MANAGING VIOLENCE AND SUSTAINING DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA:
AN UNRESOLVED AGENDA

DAHIDA DEEWUA PHILIP (Ph.D)
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA, ABUJA-NIGERIA
Email: dahida2008@yahoo.com
Deewuadahida@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
Nigeria gained her independence in 1960 which ushered in a democratic parliamentary system of government. The democratic institutions were not allowed to exist in full scale as a result of frequent military interventions. The enthronement of democratic governance at all levels in May 29, 1999 was widely expected to usher in a political culture based on justice, equity, sense of belonging, participation and violence tolerance, transparency and accountability in the conduct of the affairs of the nation and improvement in the welfare of the citizenry. However, Nigeria is today bedevilled with ethnic unrest, religious crisis, armed militias groups are gradually increasing at alarming rate with steady manifestation of political violence in every election conducted at the federal, state or local level. It has also become necessary to view the violence in Nigeria as the fallout from the opening-up occasioned by the return to democratic rule after a very long period of military rule, during which feelings were bottled up. With the democratic opening, the space had existed for these pent-up feelings to come to the fore, often leading to clashes among the various groups inhabiting Nigeria. The paper therefore, examines this violence and recommends that good democratic governance should be put in place with adequate conduct of free and fair elections.

Keywords: democracy, violence, electoral violence, and democratic consolidation

Introduction
The transition from military to a democratically elected government in Nigeria, during the 1999 general election was a welcome development to local and international observers since democracy has respect for rule of law, freedom of speech and opinion. However, the 1999 general election which ushered in the administration of General Olusegun Obasanjo was fraught with violence, rigging, and irregularities, snatching of ballot boxes, manipulation, corruption, and widespread criticisms. Similarly, the 2003, 2007 and 2011 general elections were characterized with the assassination of political opponents, wanton destruction of lives and properties, acrimony, lawlessness, campaign of calumny and legal battled due to loss of confidence in the electoral processes. Nigerians had for long developed a deeper love for democracy. This love had been demonstrated in the time past whenever there is a need for this. Thus in spite of the ills that followed most elections, Nigerians still showed their willingness to elect their leaders even in the 2011 elections. Such started with a timetable which was set and adjusted later for convenience. To prevent electoral violence during the elections, a meeting of the 36 state Governors of the Federation which was presided over by the then Chairman of the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF), Hon. Bukola Saraki was held on 8 February 2011 at Abuja in which the Governors signed an undertaking in a bid to conduct free, fair, credible and transparent elections.

Paradoxically, in spite of the undertaking, violence could not be ruled out. Nigerians have acquired a culture of electoral violence. Violence has become part of the political culture in Nigeria such that all elections since independence (Nigeria has conducted six general elections. The elections were held in 1964, 1979, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011). Almost all the elections were virtually violence ridden. All of these elections were substantially marred by various types of violence associated with party politics and conduct of elections. On the other hand, Edoh (2003) opined that Nigeria’s democratic
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experience has neither served the purpose of political emancipation nor led to economic betterment of the citizens. This is especially in the face of endemic poverty, hunger, unemployment, and progressive disempowerment of a large chunk of the population. The fact that most general elections in Nigeria are marred with violence and all manner of irregularities has made the electorate to lose confidence in the electoral process. It is against this background that this study seeks to look at managing violence and the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria.

Objective of This Paper
The objectives of this paper are:

i. Analysis the Causes of Electoral Violence and irregularities in Nigeria
ii. Identify the challenges of sustaining democracy in Nigeria
iii. Recommend measures that would ameliorate the crisis of electoral violence in Nigeria and sustain the hard earned nascent democracy.

Methodology
The data used in this paper was derived from the secondary source of data collection. The methodology therefore, is basically documentary. It involves learning new facts and principles through the study of documents and records. The documents and records include journals, textbooks, newspapers, magazines, official publications etc.

Conceptual Issues
The beauty of any academic research in most cases is more apparent when the views of scholars on relevant concepts are critically analyzed. Therefore, the following terms are conceptualized in attempts to get clear understanding of issues being addressed in this paper;

(a) Democracy
Democracy refers to a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people collectively and is administered by them or elected by them. The term “democracy” was derived from two Greek words “demos” meaning “people” and “Krata” signifying “rule of or by.” It is sometimes described as “government by the consent of the governed” (Olawale: 1987). According to Abraham Lincoln, democracy is “the government of the people, by the people and for the people”. Democratic system of government therefore started in ancient Greek City States. Such government is representative of all peoples and interests within the state and is described as open government because; it permits freedom of speech and ideas. Democracy allows the people to choose and reject their leaders and their programmes when such are no longer serving the interest of the people. Democracy is regarded as the best form of government that can be adopted in a country (Anyaele: 2003).

(b) Democratic Consolidation (sustenance)
Democratic Consolidation according to Omotola (2002) means a status of democratic maturity such that it can no longer be threatened or truncated by reactionary forces whether internal or external. In the same vein, Schedler (1998) asserted that:

Democratic Consolidation is meant to describe the challenges of making new democracies extend their life expectancy beyond the short – term, of making them immune against the threat of authoritarian repression and of building dams against eventual reverse waves.

