



**Democratic Struggles in Nigeria and Hobbes' View of Human Nature: A Philosophical Reflection on the Idea of "Man is A Wolf to Man"**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Across Nigeria, democracy has been celebrated as a framework for freedom, representation, and societal progress. Yet, the country continues to grapple with recurring political conflicts, electoral violence, economic hardship, and civic unrest. Why do democratic ideals often falter in Nigeria despite repeated electoral exercises and institutional reforms? This question underscores the persistent tension between human nature and democratic governance, suggesting that the roots of instability may lie as much in human behavior as in institutional weaknesses. Using an analytic method, this study examined Nigeria's democratic struggles through the philosophical lens of Thomas Hobbes, particularly his assertion that "man is a wolf to man." The analysis integrated contemporary events including the 2023 general elections, the PDP primaries between Wike and Atiku, the 2024 #EndBadGovernance protests, rising economic hardship, and security challenges to illustrate how competition, fear, and self-interest manifest in political life. The findings reveal that many challenges in Nigeria's democracy such as vote buying, electoral manipulation, political rivalries, and civic unrest reflect the Hobbesian view of human nature. Self-interest, ambition, and the pursuit of survival often drive both political actors and citizens, generating conflict and instability. In conclusion, Nigeria's democratic struggles cannot be understood solely as institutional failures; they are also deeply connected to human tendencies that require regulation through strong governance, civic responsibility, and ethical leadership. The study recommends strengthening democratic institutions, improving security, promoting civic education, ensuring transparency, and encouraging constructive youth participation to transform these challenges into opportunities for political stability and sustainable national development.*

**Keywords:** Nigeria, Democracy, Hobbes, Human Nature, Homo Homini Lupus, Electoral Violence, Vote Buying, Political Rivalry, Insecurity, #EndBadGovernance

**INTRODUCTION**

Human societies have always struggled with the tension between cooperation and conflict. While democracy is often celebrated as a system that promotes freedom, equality, and participation, the reality in many societies shows that the pursuit of power frequently exposes the darker side of human nature. Nigeria, since its return to democratic rule in 1999, has continued to experience intense political competition, electoral disputes, protests, and governance crises. These struggles raise an important philosophical question: why do individuals and political actors, who are expected to work for the common good, often behave in ways that deepen conflict and instability within the democratic system? This concern brings to mind the famous pessimistic view of human nature expressed by the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes. In his influential work *Leviathan*, Hobbes argued that human beings are naturally driven by self-interest, competition, and the desire for power. According to him, when individuals are left without a strong authority to regulate their actions, society may descend into chaos where survival becomes the primary concern. His well-known expression "*man is a wolf to man*" (*homo homini lupus*) vividly captures the idea that human beings can become threats to one another when personal interests override collective wellbeing.

The Nigerian democratic experience appears to reflect some aspects of Hobbes' insight. Electoral violence, political rivalries, corruption, protests over economic hardship, and intense struggles for political control reveal how the quest for power can sometimes overshadow the ideals of democracy. Instead of

cooperation and public service, political actors often engage in fierce competition that weakens public trust and threatens democratic stability. In such circumstances, the democratic arena begins to resemble a battleground where individuals and groups struggle to dominate one another. Against this background, this study reflects philosophically on Nigeria's democratic struggles through the lens of Hobbes' understanding of human nature.

### **The Hobbesian Concept of the State of Nature**

The idea of the state of nature occupies a central place in the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes. In his famous work, *Leviathan*, Hobbes attempted to explain what human life would look like if there were no government, laws, or political authority to regulate human behaviour. For Hobbes, the state of nature represents a hypothetical condition in which individuals exist without any organised political structure. It is a situation where everyone is free to act according to their own desires and interests without any external authority to restrain them.<sup>1</sup> Hobbes believed that human beings are naturally driven by self-preservation, fear, and the desire for power. Since all individuals are relatively equal in their ability to harm one another, no one can feel completely secure. As a result, people constantly compete for resources, recognition, and survival. In such a condition, suspicion and distrust dominate human relationships because individuals cannot be sure of the intentions of others. According to Hobbes, this constant competition and fear eventually lead to conflict, making life unstable and dangerous.<sup>2</sup> In describing this condition, Hobbes famously argued that life in the state of nature would be a "war of every man against every man." In such a state, there are no laws to define justice or injustice, and individuals rely solely on their strength and cunning to protect themselves. Hobbes therefore characterised life in this condition as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." This striking description highlights his belief that without political authority, society would descend into disorder where violence and insecurity become common features of daily life.<sup>3</sup>

