The Emerging Rise of Political Dynasties in Nigeria in the Fourth Republic

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Abstract

Political dynasty is a prevalent form of transmission of political power in any democratic government. Its alarming rate in Nigeria is becoming very high since democracy has come to stay in the country. Over the years, so much has been heard about political dynasty in United States of America, Philipines and other parts of Africa. Families such as the Kennedy's, the Clintons and the Bushes dominated in America. In Africa, we have the Moi family, the Kenyattas and the Odingas all in Kenya, and many more. In Nigeria, the likes of the Ikolis', the Sarakis and few others, dominated between the First and Third Republics. This article studies the emerging rise of political dynasties in Nigeria in the Fourth Republic. Nigeria political structure comprises of national, state and local assemblies, therefore, political dynasties are likely to exist at all levels. The rate at which politicians are installing their family members or loyalists in power since beginning of Fourth Republic in 1999 is becoming worrisome and having its side effects on democracy. These politicians have created their own political dynasties that have dominated government or key organizations to continually perpetuating their influence in power, either by having family members holding high profile political positions at the same period or hold such positions across generations. Even in some quarters, many claim that they are born to rule, so it is their political rights to be in power at all times.

KEYWORDS: Political Dynasties, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Democracy, Fourth Republic.

Introduction

Historically, kinship plays a role in determining the ruling class in democracies because almost all countries in the world used kinship as the main principle for distributing political power, the development of representative democracy resulted in the replacement of hereditary succession with popular elections as the key mechanism for political selection (Geys B. & D. M., 2017). The existence of political dynasties in democratic societies, particularly in a consolidating democracy, has sparked debate among pro-democratic activists, scholars and policymakers. In many cases, activists, political experts, politicians, and scholars have charged political dynasties with being a stumbling block to democratic consolidation, an erosion of the quality of democracy, a source of corruption, a root cause of underdevelopment, and an obstacle to reformist candidates' ability to occupy office. However, in some countries, the emergence of political dynasties can be observed clearly at the sub-national level. (Kenawas, 2015). Nigeria has a federal political structure, with national, state and local assemblies in place across the country, political dynasties actually in existence across all levels in Nigeria democratic settings (Khadijah et al., 2024).

Political Dynasty

Political dynasty is a combination of two words that is politics and dynasty in which the combination reflects its domineering power or influence on the political scene. Dynasty is defined as a family which has members from two or more generations who are important in a particular field of activity (Collins Dictionary). The field can either be in business, sports, and social or in politics. Our focal point is on politics which is refer to something as being political, or all about politics, to mean it boils down to a power struggle between people or group which involve a process of manoeuvering to assert rival interests. Politics is also a process of competitive claims-making by rival parties in other to win election, and with the aim of mobilising support to put these programmes into action (Boswell, 2020). From this definition, political dynasty as a family comprises of members either closely related by blood or through marriage, working relationship over a long period or by being loyal workers fully or partially involve in the game of politics.

Political Dynasties in Nigeria

Political dynasties are present in over 144 countries around the world, simply means it cut across all the continents globally, be it Europe, Asia, South America, North America, and Africa among others. A key difference between dynastic and non-dynastic politicians is that dynasts receive and bequest political capital across generations. Potential challengers may be deterred, believing that dynasts are hard to beat, so dynastic rule may also have a chilling effect on political competition (George & Ponattu, 2018). As for the usual practice of political dynasties across the world, Nigerian political dynasties have not entirely adopted the original vision of it, but they share some of their interests, styles, and competitive struggles. They are in different shapes, depending on the context, nature of relationships, and the intention of the leading politicians in the dynasties. There are two categories of political dynasties practice in Nigeria, the first category is that of family ties which can as well be divided into two, that is, the nuclear family dynasties and the extended family ties consisting of networks of in-laws, nephews, cousins, blood relations, and others. The second category is political dynasties with a network of friends, associates, and political allies (Khadijah et al., 2024). Asabor (2024, Nov. 26) views on the growing trend notes that in a democratic setting across the world, power belongs to the people, who vote for candidates of their choice to represent them, not to a select few families that dictate the pace of governance. But, across Nigeria with population of over two hundred million people, political dynasty building has become troubling trend firmly rooted in the political arena in all the thirty six states. Political positions have systematically corner for themselves, their family members, and cronies. The phenomenon runs counter to the spirit of democracy and fairness, rather than having a democratic setting that is to foster inclusion and diversity of qualify candidates in leadership, it is gradually entrenching an inequality, stifles meritocracy, and is creating a system that serves a privileged few at the expense of the larger population. He reiterates on the Nigeria's political landscape from federal to state and to local levels, the presence of some well known family names that dominate governance across multiple generations and tiers of government are tremendously increasing. Relatives of many influential families who have the wealth to influence the populace are leveraging their positions to ensure that their relatives are occupying any available political offices in government. This act of political dynasty is not different from

