ACHIEVING THE ESSENCE OF GOVERNMENT IN A GROWING DEMOCRACY: SAVING NIGERIA FROM ANOTHER CIVIL WAR

REVD FR JOSEPH CHIBUZO INMPEY (PhD)
General Studies Division
Enugu State University of Science and Technology
Agbani, Enugu, Nigeria
lordinmpey.7@gmail.com

&

ANGELA U. ILO (PhD)
Public Administration Department
Caritas University Enugu, Enugu State
Angieonwuzu63@gmail.com

Abstract
In Nigeria today there are more than enough reasons to query the essence of government as it is evident that the government has failed in its primary function of providing good governance and securing lives and property. Motivated by the above, this study adopted qualitative method of data collection in dealing with the topic; achieving the essence of government in a growing democracy: saving Nigeria from another civil war. In view of this, data were generated from secondary source materials. Thus based on content analysis of documented evidences the study unraveled the essence of government and the many challenges facing democratic governance in Nigeria; insecurity in the forms of terrorism, insurgency, armed banditry, kidnapping and these in addition to marginalization, inequality, chronic corruption and nepotism indeed constitute systemic threat to national cohesion in Nigeria today. The study recommends as follows; urgent need for restructuring the Nigeria polity to ensure the effective operation of true federalism as against the current quasi federalism currently in practice in the country; objective implementation of the recommendations of the 2014 National Conference or convening a national conference urgently whose recommendation must be implemented will be a precondition for evolving a people’s constitution that will cater for the diversities inherent in the Nigerian federal system; need to review the geopolitical structure of Nigeria so as not to allow the continued dominance of a particular section of the country over others; and urgent need to change the 1999 Constitution to ensuring that it reflects the Peoples aspiration in a united federal republic of Nigeria.

Keywords: Government, Growing Democracy, Plural Country, Civil War, Nigeria.

Introduction
Government has indeed become one of the most popular concepts in the world. Connotatively and denotatively the concept is used and applied by both educated and non educated alike on daily bases. With the above in mind, suffice to say that a government is the system or group
of people governing an organized community, generally a state. It can also describe the leadership of a supranational organization, such as the United Nations or the EU, or a political region, or local units, such as a county, city, or township. "Government" generally refers to the organizational structure that makes laws, sets policy, and runs the day-to-day affairs of some political unit, region, or community. As such, it generally is not used to refer to organizations that are considered to be privately-owned or privately-run, such as a business, a corporation or company, private organization, or any private entity.

In the case of its broad associative definition, government normally consists of legislature, executive, and judiciary. Government is a means by which organizational policies are enforced, as well as a mechanism for determining policy. Each government has a kind of constitution, a statement of its governing principles and philosophy. Typically the philosophy chosen is some balance between the principle of individual freedom and the idea of absolute state authority (tyranny). While all types of organizations have governance, the term government is often used more specifically, to refer to the approximately 200 independent national governments and subsidiary organizations globally.

Historically, prevalent forms of government include monarchy, aristocracy, timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, theocracy and tyranny. The main aspect of any philosophy of government is how political power is obtained, with the three main forms being electoral contest, coup d’état and hereditary succession. The moment and place that the phenomenon of human government developed is lost in time; however, history does record the formations of early governments. About 5,000 years ago, the first small city-states appeared. By the third to second millennia BC, some of these had developed into larger governed areas: Sumer, Ancient Egypt, the Indus Valley Civilization, and the Yellow River Civilization (Christian, 2004).

The development of agriculture and water control projects was a catalyst for the development of governments (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2010). On occasion a chief of a tribe was elected by various rituals or tests of strength to govern his tribe, sometimes with a group of elder tribesmen as a council. The human ability to precisely communicate abstract, learned information allowed humans to become ever more effective at agriculture, and that allowed for ever increasing population densities. David Christian (2004) explains how this resulted in states with laws and governments.

As farming populations gathered in larger and denser communities, interactions between different groups increased and the social pressure rose until, in a striking parallel with state formation, new structures suddenly appeared, together with a new level of complexity. Like stars, cities and states reorganize and energize the smaller objects within their gravitational field. Starting at the end of the 17th century, the prevalence of republican forms of government grew. The Glorious Revolution in England, the American Revolution, and the French Revolution contributed to the growth of representative forms of government. The Soviet Union was the first large country to have a Communist government (Smelser, 2001). However, since the fall of the Berlin Wall, liberal democracy has become an even more prevalent form of government (Kuper, 2008). In the nineteenth and twentieth century, there was a significant
increase in the size and scale of government at the national level (Haider, 2014). This included the regulation of corporations and the development of the welfare state (Kuper, 2008).

