



## GODFATHER POLITICS AND NIGERIA'S DEMOCRACY: THE PROLIFERATION OF ARMS AND TOMORROW'S FUTURE

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines godfather politics and the proliferation of arms with emphasis on tomorrow's Nigeria. Available data on the level and dimensions of godfather politics and the proliferation of arms in Nigeria reveals an increase of violence over time, which constitutes serious threat to lives and properties, hinders business activities and discourages local and foreign investors, all which stifles and retards tomorrow's Nigeria. This rising wave of godfather politics and the proliferation of arms have not abated but have assumed a dangerous dimension which is threatening the tomorrow's Nigeria. In the light of the above the paper finds out that the loss of legitimacy which has enveloped Nigeria's elections since the ascendancy of President Olusegun Obasanjo(1999) is not necessarily because of the fact that godfathers have turned elections into a 'do or die affair' through the brandishing all kinds of weapons to the extent that election periods are now wrought with fear, anxiety and desperation but because of the singular reason that the mainstream of the Nigerian electorates are beginning to see elections as becoming more or less meaningless, ineffective, and inconsequential political rituals of institutionalizing participatory democracy. Furthermore, the study also notes the competitions among godfathers to control state powers and resources through the imposition of their favoured godsons as candidates have defeated the purpose for democratic governance. The paper also observes the upsurge of political assassinations, organized kidnapping, and other evils leading to a number of senseless killings, displacement of thousands, and the destruction of properties remain frightening. The study therefore recommends that government should enact and enforce all relevant laws and decrees to empower the country's electoral body to be truly independent in order to sanction all fraudulent practices, including the morbid quest of godfathers and, the use of small arms and light weapons to intimidate and manipulate election results. Secondly, there should be an outright ban on all forms of financial and material inducement on electorates. Finally, public enlightenment should be embarked upon to educate the citizenry of their democratic and institutional rights and create the awareness that contest for elective positions is not 'a must win'*

**Keywords: Godfather; Politics; Democratic governance; Small arms and Light weapons; Electoral violence; Insecurity;**

## Introduction

One of the major benefits of democracy across all climes is the prospect of enthroning good governance for the growth, and development of the citizenry; and also for offering the people the right to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections. Every nation that has embraced the principle of democracy believes it is the only mechanism through which the interest, well being, rights and lives of the citizenry could be unquestionably protected and guaranteed (Attah; Audu & Haruna, 2014). In other words, democracy guarantees the free expression of the will of electors. However, in practice, particularly in Nigeria, it is a different ball game as the menace godfathers and the proliferation of arms have thwarted all genuine efforts to install good and responsive government to bring to a close the threat of political instability, abject poverty, acute youth unemployment, heightened crime rate, poor health prospects and widespread malnourishment which have been the main features of Nigeria's democracy despite the enormous resources and huge potentialities the country is blessed with.

Democracy is an entrenched concept used in government and political systems across the world. Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has been battling with the issue of swearing in good, credible and accountable government in the country. The search for good governance which is basically the making and implementation of simple to understand policies by the leadership in collaboration with the followers is Nigeria most urgent need at this time in her history. By implication, poor leadership and bad governance had crippled the country's progress in virtually every field of human endeavours. The issue of the absence of good governance, according to Otoghile, Igbafe and Agbontaen (2014) is a phenomenon that has stunted the growth of many nations of the world with reference to Africa and Nigeria in particular. The presence of mass number of self centered godfathers who reign supreme and intimidate the electorates with arms contradicts the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development that recognizes the urgent need to address profound social problems, especially poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, that affect every country and sets as the task of the governments to address both their underlying and structural causes and their distressing consequences in order to reduce uncertainty and insecurity in the life of people (United Nations, "Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development", in Report of the World Summit for Social Development, A/Conf.166/9, New York, 19 April 1995, Para.2). Thus, it is not an overstatement to contend that the return of the country to electoral democracy in 1999 has not made significant impact on the economic and social well-being of the people.

Corroborating further, the country's democratization processes had since independence, witnessed massive electoral fraud followed by violence which has compromised the very ethics of liberal democracy in spite of several electoral reforms that have no positive effect (Onwe, Nwogbaga and Ogbu, 2015). Unfortunately, there is no evidence of any serious and sincere attempt being genuinely made to stop this sticky situation to democratization process because the Nigerian society, in her mad quest for elective offices is not free from this predicament: this lack of sense of direction has resulted in the decline of decency and morality.

In recent years, there have been outcries from many Nigerians, usually those referred to as the "old school" against the continued decline in our unique ways of life to no avail. Dishonest practices that were condemned in the past are often winked at today. Thieves and swindlers are frequently being glorified and romanticized in the media. In turn, many Nigerians fit the description found in the bible: *"where you saw a thief, you were even pleased with him"* Psalm 50:18. While ethics are changing very fast and matching the inordinate dreams and expectations of contemporary Nigerians, their forebears have taken to brooding over and moaning about the darkness that hovers over their children's tomorrow. Unfortunately, the fear of being killed either through assassinations by political thugs or police sponsored stray bullets has shut out any genuine constructive criticism from the forebears. While one laments that contemporary Nigerian leadership has been a carry-over from the colonial British colonial style of rulership where the inheritors of power descended from an elite group who were distant from the people they governed, it is important to underscore the fact that the present realities in Nigeria are no different. There is so much moral turpitude than rectitude. The urge to amass wealth through dubious means, manipulate change in the constitution and to rig elections to remain perpetually in power has morally en-crippled Nigeria and Nigerians in a more frightening dimension.

After a long rigmarole, it has dawned on Nigerians that the backward steps taken so far since the return of democracy (1999) were as a result of the emergence of a willfully and self-centered and money-inclined godfathers who, aside from being unscrupulous have also imposed their unelectable godsons on Nigerians as conduit pipes to steal and siphon collective resources into private pockets. With this, contemporary Nigeria politics has become decadent, cerebrally diminutive, innately corrupt, corruptive, corrupting and morally bankrupt and spiritually retrograde and culturally retrogressive.