the era of monarchical rules whereby prince attaining the monarch stool is hereditary. This process is not democratic in nature as the right and better candidate is being denied. It is tantamount to feudal system.

Political Dynasties in Pre-Colonial Era

Prior to Nigeria independence in 1960, political dynasty has been in the political system and continued to spread from decades even after the independence to the extent that we have now. It cut across the national, state and local government. A vivid example of the pre-independence period is that of Alvan Azinna Ikoku, *an activist, nationalist, politician and undoubtedly, a statesman,* and a pioneer of education in Nigeria. Ikoku and his son, Samuel Goomsu Ikoku were political rivals. He contested against his 34 years old son and lost the South Eastern House of Assembly election on March 15, 1957. Samuel defeated his 56-year-old father with 59 votes and became the minority leader of the assembly. Though, Alvan heavily frowned at it but later gave his son full support to carry on and even provided funds for his re-election in 1961 (Alabi, 2022, May 29). Joseph Sarwuan Tarka is another notable name in the pre-colonial era that joined politics at an early age and took the political arena by storm. Upon joining the Middle Belt People's Party in 1954, he contested in the pre-independence election and won a seat in the House of Representatives to represent Jemgba Constituency in 1957. And in that year, he was nominated a member of Nigeria Constitutional Conference. In order to create identity for people of the Middle Belt, he and his contemporaries formed a political party, United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) to wrestle power from the North, he aligned with the South. However, in the build-up to the Second Republic in 1979, Tarka re-aligned with the North, joined the National Party of Nigeria and contested the presidency. Later, he contested the senatorial seat of Benue East and won while his son, Simeon Tarka, also won House of Representatives the same time (Charles, 2019, August 25).

Development of Political Dynasties in Post-Colonial Nigeria

What is today known as political dynasty in Nigeria started with the politics of godfatherism in the post-colonial era. Godfatherism in the first and second republics was between politicians or political agents; individuals working for the electorates. But, the politics of godfatherism became notorious and widespread in

the Nigerian polity since the return to democratic rule in 1999. This is mainly because the political entrepreneurs hijacked it. Godfatherism in the first and second republics was carried out by the founding fathers that fought gallantly for Nigeria independence. They nurtured political godsons across their regions who later became governors. Common among these godfathers are Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the Western region, Chief Nnamdi Azikiwe in the Eastern region, and Sir, Ahmadu Bello from the Northern region. Their nurtured political godsons that later became state governors from 1979-1983 including Chief Bola Ige (Oyo), Alhaji Lateef Jakande (Lagos), Chief Bisi Onabanjo (Ogun), Jim Nwobodo (Anambra) and Chief Sam Mbakwe (Imo). However, many of Ahmadu Bello's godsons included politicians commonly referred to as Kaduna mafia. Some of these godsons of the first generation patrons later became godfathers in subsequent Nigeria politics (Nwachukwu & Okoji, 2024).