In Africa the emergence of government was arguably a by-product of colonialism and western capitalism, though the natives had their traditional administrative systems prior to the advent of colonial government. However, in contemporary times Government serves many vital functions, including national security and protecting civil liberties, from freedom of speech to freedom from unreasonable search and detention. As well as securing the safety of its citizens without infringing on individual rights. Today however, the Nigerian state is confronted with numerous challenges and threats to its continued corporate existence and this gives cause for serious concern. With these points in mind, this paper shall address issues bordering on achieving the essence of government in a growing democracy as an imperative for saving Nigeria from another civil war.

Statement of the Problem
Beyond principle, it is arguable that in praxis throughout history government has served as a vehicle for the organization of hatred and oppression, benefiting no one except those who are ambitious and ruthless enough to gain control of it. This is a stack reality especially in Africa and other developing parts of the globe and it is indeed worrisome. What, arguably, makes government necessary is the need for protection from other, even more dangerous, governments. The violent and corrupt nature of government is widely acknowledged by almost everyone. That’s been true since time immemorial, as have political satire and grousing about politicians. Yet almost everyone turns a blind eye; most not only put up with it, but actively support the charade. That’s because although many may believe government to be an evil, they believe it is a necessary evil. (The larger question of whether anything that is evil is necessary, or whether anything that is necessary can be evil, is worth reflecting about). It is incumbent on the above that the need to re-examine the essence of government is considered timely, exigent and germane to this study for Nigeria to be saved from another civil war.

Objective of the Study
The main objective of this study was to examine the import of achieving the essence of Government in a growing democracy as a veritable precondition for saving Nigeria from another Civil War. Pursuant to the above, the following specifics shall be addressed:

1. To review of the Concept and Primary Essence of Government;
2. To interrogate the Governance Challenges facing Government in Nigeria;
3. To re-examine the essence of the Nigerian State and the Systemic Threats to National Cohesion; and
4. To adduce measures for saving Nigeria from another Civil War going forward.

Methodology
The study adopted qualitative method of data collection. In view of this, data were generated from secondary source materials. Qualitative research emphasizes words, rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. Furthermore, it predominantly emphasizes a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research; in which the emphasis is placed on capturing inferences from a general field into particular situations. Also, qualitative research entails a perspective of social concepts as an increasingly shifting sphere based on individual contributions. Data were sourced through relevant text materials
and historical documents. These include: texts, journals, online articles, Magazines, Archives and the likes. Data was analyzed by logical sequence of content analysis.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study was anchored on the theory of the colonial state. This largely underscores the attitude of the Nigerian state today and the challenges of sustaining democratic governance. To the above extent the nature and character of the Nigerian state has not helped matters since the Nigerian state started out during colonialism. Colonialism in whatever forms, intends to achieve the twin objectives of exploration and exploitation of the colonized territories. As instructively observed by Young (1988), Colonial Nigerian state was oppressive and authoritarian in its conduct and was not in a position to bridge its alien and distant nature from the Nigerian people. This, he argued was in line with the general nature of colonial state which sits atop a conquered entity. Unfortunately, local elites that inherited the post colonial Nigerian state continued with the authoritarian and alienating nature of the colonial Nigerian state for the one reason that the state does not evolve from the society and/or consensual agreement of the inhabiting nationalities. Because of the fragile nature of the Nigerian state encapsulated in weak institutional capacities to discharge state functions, political dramatis personae have over time personalized and usurped state apparatuses to the detriment of democratic practice and sustenance. State institutions and apparatuses including the police, electoral bodies, judiciary and political parties have demonstrated their weaknesses and incapacity in ensuring a virile democratic Nigeria as witnessed in the 1964-65, 1979, 1983 and regrettably 1993 elections.

The character of the Nigerian state has been exploited by the operators of state affairs to achieve particularist and sectional interests. Managers of state affairs have oftentimes assumed the position of the state thereby rendering the state paralyzed and in fact subjecting it to their whims and caprices. The situation became more pathetic under military regimes, with their unitary, hierarchical and command nature largely affecting the operation of the Nigerian state. Olaitan (1997) lends credence to this in his summation of the Nigerian state and the Babangida military regime: This essential character of the Nigerian state was properly identified and exploited by General Ibrahim Babangida who ruled Nigeria between 1985 and 1993 under an unprecedented regime of military presidency. To be sure, the notion of military presidency is essentially a loaded authoritarian one. Olaitan (1997) concludes that the surviving character of the Nigerian state defined by its lack of autonomy, the immensity of its power, its proneness to abuse and the lack of immunity against it, constitutes a road block to democracy and the many threats to national cohesion as currently evident in Nigeria.