The glorious exit of the post-independence godfathers who were part of the masses of the people and, who have been honoured posthumously at different fora, were so done because throughout their existence, they understood their heritages, values, cultures and histories, but the emergence of a morally bankrupt godfathers masquerading as agent of change is not only worrisome and disturbing, but raise some fundamental questions. Among them: what is the hope for a society that encourages and breeds criminals in the name of democracy without good governance? Why do most Nigerian politicians have this intense feeling of satisfaction -- a particular glow that encourages them to continue stealing and embezzling collective funds to get whatever they want regardless of the stigma associated with such acts?

However, it is important to note that every society, irrespective of its size and configuration has three groups of individuals, namely, those on the progressive platform who command respect among the people and who usually might not be interested in electoral contests, but ensure that the best candidate out of the packs represents the people. The second group, a group made up of anti-progressive elements always on collision course with any communal and collective good for their ulterior motives. The third, an indifferent group and a resemblance of the biblical leper that needs to be cast into the troubled river in order to be cured of its indifference (Chukwu, 2016). Be that as it may, the inordinate activity of the second group which, of course, is the focal point of this paper has shown that there is indeed so much danger ahead.

Godfathers have always flooded the Nigerian political space, but its conspicuous presence since the return of democracy(1999) has contrasted sharply with the roles played by the likes of Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, and Ahmadu Bello who were lionized, respected, idolized (Fawole, 2001). Obviously, Nigerians have willingly at different fora exaggerated the achievements of the likes of Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Aminu Kano, Tafawa Balewa, Ahmadu Bello and a host of others to the extent that their persons were made to look more than ordinary. But then, the fundamental fact remains that their brand of god-fatherism added value and experience to governance. By extension, they were altruistic, highly respected, revered and deified by others. In addition, they were indeed the significant other in their different constituencies as their views were generally accepted unquestioned. They were regarded by their constituents as the conscience and custodian of all moral values and ideas. As minorities, they command overbearing influence on the majority and, as innovators; they were also believed to possess requisite knowledge and expertise in the relevant societal spheres of interest to set appropriate standards.

Today, one may really despair and angry observing a new brand of criminally minded politicians who are daily corruptly amassing collective wealth meant for all for themselves alone to the detriment of reaching our developmental goals. But if after many years independence, no one sees anything wrong with this crooked way of governance, what hope is there for us to re-brand Nigeria in order to effect a change in our morals? And besides, what legacies are being bequeathed by these new breed of godfathers to the emerging younger generations of Nigerians? Succinctly put, in the present day Nigerian society, the quick pursuit of money and its accumulations, irrespective of its source, stands alone as a symbol of greatness amongst these no-good deciders of our collective tomorrows. Hence, the proliferation of arms and light weapons, the easiest route to impose their unelectable has become a norm.

Unfortunately, since the emergence and the infamous exit of President Olusegun Obasanjo presidency (1999), the proliferation of arms and light weapons has become commonplace in Nigerian politics. Thus, the increase in electoral violence at every turn of election in Nigeria has been geared towards institutionalizing godfather-godson politics in Nigeria through sporadic gunshots at election venues to pave way for the victory of godsons.

Whether it is admissible or not, the intents to violently intimidate opponents in order to delay or otherwise influence an electoral victory against the wishes of the electorates have assumed epidemic proportions, becoming serious threats to democratic consolidation in Nigeria than ever before. Ever since the proliferation, availability and use of small arms became common element, electoral violence has become a norm. As a result, democracy, according to Abdullahi (2013), has suffered debilitating experiences ranging from double or multiple registrations cum voting, deliberate late arrival of election materials by electoral officials, stuffing/snatching of ballot boxes, destruction or hijacking of electoral materials, harassment and intimidation by armed groups, electoral violence, falsification of results, delay in announcing results with no satisfactory explanation and other nefarious activities. Today, godfathers now engage in moral turpitude than rectitude. The urge to amass wealth through dubious means, manipulate change in the constitution and to rig elections to remain perpetually in power has morally en-crippled Nigeria and Nigerians in a more frightening dimension.

Consequent upon this ugly trend, elections in Nigeria have become ‘a must win competition’ for godfathers in an attempt to wrestle the state treasury from the majority. With the state treasury safely in their custody, they continue to infect the society with immorality. As it were, what is

“morally right” is solely determined by godfathers who are not only influential and powerful but very morally decrepit. With the availability of a huge cache of arms at their disposal, the act of violence to upturn electoral results to suit their whims and caprices is a norm. What it gives back to the society as morality is nothing but virus which attacks and erases all traces of moral code in the system. It is indeed *garbage in and garbage out* (Charles, 2014)

In this vein, Nigerians, on every election, irrespective of the position being contested for, have witnessed uncontrollable violence leading to loss of lives and wanton destruction of properties, which Ajadike (2010) avers is threatening participatory democracy, peace, and the consolidation of democracy. Basically, the staggering posture of electoral violence being remotely sponsored and controlled by godfathers leaves much to be desired in Nigerian democratic experiment. Corroborating, Nkwede (2014) avers that the politics of godfathers in Nigeria has essentially become more visible and widespread like harmattan fire. Earlier, the erstwhile United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon realised the destructive tendencies inherent in godfatherism politics and pointed out that ‘Democracy is premised on the ballot box and not on violence’ (Ban Ki-moon, 2011). The observations of the Secretary-General may have stemmed from the way godfathers have become predatory in their motivation to influence electoral politics. It is in this vein that Gambo (2007) says there has been greater commitment and manifestations of discontentment in enshrining democratic culture in the areas of political security and participation. In the same strand, Aiyamenkhue (2010) notes that:

There has been a lot of crises in Nigeria politics and administration, a crisis of confidence in our elected officials, a loss of faith in our democratic government and an increasing frustration at government, and more also, an increasing frustration at the irrelevance of individual’s vote in our political process. All these crises are caused by the unholy alliance of godfatherism.

As a corollary of the above, this paper attempts to x-ray the distasteful mystery behind the power of godfather in politics and the challenge of proliferation of arms with a view to knowing: the implications for tomorrow’s youths and suggesting ways of eliminating the menace in the body politics of the country.