The Hobbesian concept of the state of nature does not necessarily mean that such a condition historically existed exactly as described. Rather, Hobbes used it as a philosophical explanation to show why human beings require a strong political authority to maintain peace and order. For him, the fear and insecurity present in the state of nature compel individuals to seek a way out of constant conflict. This leads to the formation of a social contract in which people agree to surrender some of their freedoms to a central authority capable of enforcing laws and maintaining stability. Therefore, the concept of the state of nature serves as the foundation of Hobbes' political theory. It demonstrates his belief that the absence of effective authority allows human selfishness and competition to dominate social life.

### **The Idea of "Man is a Wolf to Man" (Homo Homini Lupus)**

The Latin phrase "*Homo homini lupus*," often translated as "*man is a wolf to man*," captures the essence of Thomas Hobbes' view of human nature and its implications for social and political life. Hobbes used this vivid metaphor to illustrate his belief that, in the absence of law and authority, humans can be each other's greatest threat. Just as wolves in nature act primarily out of self-interest, aggression, and survival instinct, so too do humans behave when left unchecked by social rules or political institutions. For Hobbes, this idea is not merely a pessimistic statement about human cruelty but a philosophical observation about the natural tendencies of human beings. He argued that humans are driven by desires, fears, and the pursuit of power. In conditions where there are no constraints no laws, courts, or governance these tendencies lead to competition, conflict, and even violence. The phrase underscores the potential for humans to harm one another in pursuit of personal gain, security, or dominance, often at the expense of collective welfare.<sup>4</sup>

In the context of modern societies, especially fragile democracies like Nigeria, Hobbes' metaphor becomes highly relevant. Political rivalries, electoral violence, corruption, economic exploitation, and social unrest can be seen as reflections of this natural tension between self-interest and the common good. For instance, the manipulation of elections, political intimidation, or partisan conflicts reveal how individuals and groups sometimes prioritise their own interests over societal stability. In these moments, Hobbes' idea that *man is a wolf to man* helps explain why democratic ideals are difficult to realise without strong institutions and civic responsibility. Moreover, Hobbes' notion is not a call for hopeless cynicism. Rather, it serves as a philosophical warning about the consequences of leaving human nature unregulated. It justifies the need for laws, government, and social contracts that restrain the destructive tendencies of individuals while promoting cooperation and security. In essence, the idea reminds us that democracy, while a noble

system, depends not only on rules and procedures but also on the moral discipline and restraint of its citizens. Thus, *homo homini lupus* is both a diagnosis and a caution. It diagnoses the potential for conflict inherent in human nature and cautions that without institutional checks and shared civic values, societies no matter how democratic risk sliding into disorder, mistrust, and strife. In this way, Hobbes' insight provides a compelling lens to examine the democratic struggles and political realities of contemporary Nigeria.

### **Political Violence and Electoral Conflicts in Nigeria**

Nigeria's democratic journey has often been accompanied by episodes of political violence and electoral conflicts, and the 2023 general elections were no exception. Despite the country's long-standing commitment to democratic governance since 1999, the 2023 elections highlighted deep-rooted challenges in the political system, including intense rivalry between parties, contestation over electoral outcomes, and widespread fears of violence. During the 2023 general elections, reports of ballot snatching, intimidation of voters, and clashes between party supporters were widespread in several states. These incidents disrupted the voting process, creating a climate of fear and insecurity in areas where citizens were expected to exercise their democratic rights freely. The situation illustrated the fragile nature of electoral democracy in Nigeria, where competition for political office sometimes leads to aggressive confrontations rather than constructive dialogue and political engagement.

Electoral conflicts in 2023 were also influenced by structural weaknesses in the political system. In some cases, disputes over the conduct of electoral officials, delays in result announcements, and allegations of vote manipulation escalated tensions, prompting court challenges and public protests. Such conflicts not only undermined public confidence in the electoral process but also threatened the legitimacy of the elected officials, highlighting the difficulty of maintaining a peaceful and credible democratic system in the face of high-stakes political competition.<sup>5</sup> The role of security agencies in the 2023 elections was both crucial and controversial. While they were tasked with protecting voters and election materials, there were instances where their presence was perceived as biased, exacerbating political tensions and sometimes resulting in clashes with citizens. This reinforced the perception that Nigeria's democracy remains vulnerable to violence whenever the struggle for power intensifies.