**Review of the Concept and Primary Essence of Government**

What do you think of when you hear the word 'government'? Does Aso Rock Villa in Federal Capital Territory Abuja or the Capitol Building in Washington D.C., come to mind? Or perhaps you get a mental picture of the President, National Assembly or Congress as the case may be. You might even be thinking about terms like 'power', 'authority' or 'control' or 'rules' or 'politics.' Nevertheless, let's take a moment and try to explore the definitions of government at this juncture. Government is so ingrained in our culture and so much a part of our everyday lives that most of us, when asked, can't offer a very good definition of the actual word.
Defining government, however, is the starting point for any study of the essence of governmental system.

Dictionaries and scholars define government in different ways. Let's proceed to sort out these definitions.
The Merriam-Webster Dictionary offers three definitions of government:
1. 'The group of people who control and make decisions for a country, state, etc.'
2. 'A particular system used for controlling a country, state, etc.'
3. 'The process or manner of controlling a country, state, etc.'

Notice here that government can be defined by the people involved; the system in place, or the process in use. Dr. Harold Damerow, a professor of government and history, gets a bit more specific with his definition. He says that government is 'responsible primarily for making public policy for an entire society.' He also mentions that government is 'the steering mechanism for a given society.' It forms the policies that keep a particular society heading in the right direction (Harold, 1987). Finally, Black's Law Dictionary mentions that institutions of the government 'regulate the relationships among members of a society and between the society and outsiders' and that they 'have the authority to make decisions for the society' to meet goals and maintain order. While all of these definitions help us grasp the meaning of the word 'government,' they provide a lot to remember, so let's summarize. Government, whether we refer to the system or institutions in operation, the group of people in charge, or the process in use, is the authority that sets rules for a society, helps its members relate to one another and to others, and keeps it running smoothly, securely, and peacefully.

The essence of something is what makes the thing what it is. But surprisingly little study of government has been done by ontologists (who study the first principles of things) or epistemologists (who study the nature of human knowledge). The study of government almost never concerns itself with whether government should be, but only with how and what it should be. The existence of government is accepted without question.

What is the essence of government? After you cut through all the rhetoric, the doublethink and the smokescreen of altruism that surround the subject, you find that the essence of government is force. And the belief it has the right to initiate the use of force whenever expedient. Government is an organization with a monopoly, albeit with some fringe competition, on the use of force within a given territory. As Mao Zedong said, "The power of government comes out of the barrel of a gun." There is no voluntarism about obeying laws. The consent of a majority of the governed may help a government put a nice face on things, but it is not essential and is, in fact, given with any enthusiasm. A person's attitude about government offers an excellent insight into their character. Political beliefs reflect how a person thinks men should relate to one another; they offer a practical insight into how he views humanity at large and himself in particular. There are only two ways people can relate in any given situation; voluntarily or coercively. Almost everyone, except overt sociopaths, pays at least lip service to the idea of voluntarism, but government is viewed as somehow exempt. It's widely believed that a group has prerogatives and rights unavailable to individuals.
In the light of the above, therefore, discussions on essence of government and governance have given birth to such twin terminologies as bad governance and good governance. While the former has been argued to be the bane of underdevelopment and societal problems, the latter has always offered a rescue. Governance entails those processes, activities, events and happenings in the society that can enhance (or impede) service delivery. It embraces all of the methods that societies use to distribute power, and manage public resources and problems with a view to enhancing the well being of the people. Distributing power, and managing resources and problems (including conflicts) requires a powerful and overarching state that can mobilize state instruments and apparatuses, check abuses and balance interests. The role of the state in governance process is crucial and therefore requires building institutions that are responsive to and responsible for societal actions. The society is replete with divergent groups and associations, each seeking to maximize its potentials in appropriating power needed to actualize its interests. The state, through governance processes becomes an umpire, an arbiter setting the standards and rules of the game to ensure social order. It is very instructive to note that for the state to assume this position, it must be a creation of the society. That is, the state must evolve from the society and hence should serve the interests of the society since it is setup to perform that role (Olaitan, 1997).

Consequently, the development of any state or society is arguably tied to an extent to which its government and/or governance is ‘democratic’ and ‘good’. Democratic good governance provides a platform for rapid changes in the socio-economic and political status of nations and their citizenry. Good governance encompasses all the processes wherein public resources and problems are managed effectively, efficiently and in response to critical needs of the society. According to a UNDP (1997) report, effective democratic forms of governance rely on public participation, accountability and transparency. It implies effective public administration in relation to public policy formulation and implementation in the bid to attain high level of economic stability. The Observation of Kofi Anan as highlighted in the report further lends credence to the underlining importance of good governance when he asserts that: without good governance, the rule of law, predictable administration, legitimate power, and responsive regulation-no amount of funding, no amount of charity will set us on the path of prosperity.