In a broader perspective, Osaghae (Azeez 2005) argued that democratic consolidation does not simply mean the defeat of supposedly undemocratic forces and rulers like Kamuzu Bandu of Malawi or Robert Mogabe of Zimbabwe or the putting in place of democratic institutions and paraphernalia. The survival of democracy has a lot to do with how it is able to better the material conditions of the people in terms of provision of effective and affordable education, shelter, security of life and property, better health care, employment, food, portable water and as well as to ensure political stability and thereby save the people from the scourge of war and other violent conflicts. Apart from ensuring socio-economic wellbeing of the people, democratic consolidation also entails the legitimization of the political institutions and processes, viewing it from this perspective. Diamond (1999) defined democratic consolidation as:
The process of achieving broad (and) deep legitimization such that all significant political actors, at both the elite and masses level believe that the democratic system is better for the society than any other realistic alternative they can imagine.

In the same vein, Luiz and Stepan (1996: 33) stressed that democratic consolidation must be more than a commitment to democracy in the abstract; it must also involve a shared normative or behavioural commitment to the specific rules, values, attitudes and practices of a country’s constitutional system.

(c) Election

In its strictest sense, there can never be a democracy without election. Transitions in numerous countries today have continued to reveal that democracy is possible without election. But what type of democracy is this? Huntington is however quick to point out that, a political system is democratic ‘to the extent that its most powerful collective decision-makers are selected through fair, honest and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes, and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote’ (Huntington, 1991).

In its proper sense, election is a process of selecting the officers or representatives of an organisation or group by the vote of its qualified members (Nwolise, 2007). Anifowose defined elections as the process of elite selection by the mass of the population in any given political system (Anifowose, 2003). Elections provide the medium by which the different interest groups within the bourgeoisie nation state can stake and resolve their claims to power through peaceful means (Iyayi, 2005). Elections therefore determine the rightful way of ensuring that responsible leaders take over the mantle of power.

In terms of its origin, election is totally alien to African political systems as election to the royal thrones in Africa from time immemorial has been through the royal blood. This phenomenon became diffused following the advent of colonialism. The traditional institutional systems and the social structures adapted from Western models coexist (Riggs, 1967). This means in effect that, the traditional institutions choose leaders through the lineage of royal blood while the western model imported to the transitional society does that through elections. However, with the process of political decolonisation from 1945, there was an extension of the franchise and the scope of representative institutions which go with election process. The fact however remains that in the transitional societies, elections have often been conducted in such a way as to give but a poor reflection of the popular will which have often been leading to violence.

(d) Violence

African democracies without any shadow of doubt have become vulnerable to violence even with the slightest provocation. Violence has even gone beyond African countries. It is a universal phenomenon. It has become something that is used by groups seeking power, by groups holding power and by groups in the process of losing power (Anifowose, 1982). Scholars differ on whether to consider violence as objective or subjective, on what to include or exclude as violence, and on how to classify the various forms of violence. The outcome of this made scholars to come up with many forms of violence. Fanon offered a three-fold categorisation of violence similar to what Galtung made in his article in 1969. These are: physical, structural, and psychological violence. Physical violence involves somatic injury inflicted on human beings. Killing of an individual is an example of this. Structural violence is a condition of social injustice while psychological violence is injury or harm done to the human psyche which includes brainwashing, indoctrination of various kinds and threats (JInadu, 1980:46 and 47).

Similarly, Gur gave a threefold categorization of violence which are: turmoil or mass-based, relatively unorganised and spontaneous political violence (demonstrations, riots, strikes, and localized rebellions); conspiracy, that is, organized political violence which involves limited participation (assassination, coups d’etat and small scale guerrilla wars); and internal war or organized political violence involving mass participation (terrorism, large-scale guerrilla warfare and revolution) (Osaghae, 2005). Alain Chesnais who studied violence in the 18th and 19th centuries stated that: ‘violence in the strict sense, the only violence which is measurable and indisputable is physical violence. It is direct injury to persons; it has three characteristics: it is brutal, eternal and painful. It is defined by the material use of force’ (Adebanwi, 2004). Alanamu while citing Salami categorised violence into two which are, direct and indirect violence. Direct violence refers to acts of deliberate attack on person’s physical of psychological integrity. This has in this category all forms of homicide (genocide, war crime, massacres, murders, terrorism) as well as all forms of brutal actions such as kidnapping, torture, rape, maltreatment. Indirect violence covers harmful, sometimes even deadly situations or actions which, due to human intervention, do not necessarily involve a direct relationship between the victims and the institution (Alanamu, 2005).
Violence therefore is an encompassing phenomenon. It is organised in nature carried out by the people or government to cause harm or injury with the intents and purposes to carry out a desired objective.

