
OTHER SIDE OF DEMOCRATISATION: INTERNAL CONFLICTS AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

By

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Abstract

This work focuses on democratization and how it affects internal conflict. The paper uses content analysis and discourse method to explore and establish the link between the democratic process and conflict of interest associated with politics. The paper argues that democratization plays a vital role in creating a conflict of interest and strengthening civil disorder in the transitional process of state consolidation of democracy. This paper refers to various conflict zones around the world and focuses its analysis to Nigeria's democratisation process. It posits that internal conflicts are the indispensable product of democratization, particular in developing societies. However, there are rules of engagement that regulate the process towards endearing and a stable political system and democratic consolidation. Thus, all actors must adhere strictly to the rules of engagement for effective democratization.

Keywords: Democratic Transition, Political Polarization, Political Instability, Internal Conflict.

Introduction

The development of democracy as a universal system and practice has received different interpretations and connotations. The spread of democracy and the process of dismantling authoritarian systems by imbibing tenets of democracy is described as democratization. The democratization process examines scholars from different perspectives in time and space, which led to the theory building to explain different scenarios and traits in democratic practice.

Huntington (1991:15) came up with the idea of waves of democratization. According to him, "a wave of democratization is a group of transitions from non-democratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period." The author noted that the first wave started at the beginning of the 19th century and terminated at around 1930. The rise of fascist movements across European states led to the collapse of democracies and the rise of authoritarian regimes.

The second wave started at the end of the Second World War with the defeat of Axis Powers in 1945. Many countries in Europe embraced democracy, and couple with decolonization and independence of many occupied territories in Africa, Asia, Latin America, etc., the number increased significantly. The wave took a reversal trend by the 1970s when many third world democracies turned to authoritarian and dictatorial systems.

The third wave began with democratization in Portugal in 1974, followed by a significant number of countries in Europe and Latin America up to the 1990s. According to Huntington (1991:45-6), five key factors led to the third wave: one is legitimacy crisis within authoritarian regimes; two growing popular demand for better economic and social living standard; three has to do with the spread of secular ideas even among the clergy; four was the multilateral endorsement of democracy by European states, and it exports by the U.S; finally, the contagious effect of democracy spill-over to neighboring states and the role of information communication technology reinforced the transition process.

Over the years, especially in this contemporary era, the discourse on issues relating to conflicts and democratization has been a subject of discussions among scholars in the realm of

political science discipline. To that end, it is the humble conviction of this article to provide a research-based answer to the lingering question of whether democratization opens room for internal conflict. The intelligentsia and academia that believe in the notion that the former usually led to the existence of the latter argue that when the political liberalization arose around the globe, followed by the birth of economic rhetoric; the global stage has experienced more than thirty brutal and bloody conflicts erupting on the globe. Most of the violence are internal armed conflict by nature (Beverly & Ronnie, 2000). So, the strong cooperative effect between internal conflict and democratization has been confirmed by realist study, because civil wars mostly erupt in semi-democracy (Hegre & Nome, 2010), especially in societies without earlier knowledge and practice of political pluralism, or if the political actors are not prepared to adapt power-sharing (Cederman, Simon and Krebs, 2010).

The aim of this paper is not just to highlight or offer an additional contribution to scholarship on the causes of civil disorder and violence to a particular regime system but also argue that democratization has positive and negative sides. Most literatures on democratization are encumbered with positivities; while its negativities are neglected or passively discussed (Fukayama 1992 & Georg, 1992). Hence the need to also look at the other side, adverse outcome, of democratic transition experience of societies like Nigeria that have become sharply divided and conflict-ridden. Thus, most causes of internal conflict in developing democracies are associated to democratization, direct or indirect. However, the paper does not imply that democratization is bad but posits that it has both negative and positive sides.

Methodology

This paper describes and discusses the effect of democratization on internal conflicts associated with transition process of emergent democracies. The study relies on relevant literature for content analysis and current events for discourse analysis. It focuses on transition from authoritarian system to democratic system of developing democracies, with particular reference to Nigeria since the return to civil rule in 1999. It applies transition theory as framework of analysis because of the nature and pattern of the research problem and scope. The research represents a multi-dimensional understanding of the processes of democratization as it relates to cross-national internal contradictions and case study of civil tension and violence emanating from liberalization of democratic institutions through transition to consolidation of democracy.