**Governance Challenges facing Current Democratic Government in Nigeria**

The current democratic governance was earned through a hard fought mass resistance. For long before the emergence of the fourth republic the military had dominated the political scene. Against this backdrop, great hope and expectations greeted Nigeria’s return to multi-party politics and civil rule in 1999 but despite the conduct of six consecutive general elections (1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011, 2015 and 2019), the hope expressed by the people in the democratization process is gradually faltering while the expectations are becoming apparently dashed. Political liberalization and not genuine democratic transition can best describe Nigeria’s political landscape since 1999 because of the failure of the process to manifest profound evidence of a growing democracy. Arguably, Gunther et al. (1995) assert that, democratization process has three phases: the fall of the authoritarian regime, consolidation, and enduring democracy. The process in Nigeria has only so far witnessed the collapse of authoritarian military regimes while consolidating on that has become a serious challenge. Achieving a consolidated democracy requires good governance by democratic
regimes. It also demands upholding democratic values of popular participation, respect for the rule of law, free and fair elections and the independence of the judiciary. Good governance essentially promotes improved welfare of the people, transparency and accountability by public office holders in the conduct of state affairs and reduces corruption to the barest minimum. The realizations of these correlates of democracy are some of the daunting Challenges confronting democratic governance in Nigeria. What then are the factors that militated against the facilitation of true democracy under this administration? What led to the faltering of the initial expectations that accompanied democratization process in 1999 and early 2000? Why was it difficult to consolidate on the gains of the democratization effort with a view to achieving the essence of government? These are some of the issues that will challenge our curiosity as the discourse unfolds.

Democracy like other social science concepts suffers from the problem of definition. It is not the case that defining democracy is that problematic, but providing a universally acceptable meaning is always the challenge. Scholars have particularly differed on what exactly constitutes the meaning of democracy. Extant literature disagrees on the universality of a definition of democracy. However, Scholars, political observers, analysts and statesmen have emphasized the different aspects of the process. They seem to emphasize the characteristics of democracy than attempt a conceptual definition. It is perhaps, as usefully observed by Enemuo (1999), much easier to identify a democracy than to define it. There is, notwithstanding the disagreement on perception and conception, the consensus that the best form of organizing government in the whole world today is democracy. The obvious reason is that democracy as a concept is now fascinating and inviting to all people and governments, even the most authoritarian. Being recognized as democratic has somewhat soothing effect on regimes and purports a sense of stability (Olugbose, 1992; Ariyo, 2001).

According to Huntington (1970) democracy exists where the principal leaders of a political system are selected by a competitive election in which the bulk of the population has the opportunity to participate. Implicit in the definition is the notion of election as a fundamental element of democracy. It equates democracy to election and the electoral processes in which the power of decision and choice rests with the people. Democracy to him revolves round the selective processes through which leaders emerge and ascend to power. This view is further corroborated by Guy (1991): Democracy means first and foremost, the real possibility for those who are governed of choosing and unseating, peacefully at regular intervals those who govern them. Guy’s view reinforces Huntington’s stand that election is fundamental in installing democratic regimes and in fact in ‘sacking’ them where the people no longer have confidence in them. Democracy rests on popular participation of the citizens since the government in the first place is for them and their choice is undeniably paramount. The foregoing echoes Abraham Lincoln’s famous definition of democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people (cited in Ake, 1992).

It should be noted that democracy transcends the conduct of elections and all the electioneering processes. Equating democracy with elections and electioneering activities is systematically undermining the expectations that democracy brings. Though, the selection process provides a form of guarantee and hope in the political process, it does not guarantee the emergence of the desired leadership neither does it provide the assurances of the
“dividends” of democracy. This view is aptly captured by Pogoson (2010) when she asserts that: democracy is based on the principle that public decision is the business of all citizens equally. This means that all citizens must not just be entitled to, but also enabled to participate in public decision making. The question of democracy goes beyond the holding of elections to the realization of democratic principles of governance in practice and to the balance of social forces in the political Community. It is what politicians do when they are in office that counts.

Political developments in developing countries particularly in the African continent are perturbing because democracy has defiled all definitions even theories that emphasize elections. Elections in Africa are largely characterized by minority participation and opinion. This has reduced leadership to the expression of the minds and interests of the minority who have held the polity by the jugular. To Adebanwi and Obadare (2011) nations are only democratic in as much as they have not lost confidence in the process even if they have consequently become apathetic to the system, a situation that further promotes the preponderances and ambivalences of political actors.