(e) Electoral Violence

Electoral violence presents one of the gravest threats to many democratizing societies. And there are several manifestations of electoral violence. These include murder, arson, abduction, assault, violent, seizure and destruction of electoral material, overwhelming presence of the gun and other weapon-brandishing soldiers, security operatives and youths. These acts of electoral misdemeanor are perpetuated by individuals and groups (comprising mainly of youths with the aim of influencing the results of elections. It is in light of the foregoing that Ogundiya (2003) defined electoral violence as:

All sorts of riots, demonstrations, party clashes, political assassinations, looting, arson, thuggery, kidnapping, etc., spontaneous or not, which occur before, during, and after elections. It could be regarded as elections motivated crisis employed to alter, change or influence by force or coercion, the electoral behaviour of voters or voting patterns or possibly reverse electoral decision in favour of particular individual, groups or political party.

Ultimately, from the above definition, electoral violence is a means to an end – geared specifically towards influencing the voting behavior of electorate as well as changing electoral results in favour of an individual, groups, or party with the use of force, which often results in violence, fatal injuries, death, and destruction of property. Thus, electoral violence as used in this study, refers to all forms of the threat and/or use of physical force employed to disorganize the electoral process, destroy electoral materials as well as to intimidate the electorates with the ultimate aim of either retaining political power as long as possible or wresting political power from its incumbent holders. In Nigeria, like any other ailing democracy, the phenomenon of electoral violence is a device that is habitually employed by the political elites in their struggle for the distributive mechanism of the state apparatus.

Electoral violence coupled with other manifestations of political violence such as intra and inter-party conflicts and the devastating influence of godfatherism have continued to pose serious challenges to the sustenance and consolidation of the country’s democracy. This is so because the importance of fair and credible elections to the consolidation and survival of democracy cannot be over emphasized. It is imperative to note that elections are not only meant to ensure, confirm or re-affirm the legitimacy of the political (elective) office holders through a regular consent, but also to provide a fertile ground for democracy to thrive. And it is even more worrisome to note that the main armies and victims of this ugly phenomenon of electoral warfare are our youths – the future leaders of the Nigerian nation. Since violence can be defined as the illegitimate or unauthorised use of force to effect decisions against the will or desires of others (Kolawole, 1988), then Nwolise while quoting Albert defined electoral violence as all forms of organised acts or threats physical, psychological, and structural, aimed at intimidating, harming, blackmailing a political stakeholder before, during and after an election with a view to determining, delaying, or otherwise influencing an electoral process (Nwolise, 2007).

Theories of State

a) The Divine Theory of State’s Origin

The theory of divine origin of the State outlines the fact that the State has been established by an ordinance of God and so its rulers are divinely ordained and are accountable to no other authority but God (Anifowose, 1999). This notion of the divine origin of the State strongly prevailed in the oriental Empires where rulers regarded themselves as the descendants of God. The early Hebrews, for instance, as shown in Shaapera (2009), believed that their government was created by the Lord. The theory of divine origin of leaders was used to support the absolutism of James I of England who, like others of his era, governed absolutely without any accountability to his people. Meanwhile, the divine origin perspective on the State was also strongly adhered to by rulers throughout the middle-ages (Ebenstein, 2000).

However, the divine pretensions of royal absolutism where later challenged by the rising middle classes who advanced the doctrine of popular sovereignty. The divine right was therefore challenged by the writings of John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes and other British Political thinkers who mostly considered the whole idea of „State” as a social contract between the rulers and the ruled (Ebenstein, 2000). The next sub-theme here considers the theoretical position of the social contract theorists on the emergence of the State.
b) Social Contract Theory of the State

The theory of the social contract presents the State as a product of the mutual agreement of men, created with a definite purpose to sever certain social needs. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) are regarded as the main exponents of the social contract theory of origin of State. Some later thinkers such as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), John Rawls (1921-2002) and Robert Nozick (1938) made use of this theory to elaborate their own systems of thought (Gauba, 2003).

The social contract theory of the origin of the State implies that men, at a time in history, lived or would have lived without any recognized civil law (ie without the State). This stage or life-pattern of men (when they lived without any form of organized civil law) is described as the „state of nature”. The state of nature denotes how men lived or would have lived without the authority of civil law, State or political control. At this stage, there is no industry and no systemic production. Men lived not only close to nature but they had to depend on the bounty of nature for their survival.

As argued in Shaapera (2008), “it must be noted… however, that even the social contract theorists themselves have not agreed on how the State came to be from their different analysis of life in the state of nature and what they differently perceived was the state of nature”. They commonly agreed that the State was a social contract after an unsatisfactory experience in the state of nature. For instance, Thomas Hobbes viewed the contract as being between the people and the constituted authority (State) while Locke says such a contract is “of all with all” but not a contract with government or state. Rousseau supported Locke in this way and emphasized that the contract is designed to provide “collective security”. Life in the „state of nature”, to Hobbes, is a general disposition to war “of every man against every man”, leading to perpetual fear and strife which consequently makes life in Hobbesian „state of nature” to be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short”. On the other hand, Locke emphasised „state of nature” is moral and social in character. In it, men have rights and acknowledge duties, just that life in the state of nature (for Locke) is not satisfactory as peace is constantly upset by the corruption and viciousness of degenerate men, which Locke says plagues the „state of nature” by lack of an established settled down law, lack of known and indifferent judge, and the lack of an executive power to enforce just decisions. These, Locke argued, necessitated the formation of a civil society (the State) devoid of the evils and hence the social contract (Murkherjee and Ramaswamy, 1999; Gauba, 2003: Enemuo, 1999; Appadorai, 1974).