Political Entrepreneurs in the Second Republic

Though, there were few cases of political entrepreneurs that sponsored candidates in election during this period. Prominent in this case was Dr. Abubakar Olusola popularly referred to as the strongman of Kwara politics. Saraki, a medical doctor and politician first entered into politics in 1964 as an independent candidate, contested the parliamentary election for Ilorin but lost, only to return to party politics in the beginning of the second republic in 1978. Prior to his return, Saraki was elected in 1977 as a member of the Constituency Assembly that produced the 1979 constitution, the year he won election into the Senate. He was re-elected in 1983 on the platform of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and became the Senate Leader (Omotoso, 2019, May 23). Upon his emergence as member of the Senate under National Party of Nigeria (NPN) between 1979 and 1983, Saraki bankrolled the party governorship candidate, Alhaji Adamu Attah to become governor of Kwara State, but the relationship later turned sour and he withdrew his support from him, that later cost Attah losing the second term bid to Chief Cornelius Adebayo who was in the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). Saraki dominance was put into play as he shifted camp despite still a senator in NPN and gave his support to Chief Adebayo who went ahead to win the election and become the Governor of Kwara State (Nwachukwu & Okoji, 2024).

Political Entrepreneurs Breed Political Dynasties in the Fourth Republic

The era of Senator Joseph Tarka and his son, Simon holding political positions at the same time in 1979 is quite different from the case of political entrepreneurs venturing into the Nigerian politics as perpetuated by Saraki in Kwara State that singlehandedly sponsored Governors Adamu Attah (NPN) in 1979 and Chief Cornelius Adebayo (UPN) in 1983. Since the return to democracy in 1999 after 16 years of military rule has created deleterious political vestiges co-opted by the political players, and this has led to Nigerian politicians collaborating with the traditional institutions and the high echelon of the civil service to create political fiefdoms in order to capture the resources of the state to appropriate and consume among themselves. It is observe that some of these political dynasties have had a succession of leaders at both the national and states levels started by a political patriarch from a certain family or region that are to be succeeded by their wives or children as the case may be. Some even use their extended family members or political godsons or associates to carry out their activities (Odoh, 2019, June 16). Moreover, since the return of democracy in 1999, the involvement of political dynasties and networks of godfathers has tremendously increased because the Olusegun Obasanjo's regime, which benefited from the funding of political entrepreneurs promote and allow godfatherism to flourish. Some of the godfathers of this republic include Senator Olusola Saraki of Kwara State, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu of Lagos State, Emeka Offor and Ifeanyi Uba of Anambra State, Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu of Oyo State, and Ali Modu Sheriff of Borno State, and host of others. The attitude of these godfathers impact negatively on good governance, and also reduces the legitimacy of government and voids the electoral value of the citizens (Khadijah et al., 2024). These political godfathers determine nomination of candidates who are willing to provide financial and other compensation to them for political positions across the three levels, because they have influence and exercise tremendous control over the party structure, and hereby form political dynasties within the party (Dan-Azumi, 2024). They constitute the decision makers who can make that change happen.

Composition of Political Dynasties in Nigeria

Though, the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 Constitution (as amended) Chapter 4 section 40 states that every person shall be entitled to assemble freely and

associate with other persons, and in particular he may form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association for the protection of his interests. This constitutional provision emphasises the existence of the citizen right to belong to a political party in order to participate in political affairs of the country. Similarly, the Third Schedules Part 1 Paragraph F under item 15 (e) of the 1999 Constitution provides that the Independent National Electoral Commission shall have power to arrange and conduct the registration of persons qualified to vote and prepare, maintain, and revise the register of voters for the purpose of any election under this Constitution. This constitutional provision stipulates role of the INEC in ensuring that citizens of Nigeria who are qualify can vote or stand as candidates at an election to exercise their political rights without any limitation (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). But, Nigerian politicians just like monarchs who hand over the reins of power in hereditary manner to their sons are leaving no one in doubt about their readiness to sustain their grip on power or even perpetuate themselves in office across generations, sometimes by proxy as politics is becoming more and more lucrative in Nigeria, and the manner of juicy offices they receive (Adegoroye, 2023, August 13). As earlier written, the classification of political dynasties can be categorized into nuclear and extended dynasties. Nuclear dynasties comprise of the father, mother, and children while extended dynasties are beyond the father, mother and children as it incorporates others from outside that can be from immediate family, friends, business associates, party loyalists and amongst. Below are the compositions of some prominent political families view as being dynasties in Nigeria from the Yar'Aduas' to the Adelekes' to the Sarakis' to the Iboris', and the Tinubus among others.