More disturbing is the attitude of politicians who have found it displeasing to relinquishing power willingly even when elections are held and results are not in their favour. They manipulate the electoral process, foment trouble and make their nations ungovernable. This has continued to have unsalutory effects on democratic practice in Africa. Pogoson further plays down the need to over-emphasize the issue of elections in democracy over and above other conditionalities while reacting to the emerging trends of democratic governance in Africa. She argues: African technocratic elites have been evasive of a democratic substance (economic development, social security etc) in favour of a democratic form that emphasizes mainly party formation, elections and constitutional engineering (Pogoson, 2010). The same point was earlier amplified by Moulin (1953) that a government may practice the techniques of election... without being democratic and may refrain from holding frequent and systematic elections without departing from the respect which it owes its conscience and the right to organize elections into political offices neglecting the substance of the process, the stewardship of the elected and the expectations of the electorates. He further asserts that democracy implies the presence of ethics or a certain public spirit which in particular involves respect for human rights of minorities, fair play, tolerance, observing the rules of the game, a sense of humour and unselfishness. What can be deduced from the foregoing discussion on the conception of democracy is that democracy conjures a process of organizing a political community in which individuals, through popular participation choose their representatives in a competitive medium to enhance and protect their welfare. It presents a distinct platform for elite or leadership recruitment hinged on popular participation of the citizenry and the protection of the interest of the minority. Democracy therefore represents the totality of ideas and ideals, institutions and the processes through which people participate in making decisions that affect them. It presupposes individual’s right to economic decision to own the means of production and participate fully in economic activities. It means the right to have access to food, shelter, education, health care etc. In essence, it seeks to ensure the welfare and wellbeing of all and sundry. Pogoson (2010) summarizes it thus: in its fullest sense, democracy is meaningless without economic, political and social rights. It means nothing to people who cannot eat properly, have a roof over their heads, find a job, send their children to school and have access to primary health care (PHC). These indeed in addition to systemic threat to national cohesion are the challenges of democratic governance in Nigeria today.
The Nigerian State and the Systemic Threats to National Cohesion

Nigeria’s efforts at democratization would require a re-examination of the historical events that created the Nigerian entity. The ‘forceful and thoughtless’ marriage of the Northern and Southern protectorates by the British colonial rule had done more damage than good to the Nigerian society even before the granting of independence in 1960. It can be historically sustained that the Nigerian entity did not exist in vacuum before the British conquest of 1861. Different Nationalities had existed with their respective and distinguishing values, traditions, cultures, norms, and in fact governmental system. These Nationalities had attained different levels of economic and socio-political developments before colonialism truncated such process (Akinboye and Anifowose, 1999; Rodney, 1972). Therefore, to amalgamate such nationalities in a marriage of convenience was to anticipate a failed relationship, a relationship which no doubt has been characterized inter alia by mutual suspicion, hatred, deep animosity, violence, sectionalism and ethnic chauvinism till date. Any democratization effort based on this strained relationship has, and is still frustrating any meaningful attempt at attaining full democracy and sustaining national cohesion.

The state of insecurity in Nigeria has become the single most worrisome threat to the country’s continued coexistence. Nobody is safe in Nigeria. Anything can happen to anybody at any time. This is despite the fact that, the most basic essence of government is to protect and provide essential public services to the citizenry. Everywhere government exists to protect citizens from violent crimes, and to provide public services that individuals cannot provide. Both the minimalist and welfarist views of government support these basic functions. It is in harmony with both views that the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria clearly affirms that; “The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”. Government is constitutionally mandated to guarantee the security of the citizenry. This implies that if government fails to perform this constitutional obligation with utmost dedication, it will inevitably become a fifth wheel (Omozuwa, 2017).

For many years, Nigerians have been battling with multifarious threats to peace. Many are victims of criminal violence. Incessant violent crimes have dimmed the prospects of attaining national cohesion, socio-economic prosperity, and democratic consolidation. Terrorism and the sprouting up of ethnic militias across the six geopolitical zones have also quashed all hopes that every Nigerian can experience freedom from fear of violent attacks (Omozuwa, 2017). In the light of the above, the state of insecurity in Nigeria questions the essence of social contract between the citizenry and government, which is predicated on the centrality of security to human flourishing and felicity. Under the social contract, citizenries willingly abdicate the rights of self-protection to government, thereby, authorizing it to enjoy monopoly of force for the effective preservation of citizens and the polity.