## 1.2 Study Materials

This study evaluated godfather politics and the proliferation of arms with emphasis on tomorrow's Nigeria with a view to suggesting ways of eliminating the menace in the body politics of the country. Literatures related to the variables were reviewed. This helped in identifying the scope already covered by previous scholars on the object matter which served as a guide to the present study. The study employed descriptive method in the analysis of data. Simple percentage was used to present the respondents responses to the variables which constitute the research questions.

## 1.3 Theoretical framework

The challenges of godfathers and Nigeria's democracy in relation to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, particularly during general elections have been a source of major concern. Therefore to elucidate on it, this paper employs the elite theory of power developed by three famous sociologists: Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941) and Robert Michels (1876-1936). The word 'elite' tends to play down the use of the concept 'bourgeoisie' in contemporary world (Charles, 2014). However, Nzimiro (1977) argues that the use of the word "elite" has a blinding effect because, by its use, those in the petit bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie categories are simply lumped into one category called 'elite'. This may be a short cut to do away with the burden of analysis which involves finding out the historical processes involved in the transition from one level to another in the struggle to control means of production. Fundamentally, the "elite" by definition is a category of individuals within a society who are socially acknowledged as possessing superior qualities intellectually, economically, politically, administratively or religiously (Charles, 2014). Owing to such acknowledged qualities, the elites command high prestige and widespread influence in various strata of the society.

Basically, a major distinctive feature of the elite is the tendency to influence, control and superimpose their ideas, beliefs, values and practices as acceptable and ideal in the management of societal affairs. Therefore, in the study of power configuration and processes in the society, the following observations are noticeable:

- (i) A minority group controls major decisions in the society particularly as it has to with power ascendancy.
- (ii) Masses are presumed by the minority group to lack qualities of leadership and high responsibility motive.

- (iii) There is regular circulation of elites' between the 'governing elite' and 'non-governing elite' in elective positions in the society.

Against the backdrop of these observations, the application of this theory as the basis for our present analysis is germane in view of the intertwined relationship between the exercise of political power and elite group in the society. Understandingly, the power arrogance of the elites that made it believe in itself as the only group in the society that can ascend and remain a ruling class is indisputably inimical to the growth of modern democracy in Nigeria. One of these two types of elites could at any time be in government. Whenever an 'elite class' takes over government, it is called a '*governing elite*'. When the 'elite class' is not in power, it is called a '*non-governing elite*'. One thing is certain however, that each of these elites has peculiar instincts, sentiments, residues and derivatives which configured the mind of the elites, and ultimately, the mind of the society when they ascend the throne of governance. Basically, what social forces prevail themselves will determine which elites come to power. But while in power the ruling or governing elites enforce their sentiments and derivatives, among others, to remain in power. In this instance, an office of power is used for personal gains, as opposed to a strict division of the private and public sphere. The focal point rests on the capacity of being able to divert public resources for private lucrative gains, undermining development possibilities and low tide and therefore has to adjust in its composition, qualities, sentiments, characters and derivatives to accord with changing social situations (Charles, 2014).

The elites continue to circulate in power because of their perceived endowments. The only distinctive qualities which separate one elite group from another are in terms of their instincts and sentiments. Pareto's classification of the *circulated elites* into *lions* and *foxes* betrays these sentiments. Elites of Lions rule by brute force. They are dictatorial, but they are swift in taking decisions. They possess military strategies and tactics to deal decisively with situations. The Foxes also carry with them some peculiarities in their sentiments and derivatives. Like foxes in nature, this class of elites is cunning and very diplomatic to the extent that the elites of lions recruit the foxes into government through appointments as ministers, commissioners, board members and ambassadors, among others. it is not however out of place for this to occur. This is possibly so because once elite always elite; elites are elites any day. When not directly in power, the non governing elites could be co-opted into power by cognate elite group; or they remain basically as

non-governing elite or *elite in opposition* but not as non-elites. The advantage the elites have is that no aristocracies last forever; they come and go. This explains the rate of defection from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to All Progressive Congress (APC). In Nigeria, they are two classes of people, polity, namely:

- (a) Those who rule (the ruling class).
- (b) Those who are ruled (the subjects).

The ruling class is usually at the peak, monopolizes power and also enjoys all advantages accruing from political offices and possession of power. They are always in the minority. On the other side, the Ruled constitutes the second group. Although the ruled are in the overwhelming majority, they are directed and controlled by the minority, the Ruling Class. However, not all who constitutes the ruling class rule directly. There is always one person on whose shoulders rest power and the burden of power. In Nigeria, the elite group no doubt envisages danger of possible circulation of the masses into the elite group if there is proper democratic election and decides to checkmate such occurrences through electoral violence at every turn of election in Nigeria in order to pave way for their own circulation.

Sequel to this ugly trend, the godfathers have turned elections in Nigeria to 'must win competition' and as a people, Nigerians have witnessed a relentless assault on their norms and a profound shift in their attitude to the extent that there is so much social regression, so much decadence, in so short a period of time that they have catapulted themselves into an age where too often, rules have been turned upside down, principles jettisoned and character sacrificed for whatever is available. What therefore exists in contemporary Nigerian society is the employment of violence to upturn electoral results to suit their whims and caprices. Nigerians have as a result, on every election, irrespective of the position being contested for, witnessed uncontrollable violence leading to loss of lives and wanton destruction of properties. With this picture, the chance of the Nigerian masses graduating into the rank of elites is almost zero not necessarily because the masses lack the numerical voting strength with which to decide who represents them but because they abhor violence. Since the Nigerian masses do not appreciate violence which would have springboard them into becoming godfathers, they are perpetually condemned to be ripped off.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 What is Election?**

Elections have variously been defined by several scholars. In its strictest sense, there can never be a democracy without election (Bamgbose, 2012). According to him, 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'(Bamgbose, 2012). In its proper sense, Nwolise (2007) avers that election is a process of selecting the officers or representatives of an organisation or group by the vote of its qualified members. For Anifowose (2003), elections are the process of elite selection by the mass of the population in any given political system. Corroborating, Iyayi (2005) argues that elections provide the medium by which the different interest groups within the bourgeois nation state can stake and resolve their claims to power through peaceful means. Substantiating, Bamgbose (2012) holds that elections 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 decolonization 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.