Literature Review

Democratization

The concept of democratization is one of the hallmarks of development in a nation-state, also one of the most significant concepts and vogues in contemporary political science. While, there is universally accepted definition of the concept, because it is a reasonably simple idea, since democratization is a practice or procedure which leads to a more open, more participating, less authoritarianism system, is simply the launch of a democratic government or transition to a more democratic political system (Charles, 2003). But there is no full agreement between political scientists about how the process of democratization happens, with the paradigms to use in discovering if democratization has occurred. Possibly, democratization can be a transition to four patterns of regimes, because it could be a transition from an authoritarianism political system to fully democratic political system, a transition from an authoritarianism political system to a semi-democratic political system, a transition from semi-democratic political system to upgraded authoritarianism political system, or from semi-democratic political system to a fully democratic political system. Various states have embraced the democratic systems just to see the end and breakdown in Military coup or incredible insurgency that surrenders or renounces an upgraded authoritarian regime as a substitute. Because these four patterns of democratization are regularly used to depend on other political events, whether and to what progress will democratization happen, including history, economic grows, civil society, or turns a civil war (Charles, 2003).

Internal Conflict

Conflict is inevitable in every political setting, whether organized or unorganized. Its conceptual clarity is one of the significant tasks in explaining and analyzing any academic phenomena in political discourse. In order to fulfill the expectation as mentioned above, it is pertinent to note that conflict can mere exchange of words, violent confrontation, with arms, and destruction of lives and properties. There is no generally accepted definition of conflict; however, it is widely acknowledged fact and shared knowledge in most academic documents, the consensus among many scholars that internal armed conflict means to an incredible condition of hostility engaging extended armed struggle between one or more prepared armed groups and militaries of the regime, or between such groups themselves in clash to an international armed conflict, which fights the States' armed force. In an internal armed conflict, one of the two rival teams at least is a non-state armed gang (Lawand, 2012).

Most conflicts are internal; they are defined as non-international armed conflict, domestic conflict, and civil war. In an interview, Lawand, former head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), said: there is no actual difference between civil war and internal armed conflict because civil war has no legal meaning; therefore, some used to describe it as internal armed conflict. "Article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions called "Common" because it is identical in each of the four Geneva Conventions, doesn't use the term "civil war, but refers instead to "armed conflict not for an international character" the ICRC mostly avoid using the term "civil war" when communicating with the parties to an armed conflict or publicly, and speaks instead of "non-international" or "internal" armed conflicts, as these expressions mirror the term used in common Article 3. And there were indications that various analyses that such conflicts often occur as a result of democratization that transformed to a type of political regime which is known as, semi-democracies, "intermediate", or "isocracies", or "inconsistent", because democratic countries have a minor threat of this kind of conflict (Hegre & Nome 2010, Hegre 2014). In this, an emerging concept in literature has associated internal armed conflict with democratization.

Historically, the main energetic and biogenetic explanation of human behaviours is conflict, because in general the history of conflicts is inherent in the entire life of humanity itself. Conflicts may happen within us out of any superficial causes, because it is part of human life that occur in relations or dealings with others (Kevin, 2007). Although aggression is inevitably prevalent in human deep evolutionary history, but broadly speaking what has been become conventional in the 20th and 21st centuries was the incidence of implausible violence. The two centuries have record of violence in human history at a time when humanity is embracing democratic practice. As the centuries experienced two deadly world wars, uncountable civil wars, incredible ethnic conflict leading to genocides, mass executions and concentration camps, Nagasaki and Hiroshima came into existence, then Rwanda, Algeria and Bosnia. As a result, the century has been tagged by some scholars as "the long century of violence" (Keane, 1996). Eric Hobsbawm equally called it "the age of extremes", because "more human beings had been killed or allowed to die through structural violence by human decision than ever before in human history" (Hobsbawm, 1994). Some scholars called it "a century of revolution, insurgent and counterinsurgent violence" (Joseph, 2010).

However, in just 9 years the internal armed conflict causes the death of approximately six million lives, because from 1990 to the end of 1999 there were 118 internal armed conflicts internationally, containing 80 countries and two para-state regions (Dan, 2004); and 33 of these conflicts were still operating in the 2000 in 27 territories, while the new bloody armed conflict erupted in the year 2000; however, the number of internal armed conflict in first decade 21st century is the lowly documented in the post-Cold War period (Wallenstein & Sollenberg, 2001). Although, armed conflict has increased harshly from the first second decade of 21st, that was since 2010 till date (Marc, 2014).