For Rousseau too, the State is the result of a contract entered into by men who originally lived in a state of nature”. However, Rousseau emphasizes that there was only one contract called the „social pact” to which government or the State itself was not a party. Individuals surrendered all their rights to the community and therefore, after making the contract, may have only such rights as are allowed to them by the General Will (i.e. Law) (Appadorai, 1974).

Nevertheless, the arguments of the social contract origin of the State have been criticized of being historical by not taking cognizance of history and chronology of events in human lives. The social contract theorists’ arguments of life in the state of nature is therefore criticized of being too idealistic, Utopia and hence unrealistic as history does not tell us when such a social contract itself took place in human existence as well as the epoch of the state of nature. Though, the theory of the social contract origin of State tries to demonstrate that the State is the product of the “will” of all individuals comprising it (the State) and as instrument of harmonizing the interests of all individuals and all sections of society, it is unfortunately not so in many societies, particularly in modern capitalist societies where some dominant sections or a chosen few are so well-organized and vocal that they become “self-styled representatives of the will of society, and seek to justify their authority on this ground (Gauba, 2003). The theory of social contract, therefore, lacks logical explanations as to the origin of State. It has also been described as „bad history, bad logic and bad philosophy” (Gauba, 2003).

c) The Natural Theory of State’s Origin

According to Anifowose (1999), “the natural theory sees the State as coming into being as the result of natural evolution”. For this view, the beginning of government is the result of various factors working through ages, such as kinship, religion, force and political consciousness. The State, therefore has evolved out of complex set of human needs through the ages. Thus, Aristotle argues that man was, by nature, a political animal. The need for order and security is an ever present factor man knows that he can develop the best of what he is capable only through the State; man outside the State was, naturally, indeed, not a man at all but either a god or a beast. Unlike the notions of the social contract theorists, the natural theory of the States origin, like the force theory, has no provision for citizen’s independence of the
government, including the rights of political participation in the affairs of the State. The State assumes unrestricted power over its subjects.

d) The “Force Theory” of State’s Origin

The force theory holds that the State originated in conquest and coercion. It is the result of the subjugation of the weaker by the stronger. As better captured by Anifowose (1999), in the later part of The 29th Century, some German philosophers argued that force was the most characteristic attribute of the State, that „might made right” and that power has its own justification. Hence, it was concerned that physically powerful peoples were the „best” and the State as Power, was superior to other forms of human associations. The force theory, accordingly, has no respect for the natural rights of the citizens and does not approve of any resistance to the acts of political authority. (Anifowose, 1999).

Theoretical framework

This paper adopted the Marxist perspective as a theoretical framework since electoral violence in Nigeria are usually orchestrated by the bourgeoisie with the sole aim of capturing political power at all cost. Marxist’s writings of how the State emerged maintain that the State is not a creation for the interest of all, but it originated in conflict situation and operates as a form of instrument of domination. Scholars here include Karl Marx, Fredrich Engels, V.I Lenin, Mao and Lukas (Anifowose, 1999). These people were great philosophers, revolutionaries and political thinkers who observed that the State neither evolved as a result of agreement, contract nor gradual process. According to Marx, man is not a political animal as Aristotle claimed; rather, man is a social animal. Marx maintained that the forces of production in any given society constitute the basis of all social relationships while the State rests (or is founded) upon economic conditions. Thus, the mode of material production in social life preconditions the general character of socio-political and spiritual processes in the society (Mahajan, 2000). The Marxists believe, therefore, that the development of the productive forces in the capitalist society produced surplus value and thus the appropriation of property for private use that necessitated the constitution of the State. This State then turns to be an instrument in the hands of a powerful dominant class for accumulation and exploitation of the dominated members of the society. The implications of the Marxists’ arguments on the emergence of the institution of the State, as equally captured vividly in Shaapera (2009), is that the fact that the material production in an organized society and the social relations of production necessitated the emergence of the State which rests upon economic conditions and is expected to provide the necessary conditions to improve the living standards of the people in the society. Unfortunately, however, as earlier noted, Marx maintains that the State’s creation is not for the interest of all, but it originates in conflict and operates as a form of instrument of domination. Nevertheless, the Marxists, particularly the classical strand of Marxism, equally acknowledge that the State sometimes enjoys some form of relative autonomy and ensures the goodness of all, not just a few, in a society. Thus, as buttressed by Abbass (1990), the role of the Capitalist State is that it takes charge of responsibility of the political interests of the whole bourgeoisie and then realizes the functions of the political cohesion and hegemony which the bourgeoisie is incapable to realize. In order to achieve this function, the State assumes a relative autonomy to the bourgeoisie. What readily comes to mind from the foregoing arguments, considering the fact that the State is not just an instrument of class domination but sometimes enjoys some relative autonomy to function in the interest of all in the society, is the question of what purposes or functions is the state meant to serve.