Nuclear Political Dynasties in Nigeria

An elementary meaning of nuclear family simply comprises of father, mother and children. Under this dynasty is where we see the children and wives of serving state governors as well as former governors occupying various positions in their respective states as commissioners, members of House of Assembly or at the National Assembly as either Senator or Honourable members, Federal House of Representative in the country. Wives and children are usually programmed for the tasks ahead (Khadijah et al., 2024).

Saraki Dynasty in Kwara

Saraki family in Ilorin dominates the politics of Kwara State for over four decades. The patriarch of the family, Dr. Abubakar Olusola Saraki was elected in 1977 as a member of the Constituency Assembly that produced the 1979 constitution, Senate Leader between 1979 and 1983. He was appointed National leader, Board of Trustees, All People's Party (APP) in 1998. His son, Dr. Bukola Saraki was a two term Governor of Kwara State from 2003 -2011, and later won the Kwara Central Senatorial district in 2011-2019 as he later emerged as 13th Senate President from 2015-2019. He lost is senatorial seat to APC candidate, Dr. Ibrahim Oloriegbe due to 2018 anti-Saraki political dynasty sentiment called "Otoge movement". He later contested for the office of president under PDP for the general election in 2023, but lost to Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. Similarly, Gbemisola Ruqayyah Saraki was elected as a member, House of Representatives representing Asa/Ilorin West Federal Constituency from 1999 to 2003. After then, she was a Senator for Kwara Central Senatorial district from 2003 to 2011. She was appointed minister of state for transport 2019 -2022 as well as Minister of state for mines and steel development during the administration of President Muhammad Buhari from 2022 to 2013 (Omotosho**,** 2019, May 23).

Abdul-Razaq Dynasty in Kwara

The family's entry into politics began with Alhaji Abdulganiyu Folorunsho Abdul-Razaq was the father of the current governor of Kwara State, Abdulrahman Abdul-Razaq who displaced the Sarakis family dynasty in the state. Upon Nigeria independence in 1960, he served in several positions. First, as a Special Member of the Northern House of Assembly from 1960 – 1962; Nigerian Ambassador to the Republic of Ivory Coast from 1962 to 1964; Minister of State for Transport; Kwara State Commissioner of Finance, Health and Social welfare from 1967 – 1972. Following the footsteps of his father, Abdulrahman Abdul-Razaq is the current Governor of Kwara State for his second term in office after e was reelected in 2023 under APC which he came to power in 2019.He had earlier contested the governorship elections in 2003, 2007 and 2011 respectively, all to no avail under Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). One of his sisters, Senator Khairat Abdul-Razaq-Gwadabe, represented the Federal Capital Territory at the red chamber from 1999 – 2003 where she served as Chairman, Senate Committee on Women Affairs.

She served as member of the Federal Character, Tourism and Culture, Federal Capital Territory respectively. She also served a member of the Panel of Review of Nigeria Customs and Excise. His elder brother, Dr Alimi Abdul-Razaq was the PDP's gubernatorial candidate in the 1999 elections which he lost to late Admiral Muhammed Lawal. He was the Commissioner, Legal Licensing and Enforcement of the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC), Chairman, National Iron Ore Mining Company, Itakpe, member, National Council on Privatization. He is the hero of OtoGe Revolution that ends Sarakis dynasty in Kwara State. Aisha Muhammed Lawal, the fifth child of the family was a former first lady and wife of late military governor of Ogun and Kwara States, Rear Admiral Mohammed Alabi Lawal between 1987 and 1999 and 1999-2003 respectively (Akintola, 2021).

