words, the president or governor and sundry could only go for two terms of four (4) years each. Given the above constitutional guidelines, it is unthinkable, unconstitutional and undemocratic for any one to think of a third term tenure.

The idea of a third term bid of president Obasanjo during the Fourth Republic perhaps originated from the draft constitution submitted by the incumbent government to the National Political Reform Conference (NPRC). The document contains a proposal for a single term of six (6) years for the president at the federal level and Governors at the State level. This was the document that provided the encouragement for those canvassing for the elongation of tenure for president Obasanjo's Fourth Republic (Anifowose, 2006:84).

Contending Perspectives on Self-Succession Bid

There are basically two major perspectives on this issue of self-succession or third term agenda as it is commonly referred to. The first is referred to as the pro-third term agenda which comprises of those who believe that President Obasanjo has worked so much since his assumption of office on May 29, 1999 to reverse the misfortunes of the country, having elevated it from the valley of despair to the mountain of hope. The exponents of this view are numerous but not overwhelming. They include former PDP National Chairman Colonel Ahmadu Ali (Rtd), the then special Assistant on Public Affairs to the President Mr. Femi Fani Kayode who was later appointed Minister of Aviation. Comments and open endorsements of some prominent PDP members such as Governor Daniel Gbenga who asserted that nothing was immoral with another four years in office for Obasanjo so long as it is constitutional. Charles Ugwu, the then president of Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) was reported to have endorsed the idea of third term on the basis that it will guarantee consistency in policy direction. The Governors forum also endorsed the plan and recommended a constitutional amendment. The Senate position against anti third term idea by the presidency as well as Obasanjo's keeping sealed lips and avoiding questions relating to third term issue suggested that he was behind the scene fighting for tenure elongation. Added to this, the South-West zonal caucus of the PDP held in Abeokuta on Tuesday February 2nd 2006 clearly certified the third term idea on the ground that the then president had performed so well in the last six years and thereby should continue. The then Governor of Rivers State Peter Odili emphatically

asserted that he would be the first person to plead with Obasanjo to run for a third term (Nwogwugwu, 2006:65).

A recapitulation of the agitators and supporters of regime elongation with different rationale for their supports simply show elements of self-interest and hypocrisy towards an unconstitutional act which could have led the Nigerian nation to a chaotic and an autarchy state.

The second perspective is generally known as the anti-third term agenda who are made up of opposition parties particularly those who were frustrated out of the ruling PDP and those who have their presidential ambition threatened by self-succession bid of Obasanjo as president. This category of people include Chief Audu Ogbe, the erstwhile Chairman of the PDP now leader of Advanced Congress of Democrats (ACD), Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, the then Vice President to Chief Obasanjo, Chief Solomon Lar the first national Chairman of PDP and a host of others like the civil society, Pro-democracy, groups and human rights activists (Omotola, 2006: 57).

The list of people who were against Obasanjo's self-succession bid included retired Professor Tam-David West, describing such an ambition as an invitation to anarchy contended that Obasanjo is not a messiah. In the same vein, General Yakubu Gowon who has been very much around politically warned that the tendency of leadership prolonging itself or overstaying should be avoided and not acceptable. Sunday Awoniyi equally warned that anybody who was in doubt about tyranny and dictatorship staring us in the face step by step should attempt to read and reread how Adolph Hitler became a dictator in Germany using thugs, terror, murder, rigged elections and subvert the constitution that brought him to power until new leaders took over power from him (Anifowose, 2006: 86).

The opponents of the self-succession bid of Obasanjo's administration asserted that the following factors clearly pointed to the fact that third term elongation was not a joking matter (*ibid*: 86-88).

(i) Professor Jerry Gana was said to have presented the third term project as one of the issues discussed during the National Political Reform Conference in 2005.

(ii) In an interview in Germany, the President himself was quoted as saying that he was under pressure to remain for a third term. In his words, "They keep worrying me. May be you should stay a little longer"

(iii) In one of Obasanjo's monthly Presidential chat a caller asked him to make a categorical statement on the issue but he was said to tactfully evaded the question

(iv) Members of the National Assembly were alleged to have collected huge sums of money to amend the relevant section (s) of the 1999 constitution to reflect the third term agenda. Members of the National Assembly did not come out in strong terms to condemn the alleged