The 2023 elections provide a clear example of how competition, fear, and self-interest—central themes in Hobbes' view of human nature can manifest in political life. Individuals and groups, driven by the desire to secure power or maintain advantage, often resort to intimidation or aggression, echoing Hobbes' notion that human beings can be a threat to one another in the absence of sufficient regulation and oversight. This underscores the urgent need for stronger institutions, voter education, and mechanisms to prevent electoral violence, ensuring that democracy serves as a platform for participation rather than conflict.

### **Vote Buying, Electoral Manipulation, and Weak Democratic Institutions**

One of the most persistent challenges to Nigerian democracy is the prevalence of vote buying, electoral manipulation, and weak democratic institutions. The 2023 general elections offered vivid examples of how these issues undermine the credibility of the electoral process and erode public trust in governance. Vote buying remains a significant concern. In several states, political parties reportedly distributed cash, goods, and other incentives to voters in exchange for their support. For instance, in parts of the South-East and North-West, there were widespread reports of voters receiving money and food items at designated polling areas or through party agents. These practices not only distort the principle of free choice but also perpetuate a culture where elections are seen as transactional rather than participatory exercises. Electoral manipulation also featured prominently in 2023. Allegations emerged of tampering with electronic voting machines, inflating results, and falsifying documents in local and state constituencies. In Lagos and Kano, party agents and independent observers documented instances where ballot boxes were forcibly moved or ballot papers were replaced, generating mistrust and public outrage. In some regions, delayed result announcements fueled speculation of manipulation, leading to protests and, in certain cases, violent confrontations between political supporters.<sup>6</sup>

A notable illustration occurred during the People's Democratic Party (PDP) presidential primaries, where the contest between Governor Nyesom Wike and former Vice President Atiku Abubakar became highly controversial. Allegations of manipulated delegate votes, coercion, and intimidation of local party officials dominated media reports. Wike's camp accused party leadership of marginalising his delegates to

favour Atiku, while Atiku's camp claimed that any discrepancies were minor procedural errors. The public attention and outcry over these primaries reflected how intra-party competition can mirror the broader challenges of vote manipulation and weak enforcement mechanisms. Weak democratic institutions further compounded these problems. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), while making efforts to ensure a free and fair election, faced challenges including logistical delays, undertrained staff, and limited enforcement power to prevent malpractice. Security agencies, tasked with safeguarding the electoral process, were sometimes criticized for either overstepping their authority or failing to prevent misconduct. This institutional weakness created opportunities for unscrupulous actors to exploit gaps in the system for political advantage.

Illustratively, in Edo State, a viral video circulated showing party agents handing over money to voters near a polling unit, while in parts of Rivers State, officials had to intervene after reports that ballot boxes were being tampered with before voting concluded. These events demonstrate how individual self-interest and political competition, as Hobbes suggested, can drive humans to undermine collective societal rules when accountability mechanisms are weak.<sup>7</sup> The 2023 elections highlighted the urgent need for reforms that strengthen democratic institutions, ensure the integrity of electoral processes, and educate citizens about the importance of casting votes based on informed choice rather than material incentives. Addressing these challenges is essential to reduce electoral manipulation, build trust, and stabilise Nigeria's democratic system.

### **The 2024 #EndBadGovernance Protests and Citizens' Resistance to Poor Governance**

The 2024 #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria represented a vivid manifestation of citizens' frustration with political mismanagement, corruption, and economic hardship. Across several states, young people, civil society groups, and ordinary citizens took to the streets to demand accountability, transparency, and better governance. These protests were sparked by persistent issues such as rising inflation, unemployment, fuel scarcity, and perceived failures of elected officials to deliver on promises made during campaigns. The protests were largely driven by Nigeria's youth, who make up a significant portion of the population and have increasingly used social media platforms to mobilize and amplify their voices. Hashtags like #EndBadGovernance trended widely, allowing citizens to highlight specific cases of government negligence and demand reforms. This form of civic activism demonstrated the growing impatience of Nigerians with systemic corruption and the inadequacies of public institutions.