An Analysis of the Causes of Electoral Violence and irregularities in Nigeria

Suffice it to say that contingent upon the debilitating effect of electoral violence on the nation’s political landscape, a galaxy of questions and posers about the causes of electoral violence had been raised. A cursory look at the literature suggests a number of reasons. The answer can be found in the array of causes of electoral violence that have been identified in the literatures. Some scholars contend that the causes are: greed; electoral Abuses, and rigging of elections; Abuse of political power; alienation, marginalization and exclusion; and the political economy of oil (Igbuzor, 2009). Yet, other scholars adduce the following as the causes of the phenomenon: poverty/unemployment (Maslow, 1954); ineffectiveness of security forces and culture of impunity; weak penalties; weak governance and corruption (Galtung, 1969); and, proliferation of arms and armaments. In the same vein, other pundits argue that the causal factors are: lack of security; partisanship of traditional rulers who were supposed to be the custodians of our cultural heritage; abuse of office by elected officials; zero-sum politics or winner takes it all syndrome; lucrative nature of political office; poor handling of election petition, and lack of faith in the judiciary; and
lack of compliance with the extant electoral law and enforcement of the enabling laws; the partisan disposition of the police, and other security agencies detailed to monitor the election, and secure lives and property; corrupt INEC staff and ad-hoc officials who connive with the politicians; conflict of interests between and among politicians; and greed and selfish interests of politicians coupled with ideological bankruptcy (Ugiagbe, 2010).

However, prevalent forms of political violence in Nigeria exude in political assassinations, arsons, violence-pruned campaigns, thuggery, election-related ethno-religious crisis, snatching of ballot boxes and so on and so forth. Analysts agree that this has been possible because election in Nigeria is seen as a “do or die affair”. This violence is most often carried out by gangs whose members are openly recruited and paid by politicians and party leaders to attack their sponsors’ rivals, intimidate members of the public, rig elections, and protect their patrons from similar attacks. The architects, sponsors, and perpetrators of this violence generally enjoy complete impunity because of both the powers of intimidation they wield and the tacit acceptance of their conduct by police and government officials at all levels (HRW, 2007).

It is against this backdrop that the Nigeria’s governing elite have been widely implicated in acts of electoral violence, corruption and fraud so pervasive as to resemble criminal activity more than democratic governance (HRW, 2007). It is intriguing to note that members of the political class responsible for instigating this plethora of violence as well as their foot-soldiers who undermine the electoral process by perpetrating these violent acts are never brought to book. Political behaviouralists have argued that violent electoral behaviour which is either intended to hurt or kill political opponents or their supporters has a devastating human rights impact on ordinary Nigerians. In the same vein, they contend that the scenario is prevalent because of the nature of the political system, the prevailing political culture and the level of political socialization. In the Nigerian case, electoral violence is more entrenched because our political system is supportive of zero-sum game politics. This was why Otoghiile (2009) described electoral violence as the radioactive by-product of some structural and attitudinal dislocations in the society which affects the level of political participation of the citizenry.

The sociological discourse on the theory of violent conflicts and violent political behaviour that exude in electoral violence contends that such acts hinge on the following theories: relative deprivation; rising expectation; frustration-aggression; systemic hypothesis; and group conflict theories (Okanya, 2001). All of them can be used to explain electoral violence in Nigeria but the one that best captures the general phenomenon of electoral violence is the systemic hypothesis. It lays emphasis on the variable which often contributes to the maintenance of a political order or disorder, such as the breakdown of consensual norm, instances of political alienation, the cohesiveness of a ruling group and its legitimacy, and the attendant effect on the social structure and the political process (Okanya, 2001; Anifowose, 1982).

Pre-election campaigns, election-time, and post elections periods are usually violent, with campaigning in many areas beset by political killings, bombings and armed clashes between supporters of rival political factions (Abutudu and Obakhedo, 2009). Even though this plethora of violence forms part of a broader pattern of violence and abuse that is inherent in Nigeria’s largely unaccountable political system; often times, perpetrators are never punished leading to a great distortion of our democratic practice. As a matter of act, examples too close for our comfort abound of Nigeria’s system of politics has actively rewarded corruption and violence with control over governorships, parliamentary seats and other positions of public trust despite existing law (HRW, 2007).

The Challenges of Sustaining Democracy in Nigeria

The following factors shook the survival of the Nigeria’s nascent democracy to its foundation since the advent of the fourth republic in 1999:

a) Activities of Ethnic militia groups: Ethnic militia has taken the front seat in any contemporary discourse on Nigeria and its emerging democracy. The restoration of democratic rule in Nigeria on 29 May, 1999 also signaled the emergence and continued proliferation of vigilante groups, ethnic and sectional militias as well as secessionist or separatist groups. According to Okechuwu (2003) prominent among these are O’ odua people’s Congress (OPC), formed in 1994 as a militant arm of Afenifere, a pan-Yoruba group and National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) that were in the forefront of protesting the annulment of the June 12,1993 general elections. The short lived Arewa peoples’ Congress (APC) appears to have been formed to serve as a check on OPC incessant attacks on the Hausa/Fulani population in Lagos and other Yoruba towns.