### **2.2 Democracy and Good governance**

Democracy is an idea targeted at enhancing a sound and egalitarian society through an integrated effort of the masses towards a better society (Ademolokun, 2000). Admittedly, the

principle of democracy is the only mechanism through which the interest, wellbeing, rights and lives of the citizenry could be unquestionably protected and guaranteed (Attah Amana et al. 2009). Democracy as a form of government started from ancient Greece, (Athens). Onubi (2002) noted that Democracy simply means “rule by the people” thus; it is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Therefore, it is referred to as government of the majority. Democracy is also described as an idea, process (series of events leading to change or course of action) of system of government (Agbaje 1999).

Generally speaking, democracy is a way of life that involves freedom to make choices about what one does, where he lives, and how he uses his earnings; the operation of institutions-the home, the church, local, state and federal government; the right of justified property ownership; social justice and fairness; absence of social and class barriers, equality of opportunity; and the solution of common problems through the exercise of the free will of the people (Mbachu, 1990). Although the constitution guarantees freedom to form and hold an opinion, the Nigerian situation is such that the competitors for power have taken control of an issue that is definitely well beyond their sphere of competence, and they are making personal profits out of it at the expense of the corporate existence, economic revival and integration of the nation-state. In this vein, other factors such as political and economic equality, fraternal feelings are basic issues for a successful working of the democratic system. In other words, democratic government should not only be responsible or acceptable to the ‘demos’-people or the masses-but indeed political power itself and its expression should emanate from the popular will.

Fundamentally, democracy is a set of institutions that fulfils at least two essential requirements. First, it must elicit as accurately as possible the opinion of many people as possible on who shall be their representatives and on how the country ought to be governed. This means a minimum universal suffrage, political parties, and organization of fresh voting in acceptable elections at relatively frequent intervals. Second, it should provide some way of ensuring that those chosen by the public do what the electorate wants them to do or that they can be replaced if they do otherwise even between elections. This simply means that the process of government in a democracy is essentially a dialogue between the rulers and the ruled. Sergent (1975) viewed democracy with the following options: (a). Citizens involvement in political decision making; (b). Some degree of equality among citizens; (c).Some degree of liberty, freedom granted or retained by citizenry; (d) A system of representation; and (e) An electoral system of majority rule.

Therefore, democracy entrenches and expands, or seeks to entrench and expand, rights, ability and capacity of the citizens in a given society. It is always seen as the best form of government whereby people elect their leaders in society. That is the people exercise their governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by them. It therefore means that democracy provides institutions for the expression and the supremacy of the people or popular will on basic issues bordering on social and policy making. Democracy is about freedom, but it is not freedom to be irresponsible. For Ademolokun (2000), it is an idea targeted at enhancing a sound and egalitarian society through an integrated effort of the masses towards a better society. In spite of the differences in conceptualization and practices of democracy, Ojo (2006) notes that all its versions, whether liberal or capitalist, socialist and African brand, share the fundamental objective of 'how to govern the society in such a way that power actually belongs to all the people. Similarly, Chafe (1994) contends that democracy means, among others, the involvement of the people in the running of the political, socio-economic and cultural affairs of their society. Perhaps the most basic idea in democracy is that people are essentially equal, and that thus each person has a right to have a say in who governs and how they do so. Hence, legitimate political power comes from the people, and government, therefore, is legal only when the governed consent.

The wellbeing of the citizens largely depends on the extent to which the democratic institution is strengthened and sustained. This according to Bonnie and Khinde (2007) is because good governance, selfless leaders and mutual trust between the leaders and led could be guaranteed if choice of who should govern the society at any given time is solely engineered by the citizens on one hand and on a steady and sustained democratic machinery on the other hand. Though, every nation has embraced the principle of democracy because it is the only mechanism through which the interest, well being, rights and lives of the citizenry could be unquestionably protected and guaranteed.

### **2.3 The concept of Godfathers in Nigeria's Democracy**

Prior to independence in 1960, Nigeria was awash with political godfathers in the like of Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Ahamdu Bello, Aminu Kano, Michael Okpara, Tafawa Balewa, and others who influenced and controlled political activities in Nigeria. Although people tried to exaggerate their achievements, and their persons were made to look more than ordinary. But their brand of godfatherism added value and experience to governance (Adeoye, 2009). Basically, there are lots of differences between the ideological godfatherism of the First Republic

and the crude and blood thirsty godfatherism today. The first-generation godfathers were essentially benevolent and progressive. Similarly, Abdullahi (2013) says they served as a huge reservoir of wisdom and experience to be consulted on the business of governance. Indeed, in a relative sense, the first republic political godfathers were drawn by community sense of interest in seeking to influence the electorates to vote for some candidates of their choice. It was enough satisfaction for them that they wielded tremendous influence in the society and this inevitably generated a groundswell of goodwill and reverence for them, as their views on political issues were scarcely contested in their respective regions of the country. The emphasis here is that godsons (surrogates who remain totally subservient to their godfathers) can only achieve political offices with the backing of their so called “Godfathers” (Abdullahi, 2013). Political godfatherism as a concept opens narrow doors when it comes to deciding who gets what in the political scene. Substantiating, contemporary Nigerian godfathers are men who have the power personally to determine both who gets nominated to contest elections and who wins an election (of course, for self interest rather than communal). In a related strand, Omotola (2007) had averred that godfathers were those who had and still have the security connections, extended local links, enormous financial weight, and so on, to plot and determine the success or otherwise of a power seeker at any level of a supposedly competitive politics. In this vein, Audu (2006) sees godfathers are people of questionable wealth and influences who robbed political parties of their conventional and legitimate functions of presenting clear and coherent programmes on the basis of which the candidates presented by them are chosen by the voters. Earlier Adeoye (2009) avers that the relationship between godfather and godson in politics claims the monopolistic use of the term godfatherism; the ‘ism’ makes it political.