Uba Dynasty in Anambra

The Ubas family has been influential in the politics of Anambra State since the beginning of the fourth republic in 1999. Though, the family was engulfed in controversies among brothers who pitched tent against one another during election period, but the role played by the three Uba brothers in the state politics is worth mentioning. Chris Uba, the youngest of the Uba brothers was the self-acclaimed political godfather of Anambra politics but never held any political office but presided over arrangement that brought Governor Chris Ngige, Senators, House of Representatives and State House of Assembly members into power in 2003. His eldest brother, Senator Dr. Ugochukwu Uba represented Anambra South Senatorial District from 2003 to 2007. His elder brother, Senator Dr. Andy Uba, whose real name is Emmanuel Nnamdi Uba was a Special Assistant to the President of Domestic Affairs to President Olusegun Obasanjo from 1999 to 2007, and had a brief stint as governor of Anambra State for just 17 days (May 29th - June 14, 2007), before he was removed by the Court. After then he was elected Senator representing Anambra south senatorial district 2011 – 2019, he was Chairman, Senate Committee on Interior. Their sister, the late Mrs. Ify Umenyi (Nee Uba) was two terms Director General of the Consumer Protection Council (CPC), married to Chief Roy Umenyi, former Deputy Governor of Anambra State (Ubani, 2019, October 18).

Bukar Abba Ibrahim Dynasty in Yobe

This family and their allies have for so long dominated the political affairs of this highly volatile state ravaged by the Boko Haram insurgency. Bukar Abba Ibrahim was governor of Yobe State from 1999 to 2007. Prior to this, he was governor of the state from January 1992 to November 1993 during the botched Third Republic. Bukar Ibrahim later took the Senate seat of Yobe East in the National Assembly and remained there until 2019 when he stepped down for the former governor Ibrahim Gaidam. His wife Khadija was in the House of Representatives for Damatura/Gujba/Gulani/Tarmuwa in Yobe State under the APC. In 2016, she was Minister of State for Foreign Affairs by President Muhammadu Buhari. But she is back at the Green Chamber in 2023 (Odoh, 2019, June 16).

Obasanjo Dynasty in Ogun

Obasanjo family is another political dynasty that is synonymous among Nigerians this is because the dynasty has produced a Head of State, President, Commissioner and Senator. It also had one of its members as a presidential candidate at a time. The patriarch of the dynasty, former President Olusegun Obasanjo, was head of state between 1976 and 1979 after which he handed over to the civilian president, the late Shehu Shagari in 1979 in the third republic. 20 year after, he was elected a two term president of Nigeria from 1999 to 2007. Political entrepreneurs thrived during his tenure as president, and it is manifesting till date as it has tremendously increased. His daughter, Iyabo, served as Commissioner for Health in Ogun State during the administration of Otunba Gbenga Daniel. In 2007, she was elected as Senator representing Ogun Central Senatorial District under PDP platform. At the red chamber, she was Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health; member of various committees such as security and intelligence, land transport, science and technology, education, national planning and inter-parliamentary. Her attempt to seek reelection in 2011 was aborted by Action Congress of Nigeria {ACN) candidate, Olugbenga Onaolapo Obadara. Another of the Obasanjos family, the late Major Mojisola Adekunle-Obasanjo (rtd), an ex-wife of the former president was also a key political player. She was the founder of the Masses Movement of Nigeria in 1998 and later ran for the presidency on its platform in 2003, interestingly against her husband but lost while she again contested the 2007 presidential election as the only female on the ballot.

Delta State Political Dynasties

Three former governors of Delta State hold the pace in the political settings in the state despite being out of power, but their political dynasties cannot be overlooked. James Onanafe Ibori regarded as godfather of Delta politics, Emmanuel Uduaghan and Ifeanyi Okowa have continued to wield political influence by ensuring their children remain within the corridors of power both at the state and national levels.

Ibori the Gladiator

Talking about political gladiators in Nigeria, Ex-Governor James Onanefe Ibori name rings bell clearly in the annals of the fourth republic politicians. He dictated the pace since his days as governor of Delta State before his incarceration for money laundering in United Kingdom. His daughter, Erhiatake Ibori-Suenu is currently representing Ethiope Federal Constituency in Abuja after a keenly contested PDP primary election ticket against Ben Igbakpa, an associate of governor Okowa. She is the Chairman, House Committee on Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) that is considered to be one of the juicy committees in the Green Chamber.