The Igbo’s peoples Congress (IPC), a militant arm of Ohanaeze Eastern Mandate in response to, OPC and others that frequently vandalize their goods and properties across the country was formed in

The dissatisfaction with the structure, operation and power configuration under ‘Nigeria federalism’ is responsible for the unprecedented emergence of the groups. The increase in crime rate and the helpless attitude of law enforcement agencies towards this have been cited by their founders and admirers to claim legitimacy for these groups.

Agbaje (2002) observed that the activities of these groups have assumed a dysfunctional dimension and threaten the objectives of peaceful co-existence. Their activities have exceeded the limits imposed by societal consensus. These however, have a direct correlation with Nigeria’s tradition of political brinkmanship, involving threats and counter-threats of breakdown of rule-induced and system – supportive behaviour in contexts etched by the tendency of the political elite to prefer fission to fusion, coming apart rather than sticking together, at moments of great national crises.

It is noteworthy that ethnic militia groups and their activities are more pronounced under the present democratic rule than its preceding regimes, especially the military. This might not be unconnected with the relative liberal environment created by democracy and its degree of tolerance. Democracy entails hearing different shades of views and making the best out of those views. But due to lack of proper orientation this liberal democracy posture encourages banditry and has ironically popularized violence as a means of seeking redress and settling old scores. Under the fourth republic there are reported cases of violent clashes between the Hausas and Yoruba’s, between the Hausas and Igbo’s, between ethnic militia groups and government forces and in some cases intra-ethnic clashes.

b) Ethno-religious factor: this remains one of the forces that have contributed greatly to socio-political instability in the country. The latest sectarian turbulence in the country and the clamor for the presidency by the varied ethnic groups indicate that the society is still Balkanized by tribal and religious sentiments (Victor, 2002). Each ethnic nationality in Nigeria has its own faith, interest, culture, language and level of aspiration and these forces seems to affect the economic fate of each group. In addition, they make the creation of a common identity problematic, thereby exacerbating the difficulty in attaining a true democracy in the society. Currently, Nigeria lacks the necessary democratic values (civil and human abuse is rampant, freedom of speech and expression is hampered, lack of social security and distributive justice) hence the rampant social unrest in the polity (Victor, 2002).

c) The absence of true federalism: lack of true federal structure in Nigeria is a stumbling block to the nation’s ongoing democratic enterprise. The federal government is very overbearing as it controls about 80% of the country’s resources leaving state and local governments at its mercy. Where regions, states or geographical zones have the power to control their resources and to have access to the necessary funds for community development programs, democracy strives. ‘In fact, it is only true federalism that can guarantee fairness and justice in the society. More importantly, it enables each locality to progress according to the aspiration of the people. A durable and enforceable people’s constitution is an indispensable tool to make this feasible, as the constitution protects the people and determines socio-political activities in a society. As noted in the philosophy of Aristotle “we can decide the identity of a state only by examining the form (and contents) of its constitution”. In Nigeria we lack the reality of such a federal constitution and true federal state (AWUUDU, 2012).

d) Abject Poverty: continued poverty, reinforced by mass unemployment is a barrier to Nigeria’s quest for consolidating her democracy. A society of beggars, parasites and bandits cannot develop. It cannot know peace or stability and cannot be democratic (Ake, 1996). This shows that any individual deprived of the basic wherewithal cannot partake effectively in a democratic process. A poor person is therefore not a full fledged social individual, as he/she lacks the basic freedom to engage in the life he/she enjoys. One can safely argue that poverty is a hindrance to democratic consolidation since economic chaos can topple democratic institutions. The problems of poverty and injustice are good part of Nigeria, and the citizens do not seem to understand what is in their cult economy. People who lack the basic wherewithal cannot participate effectively in a democratic process. A poor person is therefore not a full fledged social individual, as he/she lacks the basic freedom to engage in the life he/she enjoys. One can safely argue that poverty is a hindrance to democratic consolidation since economic chaos can topple democratic institutions. The problems of poverty and injustice are good part of Nigeria, and the citizens do not seem to understand what is in their culture preventing them from achieving a just, prosperous-dignified life and true democracy. It is essential to note that about 70% of the Nigerian populations are estimated poor. Is there any wonder why the society is chaotic? (Victor, 2002). The consequence of the above estimation substantiates how the masses in Nigeria are easily brainwashed and their right of choice terribly manipulated making an objective choice seldom to consideration. And more often than not, various forms of inducements and gratification which provide very temporary relief from the scourge of poverty are given central attention in making democratic choices.
e) The Incumbency Factor: In political parlance, incumbency refers to holders of political office who enjoy certain privileges (such as wider media coverage and security) which are not available to other contestants in the electoral contest. These privileges create some electoral margin for the incumbent running for re-election leading to an incumbency abuse factor. In Nigeria, this factor promotes appointment of corrupt and or compromissed electoral officers, manipulation of the electoral law and the constitution, manipulation of the electoral tribunals to protest stolen mandates, use of state security forces and apparatus to intimidate opposition parties, denial of access to state owned media houses etc to ensure they regain or elongate their tenure against popular will (Jaja & Aumona, 2011:125).