The social contract envisages that government will evolve veritable mechanisms to prevent, abate, and resolve violent external or internal conflicts perpetuated by state or non-state actors. No wonder the former Head of State of Nigeria, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, recently expressed apprehension over the spate of insecurity in Nigeria. He notes that the
cost implication of the incessant violence is about $13.7 billion. As huge and fair as the financial cost estimate is it does not capture other ramifications of violent crimes. This is understandably so. What is the cost of one human life? How can we possibly compute the value of thousands of lives that have been savagely slaughtered and are still being slaughtered on daily bases? Is it possible to calculate the true value of thousands of properties destroyed by violent criminals masquerading as herdsmen? Can we calculate the social cost of the traumas victims of kidnapping undergo? How do we cost the disruption of the basic institution of society by terrorists? (Omozuwa, 2017)

The point must be reiterated at this juncture that many families are sundered by criminal violence perpetuated by herdsmen, Boko Haram, kidnappers, bandits and ethnic militias. Many children are separated from their parents. Many cannot access basic education and health care. Also, many have become premature orphans. Without viable family structures how can human values be effectively transmitted from one generation to the other? How can children fulfill their potential without parental nurturing, guidance, and support? What kind of future awaits children deprived of quality education because of violent disruptions? The point is insecurity has multilayered and multi-generational implications that do not lend themselves to easy computation in terms of monetary costs. The situation indeed is highly worrisome now more than ever before.

The onus therefore lies on the government to address the issues both centripetal and centrifugal; that are shaking the foundations of national integration in Nigeria. That way Nigeria can be saved from experiencing another civil war no sooner than later. Until government succeeds in its primary purpose it cannot succeed in its secondary purposes. In other words, government’s efforts to diversify the economy by reviving the agro-allied sector cannot amount to much without widespread peace, stability, and security. The violent clashes between herdsmen and farmers can sabotage this lofty aspiration, and the quest to attain food security. Heavily armed herdsmen have made it difficult for farmers to enjoy the sweat of their labor, accumulate resources, and transcend the limits of subsistence farming. Like devouring armies of locust they turn farms to deserts. What we are witnessing affirms the fact that the spirit of impunity rules anywhere the authority of the law is class sensitive, or somewhat exudes elements of ethno-religious biases.

Similarly, we cannot boost the inflow of foreign capital without making Nigeria a safer place to do business. Safety, security, and stability are determinants of industrial growth. They are the magnets that attract foreign investors. No rational industrialist is predisposed to making long-term investment in a nation that is seemingly at the cusp of disintegration. For Nigeria to become an anthill of economic activities she would need to strengthen her security architecture, and make sure organized crimes and terrorism are reduced to their barest minimum. Consequently, we must not forget that citizens’ participation in the public realm is always abysmally low when there are threats to safety, personal dignity, and freedom of association. For citizens to massively participate in political activities urgent measures should be taken to guarantee maximum security and safety for all Nigerians.

Also we must not allow naïve rationalization to delude us into playing the ostrich. Nigeria’s history of politically motivated violence is not nascent. It has long historical roots that antedate...
the inglorious end of the first republic on January 15, 1966, and the commencement of atrocious military incursion into the civil realm of governance. There are many flashpoints in Nigeria’s political landscape. Given the present political scenario, Nigeria is on the brink of precipice and preventive measures should be put in place to ensure the worsening insecurity situation and political tensions do not snowball into total disintegration of Nigeria. This is important against the backdrop that the key definers of politics, elections and inter ethnic cum religious relations in Nigeria are violent crimes, kidnapping, assassinations, and arson. These phenomena are bad signs of a failed state, which Nigeria is fast reclining into especially since the emergence of the present administration.

As a way forward, we should long for the era when contestation for political power, resource allocation, religious affiliation and ethnic affinity will not be fuelled by nepotism, animosity and violence. We long for the day when decorum will govern political activities, and social relations in Nigeria. We long for the day when political gladiators will become less desperate, more astute, more civil, and put the nation first. Until then violent electoral crimes will remain an ugly reality of our collective existence.