Okowa's Building Dynasty

Though, he was one of his political loyalists before things fall apart, the immediate past governor of the state, Senator Ifeanyi Okowa ruled from 2015 – 2023. Also, he was the Vice Presidential candidate of the PDP in the 2023 Presidential election. He was one term senator before becoming governor. Though, Okowa associate, Igbakpa lost in the keenly contested PDP primary election ticket against Ibori's daughter, but he had his way in the governorship primary election as his anointed candidate, Sheriff Oborevwori, who was then the speaker of the Delta State House of Assembly, defeated Ibori choice, Chief David Edevbie. His daughter, Mariyln Okowa-Daramola won the House of Assembly ticket for Ika North East state constituency on a smooth sail due to power of incumbency as governor's daughter. Mariyln served as Senior Special Assistant on Girl-Child Education during her father's tenure.

Uduaghan Dynasty Attempt

Though, former two terms governor Emmanuel Uduaghan's daughter, Orode Uduaghan attempted to ride on her father's influence to clinch the PDP's ticket for

Warri North in the House of Assembly failed, but she has been compensated with the commissioner position by Governor Sheriff Oborevwori (Nwaneri, 2022, October 3).

Adelekes Dynasty in Osun

Alhaji Raji Ayoola Adeleke served as Senator for Osun II District in the Second Republic between 1979 and 1983 followed by Isiaka Adetunji Adeleke, who was the first civilian governor of Osun State (carved out of Oyo State) from January 1992 to November 1993 under the platform of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in the aborted third republic. Upon the emergence of fourth republic, he served as a two-time Senator represented Osun West senatorial district from 2007 – 2011 under PDP, and 2015 – 2017 under APC before he died. In the same vein, Senator Ademola Adeleke won the gubernatorial election in 2022. He had earlier won the Osun West Senatorial by-election after the death of his brother in 2017 to complete his tenure till 2019 after decamping to PDP. Governor Adeleke appointed Mrs. Adenike Adeleke, second wife of the late Senator Isiaka Adeleke as Commissioner for Federal Matters while he also appointed Tunji Adeleke (Jnr.), a 30 year old graduate of Adeleke University, Ede, as Chairman of the Local Government Service Commission.

Igbinedion Dynasty in Edo

The Igbinedion family is a political and economic family of heavyweights from the ancient Benin City, Edo State. Patriarch of the family, Chief Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion is the Esama of the Benin Kingdom while his sons have had a share of political power. Chief Lucky Nosakhare Igbinedion was a two term governor of Edo State from 1999 to 2007. His sister, Hon. Omosede Igbinedion was elected as the youngest female member into the 8th Assembly of the House of Representatives (Nigeria) in 2015, representing the Ovia Federal Constituency under the PDP, and she was Deputy Chairman, House Services in the House of Representatives. Also, his younger brother, Hon. Charles Igbinedion was a two term Chairman of Ovia North East Local Government Area, and one time Edo State Commissioner of Education, while Peter Igbinedion was the Managing Director of the Nigerian Aviation Authority (Akintola, 2021).

Extended Political Dynasties in Nigeria

Yar'Adua Dynasty

Having been in the political arena since the first republic, Yar'Adua family is regarded as one of the most successful families in Nigeria's political history. Mallam Musa Yar'Adua, the Mutawalli of the Katsina Emirate served a member of House of Representative, Federal Minister of establishment, Nigerianisation and training and later as a Minister of Lagos Affairs in the first republic. His son, the late Gen. Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was Federal commissioner of transport in 1976, Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters, during Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo's military government from 1976-1979. Also, Murtala Yar'Adua, was a former Minister of State for Defence. At the dawn of the Fourth Republic, another Musa son, Umaru Musa Yar' Adua, won the governorship of his home state, Katsina on the ticket of the PDP for two terms between 1999 and 2007 before becoming President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 2007 after he was anointed for the Presidency by his predecessor, President Obasanjo. Unfortunately, he died towards the end of his first term in office in 2010. Another Yar'Adua son, Abdulaziz is now a Senator representing Katsina Central senatorial zone at the national assembly, he is the Senate Chairman of the Northern Senators Forum, at only his first tenure. His daughters, Zainab is married to the former governor of Kebbi State, Usman Dakingari; Nafisa is married to Isa Yuguda, former governor of Bauchi State while Maryam is married to Ibrahim Shema, Yar' Adua successor as Katsina State governor (Akintola, 2021).