f) The politics of godfatherism: another great impediment to democratic consolidation in Nigeria is the phenomenon of godfatherism which has been dominating the political scene of the country. It is a game where political kingmakers and gladiators manipulate the political system to enthrone their crowned political stewards. Ogundiya (2010:237) asserts that Godfatherism is both a symptom and a cause of the violence and corruption that together permeates the political process in Nigeria. Public officials who owe their positions to the efforts of a political godfather incur a debt that they are expected to repay without end throughout their tenure in office. They control state resources and policies not minding the corporate existence of the state. In fact their activities help frustrate the basic democratic values in society and block the democratic process by obstructing selection of good and qualified candidates for elective posts thereby making the rise of true democracy a hard nut(Muhammad :2013).

g) Corruption: according to John Campbell, USA Ambassador to Nigeria; corruption is a clog in the wheel of any nation struggling for the enthronement and consolidation of democracy and good governance (Punch July 7th, 2005). This shows that democracy cannot be predicted on a fragile and unstable political base. Corruption as a devastator has greatly eroded the fundamental values of democracy and its essential principles.

According to Ogundiya (2010), events in Nigeria since 1999 have shown that the tidal waves of reversal have been contending with Nigeria’s democratic project. Consequently, democracy remains grossly unstable and the future seems to be very bleak because of rampant bureaucratic and political corruption. Corruption has reached a high crescendo such that an average Nigerian now possibly associates democracy with it. The consequences of political corruption are potently manifest: cyclical crisis of legitimacy, fragile party structure, institutional decay, chronic economic problem and unemployment, and above all general democratic volatility (Muhammad: 2013). Corruption in Nigeria is generally characterized by Looting of funds and wealth kept secretly, i.e. capital flight; misappropriation and mismanagement of public funds; money laundering (acquiring money through fraudulent ways); drug and child trafficking; illegal arms deal; gratification which involves monetary, material or physical favor as a condition or reward for performing official duty, official abuse of office in which an official suppresses and violates an oath of office and nepotism which is granting undeserved favors to one’s relations. The recent corruption scandal in the oil sector totaling N1.7 trillion from 1999-2011, Police Pension Fund of N18 billion as well as the James Ibori N450 billion corrupt case of money laundering in London is just the tip of an iceberg as far as corruption is concern in Nigeria. (Muhammad: 2013).

h) Security question: from 1999-date, the country has been home with lots of ethno-religious crisis, sectarian mayhem, electoral violence etc. questioning and shaking the survival of democracy. Notable among them are, the Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani disturbance in Shagamu, the Jukun/Tiv conflict (2000), incessant turbulence in Jos the erstwhile home of peace and tourism, the post election violence in the Northern part of Nigeria (2011) and constant sectarian turmoil exemplified by the activities of Boko Harram. The x-ray of the above upheavals will indicate that, our democracy is surely under great challenge making Dauda and Avidime (2007) to argue that the current security situation in the country is a major obstacle to the consolidation of democracy. According to them, “the tense security situation in all parts of the country makes nonsense of whatever efforts has been made to justify the sustenance of our democratic experiment since the environment is unconducive for foreign investments and endangered by bad governance and political instability”.

I) Regional struggle for power

The Constitution of the PDP is not emphatic on how long a ZONE approved by the so-called “appropriate Executive Committee” should enjoy the incumbency of a particular position under this arrangement. It is this loophole in the PDP constitution that President Olusegun Obasanjo exploited to stay eight years in office. What this means is that while the zoning arrangement allowed Obasanjo to take his first tenure of four years, the PDP constitution did not expressly allow him to stay for the second four year term as the constitution made no such provision. The principle of zoning and rotation as enshrined in that
Constitution, does not expressly guarantee a second term for a person after completing his first term in office. Second term is conditional and it is predicated on performance and the will of the voters.

Indeed, Section 135 (2) of the Constitution states that “the president shall vacate his office at the expiration of a period of four years commencing from the date when he took oath of Allegiance and oath of office”. Second terms are not guaranteed by the party constitution, but are only a constitutional right of an occupant of the office of the President or Governor. Section 137 (1b) of the constitution states that ‘A person shall not be qualified for election to the office of the President if he/she has been elected to such office at any two previous elections. Unless therefore a person has been elected as President on two previous elections, he is qualified to contest unless impinged by other provisions of the constitution. PDP or any other political party guided by this provision in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) has no power to stop an incumbent. What a political party does is to merely allow an occupant of this position to contest its party primaries if he/she so desired, a provision President Obasanjo exploited and won again in 2003. President Obasanjo, it could be recalled was strongly challenged in the Party primaries by Dr. Alex Ekweume, Chief Banabas Gemade and Late Alhaji Abubakar Rimi. If he has an absolute right for eight-year tenure under the zoning and rotation arrangement, no other persons would have challenged him.