It becomes instructive to point out that the relationship between the vote seekers (Patron) and voters (Client), (Nakene, 1970; Buddan, 2006) is not only practised in Nigeria, but a worldwide phenomenon. At face value, there is a strong bond between them, a bond of loyalty, compliance and mutual understanding that relies on calculated political and business decisions, and even affection (Sklar, 2006; Hyung-Gon, 2007). But in reality, Adeoye (2009) argues that this relationship could be likened to that possessing the attributes of mafianism -- employing violent scheming and aggressive ‘politicking’ in order to manipulate all devices to their favour by any means. Substantiating, Adeoye recalls with utter disgust the wanton destruction of lives and properties in the violent confrontation between a godfather (Chris Uba) and godson - governor of

Anambra state (Chris Ngige) over the latter refusing to surrender the state treasury to the former as agreed in the pact that paved way for the godson's manipulated victory. This singular act, and others including that of the strong man of Ibadan politics, Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu and his godson, Senator Rashidi Ladoja, then Governor of Oyo state between 2003 and 2007, in which the latter was forced out of office, bring to the fore a new dimension to the practice of godfatherism in Nigeria (Adeoye, 2009). Despite this, many Nigerians still see their existence as balancing the power base and also justifying same with Machiavelli's slogan: the ends justify the means. It is therefore safe to say that violence instigated by godfathers to intimidate their opponents is a means to an end. As a result, there have been greater commitment and manifestations of discontentment in the development of democracy and participation following the expansion of the crude activities of godfathers coupled with the godson clientelism (Nkwede, 2014).

Over the past decades, the institutionalization of godfatherism and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons have become a common feature in Nigerian politics. The increase in electoral violence at every turn of election in Nigeria in order to pave way for the victory of godsons has been alarming, as it continues to occur in a more frightening dimension. Whether it is admissible or not, electoral violence being the masterminds of the godfathers has done incalculable damage to Nigeria's democracy. The contemporary manifestations suggest that the intents to violently intimidate opponents in order to delay or otherwise influence an electoral victory against the wishes of the electorates have assumed epidemic proportions, becoming serious threats to democratic consolidation in Nigeria than ever before. Ever since the proliferation, availability and use of small arms became a common feature, electoral violence has manifested in various ways. From the 'Wild-Wild West' experience of the first republic and the truncated second and third republics to the present democratic dispensation, democracy has suffered debilitating experiences as a result of various forms of electoral malpractices that result to electoral violence. These range from double or multiple registration cum voting, deliberate late arrival of election materials by electoral officials, stuffing/snatching of ballot boxes, destruction or hijacking of electoral materials, harassment and intimidation by armed groups, falsification of results, delay in announcing results with no satisfactory explanation and other nefarious activities (Abdullahi, 2013).

This explanation on the concept of godfather is necessary because the departure of post-independence political mentors from Nigerian polity, crude and blood thirsty cum money-inclined

godfathers have surfaced who are presently threats to the survival of Nigerian nascent democratic experience. However all these positive attributes of godfatherism have disappeared with the emergence of civilian rule (1999). Obviously, from these scholarly viewpoints, one asserts that there is hardly any state devoid of the existence and influence of godfathers, though the level of such influence varies. the trend has always been that people of questionable wealth purchase small arms and make them readily available to facilitate the installation of their chosen candidates in power and thereafter recoup their investments from what comes to the government purse as their share of the economy.

Going by the crude activities of political godfathers since the inception of the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic, no administration has gone down in history as so Machiavellian with its concomitant principles of conduct characterized by cunning and duplicity as Nigerians are witnessing at present. How else do Nigerian electorates explain the revolutionary changes taking place today, the many crucial courses of actions, policies and programmes embarked upon, yet never in history have they been more affected by frustrating hunger and poverty as at now. For how long shall Nigeria continue to evolve policies that would only concentrate all our wealth in the hands of political godfathers? There has been too much of oppression and brutal display of wickedness by these political godfathers against the electorates whose votes have always been thrown away. In fact, the biting economic situation has reduced Nigerians to either beggars, destitute or prostitutes. Nigerians have gone from bad to worse with virtually every succeeding administration. Obviously, there had never any genuinely and truly government that has ever put the national interest over and above parochial, personal and sectional interest since the defunct first Republic. Regrettably, even today, there is nothing in the horizon to suggest any radical departure from the status-quo-ante; because greed is waxing stronger and calling the shots. We have so mismanaged ourselves in all spheres of human endeavours that one is tempted to ask the underneath question

Does a government really possess superior wisdom to those outside it? There may be some debates here but one cannot be persuaded to accept that an individual or government as a group of individuals possesses superior wisdom. A thousand flowers, as the Chinese are wont to say, should blossom and a thousand thought should contend and so, one therefore believes that even a madman has an antidote to usher in a new beginning for Nigerians. A society that is not in a hurry to collapse on itself should not disallow him to make his prescriptions because there may be some untested and unknown wisdom in him. Really, general insanity could be diagnosed for a

government that abhors criticisms and claims to have superior wisdom to those outside it and it is only a mad man who will pray to preside over such an insane government but will their prayers really work? Nevertheless, Akinola (2009) believes in the need to have a good-hearted individual (people's hero) at the sole realm of absolute power, a godfather distributes power as he deems, and anoints who rules. But, godfatherism has taken a strange dimension in Nigeria's political environment. It has become a menace pulling down the foundations of masses-driven governance, thereby denying Nigerians the much-deserved dividends of democracy. Ademola (2004) added that since 1999, when Nigeria joined the comity of democratically governed countries, it has continued to experience an unprecedented rise in political violence ranging from increased crime wave, armed robbery, political assassination, and religious riots as a result of crises loomed between godfathers and some godsons. In essence, godfatherism is a threat to the Nigeria's nascent democracy. In a nutshell, the increase in electoral violence at every turn of election in Nigeria has been alarming. In fact, the staggering posture of electoral violence in Nigerian democratic experiment leaves much to be desired. This stems from the fact that since the adumbration of this nascent democracy on the 29th May, 1999, Nigerians have witnessed uncontrollable political insecurity, which has threatened participatory democracy, peace, political security and the consolidation of democracy (Ajadike 2010).