Tinubu Dynasty

One may be wondering that Tinubu's name should have been classified as top in this rank, but not because he is a product of the Yar'Adua dynasty. Before the defunct Third Republic, when Peoples Front of Nigeria, a political association under the leadership of the late Major-General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was founded, Tinubu was one of the foundation members alongside other members such as Atiku Abubakar, Babagana Kingibe, Sabo Bakin Zuwo, Wada Abubakar, Abdullahi Aliyu Sumaila, Abubakar Koko and Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso. That association later metamorphosed into a political party known as the Social Democratic Party, which had the late MKO Abiola as its candidate who eventually won the June 12, 1993 presidential election. It was in this year 1992 that Tinubu

joins politics (Baiyewu L, 2023, March 12). Tinubu political dynasty remains very strong and seemingly invincible with many of his nieces and cousins holding positions. Virtually all former and current governors in Lagos State and other political officeholders in the ruling party have the blessings of the 'Lion of Bourdillon'. Tinubu also called Jagaban is not only the strongman of Lagos politics; he is firmly in control of South-West APC and beyond, planting his people across in key and tactical positions in governance (Idris et al., 2018, Oct. 20). President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 2003. He was two terms governor of Lagos State, former senator in the third republic under SDP. He is the godfather of Lagos politics. Tinubu's adventure into active politics was as a founding member of the defunct Social Democratic Party (SDP) through which he was elected as senator for Lagos West in 1992 in the aborted Third Republic. Upon the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, he became a founding member of the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), a pro-democracy group that insisted on restoration of democratic governance. Upon the return of democracy in 1999, on the platform of the Alliance for Democracy (AD), he became governor of Lagos State from 1999 – 2007, and has been responsible for the emergence of three successive governors of Lagos State since then. They are Babatunde Fashola (2007-2015), Akinwumi Ambode (2015-2019) and Babajide Sanwo-Olu (2019 to date). On the hand, his wife, Oluremi who is now the First Lady of Nigeria was a three term former senator (2011 – 2023) represented Lagos Central Senatorial District. She was also former first lady in Lagos State between 1999 and 2007. Another member of his extended political family is Hon Oyetunde Oladimeji Ojo (son-in-law), the Managing Director and Chief Executive, Federal Housing Authority member, Federal House of Representatives, represented Ijero/Efon/Ekiti West Federal Constituency 2011 to 2015 where he was the Chairman, Committee on Communication, also, member, Committees on Anti-Corruption as well as National Ethics and Value Industries. Also, Hon. Lola Akande (sister-in-law), a two term member Lagos House of Assembly representing Ikeja Constituency II from 2011 to 2015, where served as Deputy Chief Whip from 2007 – 2011, and Deputy Majority Leader (2011 – 2015). She also served as Commissioner for Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation. Hon. Kasumu Adedamola is his nephew, a member of Lagos State House of Assembly representing Ikeja Constituency II since 2015 to date. He is currently the

Deputy Majority Leader of the 10th Assembly. Adegboyega Isiaka Oyetola is another of his nephew currently serving as Minister of Marine and Blue Economy. He was former governor of Osun State from 2018- 2022, and former Chief of Staff to his predecessor, Rauf Aregbesola (Nwaneri, 2022, Oct. 3).

Conclusion

Political dynasty which simply mean the succession of political positions to people belonging to the same family be it nuclear family or extended family and also beyond to maintain their power, influence, and authority in a democratic governments over the course of generations in Nigeria has gradually become norms among the politicians. If not properly checkmated and eradicated, there will be no positions for ordinary candidates to contest in the near future since the wealthy politicians could easily buy their ways to the podium at the detriment of credible candidates. In this case, political parties have roles to play to curb this nemesis by ensuring that the internal party structures are strengthening and that credible candidates are chosen to represent the party. Merit should be prioritised over loyalty and family connection. Money politics should be totally eradicated by giving level playing ground to all aspirants vying for positions. Nigerians must rise up against political family whose priority is based on family interest as against the will of the people and national interest. In the next general election in 2027, many other political families that either lost out at the 2023 general election are gathering momentum to outwit the old order and to stamp their influence in the Nigeria fragile political terrain.

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