The Late President Yar’adua was never given a ticket to rule for eight years. The North cannot therefore claim what was never given to him. He was given a mandate for four year which terminates on May 29, 2011. In accordance with its zoning principle, the PDP will be right to say the Presidential slot was zoned to the North-West where the late President hailed from. If President Yar’adua has been alive, he would have been free, like others, to seek for a second tenure, if he so decides. He would have contested it with other aspirants from other zones as was the case with President Obasanjo. There is no guarantee that he would have won the primaries, even if we like to believe that sitting presidents rarely lose primaries. There have been examples of those who did not.

The PDP constitution which enshrines the Principle of Zoning and Rotation however did not state its strategy for its implementation. As the constitution of the Party recognizes six geo-political zonal structures for Nigeria, the implication is that the rotation of the Presidency is within the six geo-political zones. The Rotation of the office of the President according to the constitution is not between the North and the South.

Even among the six geo-political zones, there is no known sequence stipulated. Recall that President Obasanjo and the South West took the Presidential slot at the Jos Convention of PDP in 1999 after a contest between him and Dr. Alex Ekweume and Chief Jim Ifeanyichukwu Nwobodo both from the South East, Tonye Graham Douglas and Chief Don Etiebet both from the South-South. It is believed that majority of those who voted for Obasanjo, did it in sympathy with the Late Chief Moshood Abiola who was adjudged winner of the annulled 1993 Presidential Election and in order to placate the South West for the injustice done to the late Chief Abiola.

In the same manner, the Late President Yar’Adua, was recalled from intending retirement from politics and handed a Presidential ticket as yet another compensation to his family over the death of his elder brother and former Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, the late Alhaji Shehu Musa Yar’Adua who died in Abakaliki prison following a fanthom coup arranged to diminish his then high political profile. It could be recalled that the late Alhaji Shehu Musa Yar’Adua was denied the opportunity to contest a Presidential election in 1992 after winning his party’s primaries. The Military annulled not only the primaries, but went further to deregister the parties and impose two political parties on Nigerians.ie Social Democratic Party (SDP), and the National Republican Convention (NRC). It was in compensation to the family of his bosom friend and loyal deputy while he was a Military Head of State, that President Obasanjo brought back late President Yar’Adua to come and contest the Presidency of Nigeria. After the demise of late President Yar’Adua, presidential election was held in Nigeria on 16th April, 2011. The election follows controversy as to whether a Muslim or Christian should be allowed to become president given the tradition of rotating the top office between the religions and following the death of Umaru Yar’Adua, who was a Muslim, and Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian, assuming the presidency. Following the election, widespread violence took place in the northern parts of the country. Jonathan was declared the winner on 19th April, 2011. This led to incessant turbulence in Jos the erstwhile home of peace and tourism, the post election violence in the Northern part of Nigeria (2011) and constant sectarian turmoil exemplified by the activities of Boko Haram. Therefore, violence during and after election in the fourth republic have been a major threat to the sustenance of the Nigeria’s democratic experience.
Conclusion
Democracy was welcomed in Nigeria with high expectation and enthusiasm since it has the capacity of ensuring political stability and socio-economic development. But this hope was soon dashed as the political landscape of the nation was turned to a “battle” ground and not for national survival but for extending self-centric and elitist agenda. The system today lacks an agenda for the masses and their rights terribly suppressed. Instead of peace, stability, development and an egalitarian society, the nation is now characterized and marred by different types of crises. Indeed, from 1999-date, the country has been confronted with lots of ethno-religious crisis, sectarian mayhem, electoral violence etc. Thus questioning and shaking the survival of democracy in Nigeria.

Recommendations
After a critical review of the findings of this paper, the following recommendations are considered:
1. *That good democratic governance should be put in place with adequate conduct of free and fair elections.* The problem of political instability demands that accountability, social justice, transparency, rule of law, gender equality, and due process must guide governance and leadership; and underpins the role of the media and civil society groups in ensuring that a desirable state is achieved.
2. It is also recommended that a special tribunal be set up to try the offenders of electoral violence in Nigeria.
3. In order to stem corruption, it is important to emphasize accountability, prosecute former and present corrupt political office holders. To achieve the above, ‘immunity clause’ should be removed from the Constitution.
4. As part of the security sector reform, there is need to decentralize and introduce state police in order to enhance responsibility and full accountability of various state Governors in maintaining and managing violence as well as security challenges in their respective states. There is also an urgent need for capacity building for the Police and other security agencies as well as increased cooperation and control in the area of small arms proliferation.
5. Lastly, the Independent National Electoral Commission should be given financial autonomy so as to allow it work and conduct free and fair election with out any interference from the executive.

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