#### **2.4 Proliferation of Small Arms and Light weapons and Electoral violence**

The proliferation of small arms and light weapon is, according to Nte (2011) often one of the major security challenges currently facing Nigeria. Nte avers that the trafficking and wide availability of these weapons fuel political instability and pose a threat, not only to security, but also to sustainable democracy. The United Nations General Assembly defines "small arms and light weapons" as any portable lethal weapon that expels or launches, is designed to expel or launch, or may be readily converted to expel or launch a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of an explosive (Heinrich, 2006). In a similar strand, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research highlights small arms to include: revolvers and self-loading pistols; rifles and carbines; sub-machine-guns; assault rifles; light machine-gun; heavy machine-guns; hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers; portable anti-craft guns; portable anti-tank guns; recoilless rifles; portable launchers of antitank missiles and rockets system; portable launchers of anti-aircraft missiles systems; and mortars of calibers less than 100mm (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), 2006: 1).

Generally, “small arms” refer to weapons meant for individual use, including revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns that are imported into Nigeria hidden in clothing, vehicles or kitchen utensils (Ayissi and Sall, 2005).. On the other hand, light weapons are portable weapons designed for use by several persons serving as a crew: heavy machine guns, automatic cannons, howitzers, mortars of less than 100mm caliber, grenade launchers, anti-tank weapons and launchers, recoilless guns, shoulder fired rockets, anti-aircraft weapons and launchers, and air defense weapons (SADC Firearms Protocol, 2003:Article 1.2). As their definitions demonstrate Small Arms and/Light weapons (SALW) can be moved from one place to another by using a single person or by a light vehicle. They can thus be smuggled quite easily from one place to another.

Though many SALW are quite simplistic in nature, their lethality has increased making it possible for a single combatant to constitute a big threat to an entire society. Today’s assault rifles and other automatic weapons can fire up to several hundred rounds a minute. An AK-47 assault rifle can release 600 rounds per minute as long as the trigger remains pressed down and when being operated in automatic mode. Its maximum range lies between 800 to 1000 meters, but its accuracy is guaranteed when used by a trained marksman with the range of 400 to 600 meters (Controlarms, 2006). When compared to other major weapon systems, small arms are cheap, portable and easy to repair or replace, easily accessible, simple to operate even by untrained youths, particularly in elections to cause electoral violence in order to delay or otherwise influence an electoral victory against the wishes of the electorates. With an estimated one to three million small arms in circulation in Nigeria, these weapons electoral violence has increased at every turn in the country’s history.

From empirical studies on politics in Nigeria since the colonial manipulation of elections between the North and South with the resultant effect of a consequent increase in the social distance between members of their populations, no election has been devoid of violence (Nnoli, 1980:122). The country, since then, has become exposed to diverse electoral violence. Thus the Richards Constitution which divided the country into north, east and west set the stage for violent electoral battles among the three main ethnic groups. However, apart from the pockets of electoral violence that took place in 1952 (the case of Azikiwe’s defeat in Western Regional House of Assembly and how he eventually settled down in the east and displaced Chief Eyo Ita and became the premier of the NCNC, and that of the electoral violence that followed the 1959 general

elections), the real electoral violence (tagged: Wild- wild west) emerged in 1964 federal election. This notwithstanding, Ibrahim (2003) argues that since the inception of democracy in Nigeria in May 1999, there have been countless electoral violence cases which have claimed hundreds of lives and properties. Similarly, many people, including women and children had been displaced in the process, resulting in untold hardship and suffering for them. The activities of godfathers in respect to their roles in electoral violence have been impacting negatively on the various segments of society;

Be that as it may, electoral violence has variously been defined; it tends to mean different things to different people. Irrespective of the divergent meanings attached to it, it is generally seen as any random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay or otherwise influence an electoral process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, and physical assault, blackmail, destruction of property or assassination. According to Human Rights Watch, one of the most glaring cases of election violence in Nigeria was the post 2011 election violence that left more than 800 people dead. The victims were killed in three days of rioting in 12 northern states. The violence began, spread and degenerated into violent riots or sectarian killings in the northern states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara following the re-election of incumbent Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from the Niger Delta in the south, who was the candidate for the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP). As election results trickled in on April 17, 2011 and it became clear that Buhari had lost, his supporters took to the streets of northern towns and cities to protest what they alleged to be the rigging of the results. Substantiating, Human Rights Watch (2012)

## **2.5 Unemployment and Electoral violence across some selected states in Nigeria**

From many literatures reviewed, the consensus has been asserted that unemployment contributes immensely to electoral violence. Accordingly, many unemployed youths go into politics with the intent and purpose of making quick money. This mentality finds explanation in the act that the government had made politics more financially attractive that nobody wants to engage in any other profession than politics. Political elites mobilize unemployed youths, often along party affiliations, as vital violent arsenals. The youths are induced to threaten or unleash violence as a means to achieve electoral and political success. More often than not political violence is paid for, used as a tool by prominent Nigerians to bolster their own political and financial positions. Electoral violence in Nigeria is induced by financial, ethnic or religious

considerations. Also, the lack of adequate knowledge or information on politics, particularly electoral processes, coupled with low level of education, the high level of deprivation and impoverishment of the Nigerian youths force many to take the readily available 'job opportunity'. The elites are responsible for arming the youths, who mostly are political thugs to manipulate electoral outcomes, kidnap or kill political opponents, threaten and intimidate electorates, destroying lives and properties, as electoral processes are disrupted. This leaves the victims with the trauma years after the violence occurred. Sometimes electoral violence leaves a permanent trauma to both the individual and the 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). In fact, in Rivers State, everything pointed to a spate of violence as the incumbent governor, Rotimi Amaechi was bent on retaining power for his new party, APC as against the Wike led PDP at the federal level. In the course of the electioneering campaigns, several high profile killings with clear political overtones heightened security concerns. The actual conduct of the elections brought some deaths though, the actual number has not been known and will of course, never be known for the singular reason that the country lacks independent investigators who will not be swayed by sentiments and bias. Fundamentally, there was abundant evidence of large scale rigging, fraud, and intimidation in many parts of the country.