- third term bid. Only the then speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Bello Aminu. Masari was courageous enough to openly raise opposition to the third term bid.
- (v) Those who show signs of opposition against the third term bid were subjected to intense persecution and acts of intimidation by the presidency. This list include Governors James Ibori, Joshua Dariye, Dirpreye Alamiyesiegha, Lucky Igbinedion, Governor Attah, Ladoja of Oyo State, General Buba Marwa and a host of others too numerous to mention.
 - (vi) The alleged setting up of a secret committee under Babalola Borishade, (whose appointment as Minister by the president was controversial) was to explore the practicability of third term project and to monitor Ibrahim Mantu's committee on amending the 1999 constitution.
 - (vii) President Obasanjo was reported to have staged a walk out on Newspaper Editors during a dinner at his Ota Farm residence when he was asked about the third term ambition.
 - (viii) The non attendance of the meeting for the PDP Governors to discuss third term agenda was based on the fear of what happened to Alamiyesiegha of Bayelsa State and Ladoja of Oyo State.
 - (ix) Investigations by a news Magazine, Insider Weekly revealed that the third term agenda was real and that the law makers in the National Assembly were under serious pressure to yield to third term agenda. It was also stated that there were surprise money in their bank account which they could not trace the sources.
 - (x) Sometimes in 2005, in one of Tell Magazines Editorial asserted that there were rumours and allegations that billions of naira were spent to buy the support of federal law makers for a third term bid of Obasabjo's administration(Tell Magazine (Editorial Column) No 9, December 05, 2005:30).
 - (xi) In a recent interview granted to Tell Magazine by an ex-federal legislator Sola Adeyeye who then represented Boluwaduro/ Ifedayo/Ila Federal Constituency in Osun State asserted that, provisions was made for each lawmaker to be given ₦70 million for supporting this evil scheme (Tell Magazine, No. 5, February 2009: 18-19).
 - (xii) The United States of America and Britain made it clear to Obasanjo that they were not excited about the intended prolongation of his tenure in any way. Even Gbenga Obasanjo, his eldest son was widely reported as rejecting his father's bid for tenure elongation (Momoh, 2006:4).

Against all these allegations and insinuations, it was expected that Obasanjo should have directly made some categorical statement on the issue but rather he went ahead to attempt amending the 1999 Constitution so that provision could be made to accommodate this evil ambition.

In desperation to accommodate this evil ambition, the bid to amend the constitution was resorted to through the then senator Ibrahim Mantu Panel. However, such alteration of the constitution is explicitly stated to require the approval of two thirds (2/3) majority of both houses of National Assembly the Senate and the House of Representatives. In addition, such an alteration according to Section 9 (4) of the 1999 Constitution must be supported by the resolution of the Houses of Assembly of not less than two thirds of all the States (1999 Constitution Section 9 (4): P.A880). The implication of this is that twenty four (24) states of the thirty six States in Nigeria must vote for such amendment before such alteration could be effected.

As part of the effort to lend some measure of legitimacy and credibility to the constitutional review process, the Mantu's Panel was mandated to tour the six geo-political zones of the country and to get the reactions of Nigerians to the proposed amendments. Most controversial within the constitutional amendment was the proposed elongation of the tenure of office of federal and State executive and the legislature to two terms of five years each or three terms of four years each. Consequently, public forum was organized in each of the geo-political zones of Nigeria with a low rate of public participation. The low vote of public participation obviously indicated negative reaction against tenure elongation (Omotola, 2006:65). Having felt that the pulse of the nation was overwhelmingly against the tenure elongation, the Mantu Panel decided to table the proposed amendments before the National Assembly for approval despite strong opposing forces in the legislature. On May 16, 2006, the amendment bill was defeated at the Senate since it could not secure the mandatory two thirds (2/3) majority as required by the 1999 Constitution. The following day, the House of Representatives threw out the bill as it could not guarantee the two thirds (2/3) majority for the amendment to scale through (ibid).

The failure of the National Assembly to secure the needed two thirds (2/3) majority automatically brought Obasanjo's pursuit for a self-succession to an end. Nigerians and the entire world jubilated for this victory. In the words of former Senator Wabara which stated thus:

Obasanjo wanted third term badly, but the God of Nigeria; the Allah of Nigeria denied him his devilish plan. The anti-corruption crusade of the Obasanjo administration was selective. We were called names, publicly vilified, tried ~~publicly~~ on national television and used as trophies in the so-called fight against corruption by the same people who would eagerly dangle N50 million before each legislator to secure a third term (Mohammed, 2008:138).

From all these discussions and revelations made in this write-up, there is no doubt that the erstwhile president meant business in his attempt for self-succession and by extension allow for self-succession of all other elected political office holders who may wish to do the same. Had this plan succeeded, this would have been the starting point of dynastification of the Nigerian politics thereby entrenching autarky in the political system.

Conclusions

This write up have tried to show the prevalence of self-succession battle African leaders particularly the chief executives commonly referred to as the president. We pointed out that the major factor acting as a catalyst for self-succession struggle could definitely be attributable to the attractiveness and juicy incentives which the political elites themselves have deliberately made provisions to suit their self-interests. Of course, we also indicated that there have been very few cases of African leaders who left office as when due and these leaders were very zealous, committed and sincere towards the transformation of the socio-economic progress of their nations.

In the case of the Nigerian nation which is our major focus, we traced the self-succession bid right from General Gowon, followed by General Ibrahim Babangida, then General Abacha and unfortunately the civilian administration of chief Obasanjo who himself also had a military background. These leaders disguised in different devilish ways to succeed themselves in power through deceitful methods of trying to elongate their tenures in office. Obasanjo attempted to amend the 1999 Constitution for the sole purpose of accommodating his ambition to continue in office beyond the constitutionally provided and allowed two terms in tenure. The only way to limit this self-centered ambition may be to make political leadership position at all levels to be less juicy and attractive. By so doing, only sincere and committed people will be interested to run for political offices and be ready to quit the stage when their tenure to leave the political scene had expired. In addition, Nigerians should continue to reject any future attempts at self-succession bid by any regime. In this way, it will be clear to any politician that self-succession bid is no going area.

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16.