However, the protests also revealed the tension between collective action and the competitive, self-interested tendencies highlighted in Hobbes' political philosophy. While the protests were intended to demand good governance, clashes occasionally erupted between demonstrators and security forces, resulting in arrests and limited violence in some areas. The state's response, including the use of riot police and occasional enforcement of movement restrictions, illustrated the fragile balance between public dissent and political authority.<sup>8</sup> A notable example was the protest in Lagos and Abuja, where demonstrators marched against the rising cost of living and poor infrastructure. In some instances, protestors blocked major highways and government buildings, while security forces sought to disperse crowds, raising debates about citizens' rights to free expression versus the need for public order. These dynamics reflect Hobbes' assertion that, without strong but legitimate authority, human interactions can easily escalate into conflict, even when the intention is to achieve a common good.

The #EndBadGovernance movement also highlighted citizens' increasing unwillingness to remain passive in the face of poor governance. This resistance serves as a reminder that democratic legitimacy depends not only on elections but also on the responsiveness of political institutions to societal needs. Citizens' engagement, whether through protests or digital activism, demonstrates a growing awareness of their collective power and the expectation that leaders serve public interests rather than private ambitions. Philosophically, the protests provide a practical lens to examine Hobbes' idea of human nature. While self-interest and competition can drive conflict, they can also motivate citizens to challenge authority when governance fails to protect common welfare. The 2024 protests, therefore, illustrate the dual nature of human behavior: as Hobbes might argue, humans are capable of both destructive competition and constructive collective action, depending on the conditions created by political institutions and leadership.

### **Economic Hardship, Inflation, and the Crisis of Democratic Legitimacy**

Economic hardship and rising inflation have emerged as central challenges to Nigeria's democratic stability, particularly in the period surrounding the 2023 general elections and the 2024 #EndBadGovernance protests. The persistent increase in the cost of living, declining purchasing power, and high unemployment rates have intensified public dissatisfaction with political leadership, raising questions about the legitimacy of elected governments. By 2023, Nigeria faced inflation rates exceeding 30 percent in basic food items and essential commodities, according to reports from the National Bureau of Statistics. For ordinary citizens, this meant that wages and incomes could barely meet daily needs, creating widespread frustration and despair. Economic hardship was compounded by fuel scarcity, rising transport costs, and increasing prices for healthcare and education. These conditions not only affected individual livelihoods but also undermined confidence in the ability of democratic institutions to deliver social welfare and economic security.

The crisis of democratic legitimacy becomes evident when citizens perceive that elections fail to translate into meaningful improvements in governance or quality of life. In Nigeria, allegations of electoral manipulation, vote buying, and corruption highlighted during the 2023 elections and primaries such as the PDP contest between Wike and Atiku reinforce the perception that political leaders prioritize personal or party interests over public welfare. Consequently, even democratically elected governments may face challenges in maintaining legitimacy if citizens feel excluded from decision-making or neglected in policy outcomes. Economic hardship has also driven political apathy and unrest. The #EndBadGovernance protests of 2024, largely led by young people, exemplified how economic conditions can mobilize citizens to demand accountability. These protests were not merely expressions of frustration but a public assertion that democratic systems must deliver tangible benefits to the people. When governments fail to address citizens' economic grievances, the social contract central to Hobbesian political theory appears violated, leading to distrust, civil disobedience, and heightened political tensions.<sup>9</sup>

From a philosophical perspective, Hobbes' notion that humans are driven by self-interest helps explain this dynamic. Individuals, facing economic insecurity and poor governance, naturally seek to secure their own survival and well-being. In a context where institutions fail to protect these interests, competition and conflict intensify, manifesting as protests, strikes, or other forms of civic unrest. Thus, economic hardship not only challenges the material stability of society but also tests the moral and political foundations of democracy itself.

### **Insecurity, Terrorism, and Banditry as Threats to Democratic Stability**

In recent years, insecurity in Nigeria has become one of the most pressing challenges to democratic stability. Terrorism, insurgency, and banditry have not only threatened the lives and property of citizens but also undermined the ability of the state to maintain law, order, and public trust. Between 2023 and 2024, Nigeria witnessed significant escalation in violent activities by insurgent groups in the North-East, bandit operations in the North-West, and targeted attacks in other regions, creating an environment of fear and uncertainty that directly impacts democratic governance. Terrorist groups, most notably Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), continued to carry out attacks on civilians, government facilities, and military personnel in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. These attacks disrupted local governance, displaced thousands of citizens, and made it difficult to conduct elections or ensure safe political participation in affected areas. Similarly, armed banditry in states like Zamfara, Kaduna, and Niger has forced communities to live in constant fear, limiting citizens' mobility, economic activity, and engagement in political processes.