The 2015 elections in Rivers State have been rated by political observers as the most deadly and frightening in nature. Not only were youths used as pawns, many politicians were attacked and buildings burnt by unknown assailants. In fact, in Rivers State, everything pointed to a spate of violence as the then incumbent governor, Rotimi Amaechi was bent on retaining power for his new party, APC as against the Wike led PDP. By February, 2015, the All Progressive Congress (APC) claimed that it has lost 30 members to political violence in the state. This included party supporters attacked on their way to a campaign rally as well as gun attacks during a campaign rally in the state. Fundamentally, there was abundant evidence of large scale rigging, fraud, and intimidation in many parts of the country.

In Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States, voters were faced with violence and intimidation. Most INEC offices in these states were burnt in protest. In Akwa-Ibom, the face-off was between loyalists of the PDP and APC took a new dimension as the deaths recorded were not disclosed, but political observers alleged the number was significant enough to warrant the total cancellation of the elections. The number of reported deaths has not been revealed till date. The campaign offices of the dominant parties (PDP and APC) were set ablaze at different strategic locations within the state. However, it is important to state that electoral violence in Akwa Ibom is not new; during the 2007 elections, some 127 Peugeot, 307 Salon Cars and 157 Keke NAPEP tri cycles belonging to the state government were burnt. About 20 other vehicles belonging to well meaning Nigerians were equally burnt at different locations. About 51 suspects were arrested in connection to the political violence at Uyo (Akpan-Nsoh, 2011). It was also in the same state that a Diaspora aspirant had his mother brutally assassinated. The same electoral violence was equally reported in almost all the northern states of the country such as Bauchi, Katsina, Niger, Plateau and most devastating was in Kano state where an electoral officer with his entire family was burnt alive for refusing to compromise. In Nasarawa, Benue, Taraba and other surrounding states, angry voters clashed with political thugs. In the Western states of Ogun, Oyo, Lagos, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti State, there was a confrontation between the PDP and APC supporters and election results were blatantly falsified in many areas as thugs beat up opposition party officials and hijacked ballot boxes. As a result, many Nigerians have been discouraged from taking part in future elections since their votes meant nothing. Prior to this electoral fraud, Ibrahim (2003) stated that there have been countless electoral violence cases which have claimed hundreds of lives and properties since the inception of democracy in Nigeria in May 1999. In the same vein, many Nigerians, including women and children had been displaced in the process, resulting in untold hardship and suffering for them.

Fundamentally, from all available statistical analyses, the 2015 elections were marred by poor organization, lack of essential transparency, widespread procedural irregularities, significant evidence of fraud, particularly during result collation process, voter disenfranchisement at different stages of the process, lack of equal conditions for contestants and numerous incidents of violence. In every respect, the 2015 elections (State, Local and Federal elections) had come and gone but the wounds created and the injustices perpetrated continue to linger.

## 5. Data presentation, Analysis and Discussion of findings

The presentation of the data was done following the sequence of the three research questions directing the study. The finding and observations resulting from the study were described with reference to the objectives, research questions raised and previous studies reviewed. In discussing the results of this study, the research will focus attention on the three research questions that directed the study.

### 5.1. Test of Research Questions One

Is there any significant relationship between godfathers and proliferation of small arms?

**Table 5.1 showing the relationship between godfathers and proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	181	90.5%
No	15	7.5%
Don't know	4	2.0%
Total	200	100%

**Source: Field survey 2018**

Table 5.1 shows that 181 (90.5%) respondents said yes to the above question, 15 (7.5%) respondents said "No" and 4 (2%) respondents are indecisive. With this result, there is a significant relationship between godfathers and proliferation of small arms

### 5.2 Test of Research Question Two:

Is there any significant relationship between unemployment and electoral violence

**Table 5.2.1: Showing the significant relationship between unemployment and electoral violence**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	192	96 %
No	8	4%
Don't know	---	-----
Total	200	100%

**Source: Field survey 2018**

Table 5.2.1 shows that 192(96%) of the respondents said yes to the above raised question, 8(4%) of the respondents said “No”, while none was indecisive. Therefore the above analysis of table shows that there is a significant relationship between unemployment and electoral violence.

### **5.3 Discussion of findings**

#### **5.3.1 There is a significant relationship between godfatherism and the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)**

The findings in the research question herein reveal that there was a significant relationship between godfathers and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), particularly during the 2015 elections in Nigeria. The proliferation and use of small arms were employed to intimidate opponents and manipulate elections results. Given the availability of small arms procured by godfathers, free and fair elections have not only been a mirage, but that the foundations of masses-driven governance have been consciously uprooted by these unwholesome activities of godfathers who, on daily basis have been denying Nigerians the much-deserved dividends of democracy. Unfortunately, the godsons pretend not to know all the criminal activities committed by their godfathers to keep them in office illegally, but only to cry foul later when these same godfathers make demand of all the monies accruing to the state for their appropriation. With this development, godfathers have successfully taken over the Nigerian political institutions, while the roles of electorates have fast diminished. This is not necessarily because godfathers stand at the

top and wield power in their different domain, but that the power that flows from them determines the power structure below them. Anything short of this has led to the proliferation and availability of small arms to counter any dissident group. As a result, politics has become riotous, difficult to manage with anarchic patterns of operations and flagrant abuse of power by godfathers. To remain relevant, the godsons must be politically corrupt to misappropriate funds to satisfy the neck-breaking financial obligations of godfathers. Corroborating this assertion, Shihata (1997) opines that corruption and patronage politics have weakened political institutions, and still serve as impediments to developments of new political activities thereby reducing economic growth. Thus, godfathers through the availability and use of small arms and light weapons to rig elections have denied the people the opportunities of political participation (Adedeji, 2009). By extension, the dividends of democracy have remain the exclusive right of godfathers and their thugs, while the downwardly mobile masses are kept yawning and jostling for survival in the midst of enormous Nigeria's wealth. In this mess, the complicity of the central government cannot be ignored as Wole Soyinka (2004) lamented that the greatest disservice erstwhile President, Olusegun Obasanjo has done to the nation was the promotion of godfatherism coupled with its illegalities, its naked violence, and its corruption.