Due to the prevalence of violent crimes, self-protection, self-arming now seems desirable. Many untrained but heavily armed vigilante groups are sprouting up like weeds. Hardly, is there a community without one or two vigilante groups. Unregulated vigilantism could serve as a catalyst for chaos. It could trigger wanton communal conflicts. When hungry youths are armed, criminality will most certainly abound. We seem to have forgotten some of the bitter lessons the civil war taught us. After the war, criminal activities thrived. For, the then military government could not track and retrieve all the arms it imported to execute the war. Some of the arms were not returned by ex-military men. Some used the unreturned arms for nefarious activities, including armed robbery. Indeed, some youths who lost their jobs during the civil war had access to arms, and used them to inflict harm on defenseless citizens. The point to be underscored is, vigilante groups may be performing some noble roles in society, but if they are unregulated, they will become instruments of social anomie. It does not make sense for the constructive use of violence or force to be de-monopolized. That could create parallel governments, like what is currently happening in Libya. Thomas Hobbes’ Leviathan illustrates the danger of living in a world of persistent insecurity with no government to ensure safety, law and order, “protecting citizens from each other and from foreign foes” (Omozuwa, 2017). It is exigent therefore, that the federal government should seriously engage relevant stakeholders with a view to finding lasting solutions to this untoward national security threat of herdsmen-farmer conflicts, Boko Haram terrorism or insurgency, armed banditry, kidnapping and others. There should not be any form of soft use of power and tackling and handling these threats, because half measures will not make Nigeria safer and secured. Government must demonstrate that this rather belated intervention is not a product of political expediency.

Suffice to say that there are no ready-made recipes to peace. Nigeria’s security threats are rather unique, but resolvable. All patriots must work together to ensure the sanity of human life is restored. Traditional leaders should not play clannish politics with security issues, because, as long as one Nigerian is endangered everyone is unsafe. It is time for government
to act and be seen as acting as a bridge builder, a unifier of all ethno-religious groups. Insecurity will remain the order of the day if government is seen as taken sides with certain groups. The greatest misdeed of the present administration will be to consider reintegration of terrorists (Boko Haram members) into the society and granting them pardon despite the many bloods they have wasted. They must be dealt with head on and subdued if the government is sincere and committed to the fight against terrorism in Nigeria.

True security does not imply the nonexistence of threats or vulnerability to harm. It refers to the presence of a functional mechanism, and pool of expertise to deftly and promptly respond to threat, public danger and uncertainty. Hence, the national security architecture should be revamped to deal with these threats promptly, objectively, and expertly; so, that, the individual pursuit of happiness will not be circumscribed and Nigeria maintain its status as the giant of Africa.

Saving Nigeria from another Civil War: the way forward
Arguably defective, the 1999 constitution formed the legal basis for and the application of the federal principles upon which the fourth republic emerged on May 29, 1999. A spate of fatal ethnic/religious conflicts and violent demand for restructuring the Nigerian federation graced the arrival of the democratically elected Obasanjo’s civilian administration (Adefulu, 2001). The above summarized the foundation upon which Nigeria’s Fourth Republic was built. While it is true that the constitution is the bedrock of any democratic experiment, such constitution must however emanate from the people. Since Nigeria is a federal state, it follows therefore that inputs into the constitutional making process must be reflective of various interests in the federation. As Wheare (1963) instructively reminds us that; “by the federal principle, it is meant the method of dividing powers so that general and regional governments are each, within a sphere coordinate and independent”. Wheare does not limit the fair sharing of power and values in a federation to only governmental bodies, but also to various interests making up the government and/or the federation. This view was amplified by Jinadu (1979) when he usefully observed that: This statement of the federal principle is qualified by Wheare’s pointing out that it is a principle of organization and practice whose ultimate test is how the federal system operates. However, the making of the 1999 constitution was not people centered and in fact, one can argue that the process was stage-managed as part of the expediency of the time to quickly return power to the civilians.

The result of the shoddiness in the preparation of the 1999 Constitution was seen in the various constitutional crises that pervaded the fourth republic especially under the Obasanjo civilian presidency. Two fundamental problems bedeviled the 1999 constitution and which have serious implications for its legitimacy. These problems relate to the process of evolving the document and of the nature and character of its writers. First and most disturbing is the criminality of the constitution itself an offence committed by the process or manner in which it evolved. The belief is that if the same offence were to be committed in mature democratic countries the document would have been served a writ of summon to answer criminal charges in competent law court. The constitution lied against itself and the Nigerian people by falsely impersonating the persons of the Nigerian people as if they were responsible for its writing. The preamble of the document reads: CONSTITUTION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA 1999… WE THE PEOPLE of the Federal Republic of Nigeria: HAVING firmly and
solemly resolved: TO LIVE in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign Nation under God dedicated to the promotion of Inter-African solidarity, world peace, international co-operation and understanding; AND TO PROVIDE for a constitution for the purpose of promoting the good government and welfare of all persons in our country on the principles of Freedom, Equality and justice, and for the purpose of consolidating the unity of our people: DO HEREBY MAKE AND GIVE TO OURSELVES the following constitution: (FGN: 1999). The reference point in the excerpts above is the emphasis “We the People”. The document was loudly affirming the process under which it was given birth as if referring to the same process which produced the American Constitution in 1778 in which peoples of diverse interest, values, and origin but with same aspiration and orientation met in San Francisco to deliberate and give to themselves a document which truly represents their ideals and ideas of a system of government, yearnings and aspirations.