In addition to the direct human cost, insecurity has profound political consequences. It challenges the legitimacy of the democratic state because citizens increasingly question the government's ability to protect them and uphold the social contract. For example, during the 2023 general elections, polling units in some high-risk areas had to be relocated or temporarily suspended due to threats from armed groups. Voter turnout declined in these regions, reflecting both fear and distrust in the capacity of institutions to safeguard the democratic process. The impact of insecurity extends to governance and resource allocation as well. Governments often redirect funds towards security operations, diverting resources from critical infrastructure, education, and healthcare. Such prioritization can exacerbate citizens' economic hardships, further eroding confidence in the state and creating a vicious cycle where insecurity fuels social discontent, which in turn fosters conditions for more violence.

From a Hobbesian perspective, these realities underscore his assertion that humans, left unchecked, may act aggressively in pursuit of survival, resources, or power. The prevalence of terrorism, banditry, and communal clashes illustrates the destructive tendencies in human nature when institutional authority is weak or perceived as ineffective. In the Nigerian context, insecurity not only endangers lives but also disrupts the stability necessary for democratic institutions to function effectively.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, addressing insecurity is not only a matter of protecting citizens but also a fundamental requirement for sustaining democracy. Strengthening security infrastructure, improving intelligence and law enforcement, and fostering community-based conflict resolution are critical to ensuring that citizens can participate freely in democratic processes without fear. The link between security and democracy is clear: without a safe environment, the ideals of participation, accountability, and representation cannot fully flourish.

### **Youth Activism, Social Media Politics, and Digital Democratic Struggles**

In Nigeria, youth activism has increasingly become a driving force for political engagement and democratic accountability. Young people, who constitute a significant proportion of the population, have leveraged social media platforms to challenge governance failures, demand transparency, and mobilize civic action. The period surrounding the 2023 general elections and the 2024 #EndBadGovernance protests illustrates how digital tools have transformed the landscape of political participation and resistance. Social media platforms such as Twitter (now X), Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have provided spaces where citizens can expose electoral malpractice, organise protests, and amplify their demands for good governance. For instance, during the 2023 elections, youth-led campaigns highlighted instances of vote buying, ballot tampering, and delayed results. Hashtags such as #EndBadGovernance, #VoteWisely, and #AccountabilityNow trended widely, allowing ordinary citizens to bypass traditional media channels and directly influence public discourse. These digital tools have made it harder for political elites to manipulate information and have increased pressure on institutions like INEC to act transparently.

Youth activism has also manifested offline in coordinated protests, town hall meetings, and civic education campaigns. The #EndBadGovernance protests of 2024, largely organized by young Nigerians, combined online mobilization with physical demonstrations to demand accountability and better service delivery. Similarly, student movements across universities and civil society organizations continue to campaign for electoral reforms and the protection of human rights, demonstrating a growing culture of civic engagement. However, the intersection of youth activism and digital politics also presents challenges. Online platforms can amplify misinformation, deepen partisan divisions, and sometimes escalate into virtual harassment or coordinated attacks on political opponents. Furthermore, the government's attempts to regulate social media through bans, surveillance, or restrictive laws have raised concerns about freedom of expression, creating tension between authority and citizens' rights.

From a Hobbesian perspective, these dynamics illustrate both the competitive and cooperative aspects of human nature.<sup>11</sup> On one hand, self-interest and competition manifest in political rivalries, disinformation campaigns, and conflicts over influence. On the other hand, collective action and shared goals demonstrate humans' capacity for cooperation when motivated by survival, justice, or the pursuit of common welfare. The Nigerian youth, through digital activism, exemplify how human ingenuity can channel competitive energies into movements that challenge injustice and demand democratic accountability.

### **Interpreting Nigeria's Democratic Struggles Through a Hobbesian Lens**

Examining Nigeria's democratic struggles through the lens of Hobbes' political philosophy provides a deeper understanding of why conflict, competition, and instability often dominate the political landscape. Hobbes argued that humans are naturally driven by self-interest, fear, and the desire for power. When these impulses are left unchecked by strong institutions or social contracts, society risks descending into disorder a state in which individuals and groups act primarily to secure their own survival and advantage. In the Nigerian context, many contemporary political and social challenges reflect this Hobbesian insight. The 2023 general elections, for instance, demonstrated how electoral violence, vote buying, and manipulation mirror Hobbes' notion of humans as "wolves to one another." Politicians and party agents, competing for political dominance, sometimes prioritized personal or party gain over the collective good, leading to disputes, protests, and mistrust in democratic institutions. The controversy surrounding the PDP primaries between Wike and Atiku further exemplifies this, as intra-party competition exposed rivalries,

manipulation of delegate votes, and attempts to marginalize opponents. These dynamics show how unchecked ambition and self-interest can destabilize democratic processes.