#### **5.4.2 There is a significant relationship between unemployment and electoral violence**

Over the past decades, elections in Nigeria have been marred by various forms of election malpractices ranging from double or multiple registration, deliberate late arrival of election materials by electoral officials, stuffing/snatching of ballot boxes, destruction or hijacking of electoral materials, harassment and intimidation by armed groups, falsification of results, delay in announcing results without any satisfactory explanation. Covertly, the unemployed youths, leaders of tomorrow have indoctrinated into the world of violence by godfathers; using them to unleash terror against opponents of their godsons.

Unfortunately, the level of unemployment in Nigeria, one of the most resource-endowed nations in the world is shocking not necessarily because her citizens are among the poorest in the world, but because there is a persisting paradox of a rich country inhabited by poor people. Ironically, Nigeria's oil and gas production accounts for over 90% of revenue accruing to the government yet, the Nigerians are riddled with abject poverty, social deprivation and injustice, pollution and under-development. As poverty systematically deepens, godfathers have taken over the centre stage with abundant resources to entice the youths to engage in electoral violence for

immediate gratification. Thus, the prevalence of poverty arising from unemployment of a large youth populations with limited access to education or jobs are deliberately to have foot soldiers that would ignite violence at the whims and caprices of godfathers. And so, the Nigerian political scene has become violence prone in varying degrees. Thuggery being an act of violence or behaviour by ruffians hired or instigated by politicians to intimidate their opponents has in no small way proven that there is a significant relationship between godfathers and electoral violence. In essence, while thuggery in Nigerian politics is a means to an end, electoral violence can be seen as any random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay or otherwise influence an electoral process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, and physical assault, and blackmail, destruction of property or assassination. The acts associated with electoral violence include physical harm, threats, intimidation, destruction of property and forced displacement. The upsurge of violence, assassinations, organized kidnapping, and other evils leading to a number of killings, displacement of thousands, and the destruction of properties was the norm during the just concluded 2015 elections were supported by godfathers and the proliferation of small arms. The ever presence of 'god-fatherism' in Nigeria's electoral process has not only stunted credible elections and good governance through violence but also disempowered political opponents to the extent that both the imposed representatives and all politically appointees owe their position to the efforts of a godfather.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The proliferation of small arms and Light weapons by godfathers in the conduct of elections in Nigeria poses a significant challenge to law and order and also to personal security. This study, therefore, attempted a succinct summation of godfather politics and Nigeria's democracy: an examination of the role of the proliferation, availability and use of small arms and light weapons to conduct of elections in Nigeria, particularly the 2015 elections. Conclusively, godfathers remain a decisive phenomenon in Nigeria's politics. There remains, therefore, the need to understand the ultimate power of godfathers, and the factors necessitating its inevitability in Nigerian politics.

However, the modus operandi of contemporary godfathers is not desirable for political and sustainable development in Nigeria. According to Oxfam (2006), The availability of small arms of an unregulated international market into the hands of large youth populations with limited access to education or jobs, and other socio-political factors have helped in no small measure to destabilize the fragile region. This succinctly explained why the 2015 elections in Rivers State

was rated by political observers as the most deadly and frightening in nature. Not only were youths used as pawns, many politicians were attacked and buildings burnt by unknown assailants. In fact, in Rivers State, everything pointed to a spate of violence as the then incumbent governor, Rotimi Amaechi was bent on retaining power for his new party, APC as against the Wike led PDP. By February, 2015, the All Progressive Congress (APC) claimed that it has lost 30 members to political violence in the state. This included party supporters attacked on their way to a campaign rally as well as gun attacks during a campaign rally in the state. Fundamentally, there was abundant evidence of large scale rigging, fraud, and intimidation in many parts of the country. In a nutshell, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has, as a result, been driven by political ambition combining with a cross cutting illegal economy, fed by oil bunkering, creating both direct and indirect drivers of violence in Nigeria. Hence, the domination of violence in the conduct of elections weakens the growth of democracy. From this point of consensus, there is need for steps to be taken to address the problem. In view of this, the paper recommends as follows:

1. There should be rules governing Nigerian politics, and politicians should be made to obey it. Nigerians have the right to enjoy the dividends of democracy, and the federal government has positive roles to play in ensuring the realization of this goal. Laws should be enacted to ban godfatherism in Nigeria's politics!
2. Concerted efforts should be made to reduce the proliferation and use of small arms in the conduct of elections. Such an approach should address both the small demand and supply aspects of the small arms problem. In terms of supply, a multi-tiered approach is required, from targeting the major global arms manufacturers and suppliers in order to encourage them to show greater restraint in the sale of weapons to regions that are experiencing armed conflict, to establishing stiffer internal arms transfer controls, to regulating the activities of arms brokers and private security companies
3. In practical terms, it is impossible to place a ban on the production and transfer of small arms in the country because they perform some legitimate functions in the governance process; they are widely used in hunting to supplement the predominantly starch-based diet in the rural communities of the country (Onuoha, 2006). Consequent upon this, Government should therefore improve and strengthen laws and regulations against small arms, impose licensing requirements, and carefully restrict their manufacture and transfer. This can only be achieved if local conditions are taken into account.

4. Strengthen controls over government-held weapons to ensure they cannot be diverted into private hands. Learning from the experience of other African countries, develop a programme for the disarmament of the armed militia operating in violence prone states
5. The government should initiate a credible, sustained dialogue with Nigerian youths to forestall their temporal employment by godfathers to cause mayhem in the name of conducting elections.
6. The Federal Government should create sustainable jobs. Thus, the only panacea for democracy in Nigeria is massive economic and infrastructure development, justice, equity and fair play in line with the tenets of federalism.



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