Surprisingly, the emphasis in the excerpts denoted by the words written in capital letters received much attention as if they truly happened. The 1999 constitution is not more than a document hurriedly put together by a selected few largely dominated by political and economic interests ‘appointed’ by the military government to meet the exigencies of the transition programme not minding the socio-political implications of the process for democratic governance. The document was assembled without a referendum which is a minimum requirement for amassing the consent of the citizenry over crucial national issues. The people whom the constitution was meant to govern were therefore short-changed in the process. Second and more critical is the military factor in the writing of the constitution. The question that rattles one’s mind is whether the military which in itself is undemocratic can guarantee a ‘genuine’ constitution to govern democratic regime? It is a common phenomenon that the constitution suffers the first casualty whenever the military strikes. The military demonstrates so such hatred for constitution such that it suspends its provisions immediately it takes over power and rules with the unitary, hierarchical and command nature and character of the military institution. It was on this basis that the 1999 constitution was promulgated by the Abdulsalami Abubakar military regime. The constitution and its provisions left unanswered many critical national questions including an acceptable revenue sharing formula among governmental structures, the Niger-Delta agitations, the structure of the Nigerian federation and religious matters.

The proposals on evolving an enduring and sustainable democracy in Nigeria are large and growing (Ogundiya, 2008; Animashaun, 2008; Adefulu 2001; Olaitan, 2001; Ogundiya, Olutayo and Amzat, 2009). However, going forward this study advances proposals that are considered germane in consolidating democracy in the Fourth Republic and saving Nigeria from another civil war since it is imperative to avoid any reversal to the autocratic military regimes of the past. An important point to note is that the survival of democracy is positively and strongly tied to the strength of the state in coercively manifesting the properties of statehood. There is no denying the fact that the Nigerian state is fragile, weak and/or soft with overdeveloped structures without commensurate functions. Although, the 1999 constitution expressly provides for the social contract in what is known in the constitution as the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy, its justiceability is what provokes dissatisfaction which a Peoples constitution will necessarily address. By the Peoples constitution, it is meant a constitution, which process and contents are driven by the desires,
expectations and ideas of the people rather than one that was hurriedly authored by the short-lived military government of retired General Abdusalam Abubakar.

What this suggests is simply that it is imperative to re-write the 1999 constitution through a Sovereign National conference in order to consolidate Nigeria’s democracy. The Sovereign National conference should, as a matter of fact, be insulated from political interference and/or influence else what will be produced from such conference would be a tele-guided constitution that will continue to recycle the perennial crises that have attended critical national issues in the past. One critical issue that is expected to dominate discussions in the conference is the way and manner to evolve a practicable federal system of government. A major defect of Nigeria’s federal structure is the process of negotiating the contents of the structure and its application. Whatever finds its way into a federal structure must be negotiated by the people, through compromise and consensus, and this must be guaranteed in a written constitution to save the country from another civil war no sooner than later.

Recommendations
The following recommendations are worthwhile:

1. There is urgent need for restructuring the Nigeria polity to ensure the effective operation of true federalism as against the current quasi federalism currently in practice in the country;
2. Objectively implementing the recommendations of the 2014 National Conference or convening a national conference urgently whose recommendation must be implemented will be a precondition for evolving a people’s constitution that will cater for the diversities inherent in the Nigerian federal system;
3. There is need to review the geopolitical structure of Nigeria so as not to allow the continued dominance of a particular section of the country over others.
4. The 1999 Constitution requires urgent attention to ensuring that it reflects the Peoples aspiration in a united federal republic of Nigeria.

Conclusion
This paper set out to address issues bordering on achieving the essence of government in a growing democracy: saving Nigeria from another civil war. From onset it was reiterated that the Nigerian state just like other developing states with colonial past are faced with numerous challenges which were as a result of the repressive and suppressive nature of its colonial experience. In the case of the Nigeria, the amalgamation process itself was more like a scam as it was a mere marriage of strange bed fellows. In the prevailing scenario the essence of government in a growing democracy like Nigeria is far from been realized as the country is still copiously faced and threatened by myriads of centripetal and centrifugal forces cataclysmic to its corporate existence.

In view of the above therefore, it is germane to conclude that in other to save Nigeria from another civil war there is need to revisit the foundations upon which the Nigerian state is built. All the vestiges and command structure of the military still prevalent in the political system need to systematically dismantled to usher in true federalism as against the current quasi federalism been practiced. In the overall contest the political system should be structured in a manner that will guarantee equal rights to all the component units and ensure
The rapid development of the natural and human resources that abound in different parts of the country.

References