Similarly, the economic hardships, inflation, and insecurity witnessed in 2023–2024 reflect the consequences of weak governance structures in regulating human behavior. Citizens, struggling to survive amid rising costs and threats to personal safety, mobilized in protests such as the #EndBadGovernance movement. While these protests were rooted in legitimate demands for accountability, clashes with security forces and occasional breakdowns in public order illustrate Hobbes' argument that fear and competition can easily escalate into conflict in the absence of a robust and trusted authority. Youth activism and digital political engagement further illustrate the dual nature of Hobbes' view. On one hand, social media activism channels self-interest, ambition, and competition into public debate and political mobilization.<sup>12</sup> On the other, when misinformation, online harassment, or polarizing narratives dominate, these same impulses can foster discord, echoing Hobbes' warning about human behavior in a state of nature.

Thus, interpreting Nigeria's democratic struggles through a Hobbesian lens suggests that the country's challenges are not solely institutional but also deeply rooted in human nature. Weak enforcement of laws, corruption, political rivalry, and economic inequities allow self-interest, fear, and competition to shape political interactions, often at the expense of collective welfare. To strengthen democracy, Nigeria must not only reform institutions but also cultivate civic responsibility and ethical political conduct, creating a social contract capable of restraining destructive impulses while encouraging cooperation and stability.

### CONCLUSION

Nigeria's democratic journey is a complex interplay of aspiration, struggle, and human nature. While the country has made notable progress since 1999, persistent challenges—ranging from electoral violence and vote buying to economic hardship, insecurity, and weak institutions—reveal the fragility of its democratic system. The events surrounding the 2023 general elections, the PDP primaries involving Wike and Atiku, and the 2024 #EndBadGovernance protests illustrate how political competition, self-interest, and fear often overshadow the ideals of democracy, leading to tension, mistrust, and instability.

Through the Hobbesian lens, these struggles can be better understood as reflections of human nature. Hobbes' assertion that "man is a wolf to man" underscores the reality that, without strong institutions and social contracts, individuals and groups naturally pursue their own interests, sometimes at the expense of collective welfare. Electoral manipulation, political rivalries, and citizen protests in Nigeria demonstrate both the destructive and constructive dimensions of human behavior: destructive when competition escalates into conflict, but constructive when it motivates collective action for accountability and reform. Therefore, strengthening democracy in Nigeria requires more than elections; it demands robust institutions, transparent governance, and a culture of civic responsibility. Citizens must be empowered to participate meaningfully, political actors must prioritize public good over personal gain, and mechanisms must exist to hold leaders accountable. Only by addressing the interplay between human nature and institutional weakness can Nigeria hope to achieve a stable, resilient, and genuinely participatory democracy. The philosophical reflection offered by Hobbes reminds us that the success of democracy depends not solely on formal structures but also on the regulation of human impulses through ethical leadership, civic vigilance, and effective governance. In the Nigerian context, embracing these lessons is essential to transform democratic struggles into opportunities for social cohesion, political maturity, and sustainable national development.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis of Nigeria's democratic struggles through a Hobbesian perspective, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen democratic stability, reduce conflict, and enhance governance:

1. **Strengthen Democratic Institutions** Electoral bodies such as INEC should be equipped with better resources, training, and enforcement powers to prevent vote buying, manipulation, and malpractice. Independent oversight mechanisms and transparent procedures will help restore public trust in electoral processes.
2. **Enhance Security and Public Safety** The government should prioritize addressing terrorism, banditry, and communal conflicts through improved intelligence, law enforcement, and

community-based security initiatives. Ensuring citizens' safety is critical for free political participation and the functioning of democracy.

3. **Promote Civic Education and Political Awareness** Programs should be implemented to educate citizens, especially the youth, on democratic values, ethical voting, and civic responsibility. Awareness campaigns can reduce susceptibility to vote buying and encourage informed participation.
4. **Regulate Social Media Responsibly** While digital activism is a powerful tool for accountability, measures should be taken to curb misinformation, online harassment, and manipulation. Platforms and regulatory bodies can work together to ensure social media supports constructive political engagement without infringing on freedom of expression.

#### Endnotes

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