Democratization has been one of the main topics of mainstream academics in the early part of

the Twenty-first century, from 1970s through 1990s following the third wave of democratization and the succeeding Colour Revolutions, different systems of democracy can now be found across all states on the globe (Hobson, 2015). The third wave of democratization has produced multiple political systems that are neither fully democratic system nor typical authoritarian system, the bases democratization has provided an extensive mixture and range of epithets as headlines of unusual kind of democracy and authoritarianism (Bogaards, 2009). These help in the sweep of internal armed conflict which replace World War, as it appears immediately after the disappearance of Second World War and the independence of most decolonized countries across the globe, and the spread of democracy. Most of the former colonial powers since 1945 have had a strong democracy. The history of wars between states, collapse of the Soviet Union and the wave of democratization and economic development brought back new dimensions to the history of wars between people within the state.

Theoretical Framework

This study makes a strong proposition that transition theory better explains the relationship between democratization and internal conflict of emerging democracies in the 21st century. Given that modernization and historical sociology theories have given a pessimistic assumptions that democracy cannot be achieved in countries with low level of development, where social political and economic structures are unfavorable. But the swift of changes we saw in the 1980s and 1990s only gave the transition theory the privilege to offer better explanation. Both modernization and historical sociology theories could not account for the sudden democratization in eastern and central Europe as well as Africa, Asia and Latin America from the 1980s to the early part of 21st century.

In the first place, the period upon which the third wave commenced, 1970s to 1990s, have been described by policy commentators and scholars as era of transitions. This was captured clearly by Huntington (1991:12) that “between 1974 and 1990, at least 30 countries made transitions to democracy, just about doubling the number of democratic governments in the world.... The current era (1970s - 1990s) of democratic transitions constitutes the third wave of democratization in the history of the modern world.” The returned to democracy in Nigeria in 1999 and various efforts by the political elites to consolidate democratic system after years of military authoritarian rule could be described as transition from authoritarianism to democratization as an extended third wave.

The internationalization of the drive to explain the new phenomenon devoted to promoting democracy and search for suitable framework to conceptualize the unfolding political events in new democracies led to the emergence of transition theory (Thomas, 2002). Thus, building on the above intellectual adventure to explain the third wave - democratization in Southern Europe, Latin America, and a few countries in Asia - the U.S. democracy community rapidly embraced an analytic model of democratic transition. It was derived principally from their own interpretation of the patterns of democratic change taking place, but also to a lesser extent from the early works of the emergent academic field of “transitology,” above all the seminal work of Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter (1986).

Core Assumptions: according to Thomas (2002), five core assumptions define the transition paradigm:

The first, which is an umbrella for all the others, is that ***any country moving away from dictatorial rule can be considered a country in transition toward democracy.*** It reflexively labeled any formerly authoritarian country that was attempting some political liberalization as a “transitional country.”

The second assumption is ***that democratization tends to unfold in a set sequence of stages.*** After the transition comes consolidation, a slow but purposeful process in

which democratic forms are transformed into democratic substance through the reform of state institutions, the regularization of elections, the strengthening of civil society, and the overall habituation of the society to the new democratic “rules of the game.” Democracy activists admit that it is not inevitable that transitional countries will move steadily on this assumed path from *opening* and *breakthrough* to *consolidation*. Transitional countries, they say, can and do go backward or stagnate as well as move forward along the path.

The third assumption—*the belief in the determinative importance of elections*. Elections give new postdictatorial government democratic legitimacy, they believe, but the elections will serve to broaden and deepen political participation and the democratic accountability of the state to its citizens.

A fourth assumption is that *the underlying conditions in transitional countries*—their economic level, political history, institutional legacies, ethnic make-up, sociocultural traditions, or other “structural” features— *will not be major factors in either the onset or the outcome of the transition process*. A remarkable characteristic is a decision by a country’s political elites to move toward democracy and an ability on the part of those elites to fend off the contrary actions of remaining antidemocratic forces.

Fifth, the transition paradigm rests on the assumption *that the democratic transitions making up the recent wave are being built on coherent, functioning states*. The process of democratization is assumed to include some redesign of state institutions.

Transition theory is an agency-centred theory and emphasizes the interaction of elites. Elite’s pacts, formal or informal, go a long way in shaping the democratization process. It focuses on variables such as civil society, associations, social and political struggles and citizenship constructions of democracy (Grugal, 2002:58-9). The clash of interest among political elites in Nigeria is natural and inevitable, but the antidemocratic forces exploit the elites’ fragmentation to cause internal conflict.

Critique of the transition theory center around its being actor-centric, teleological and lacks adequate explanation to post-communist democratic changes. However, the transition theory has been somewhat useful during a time of momentous and often surprising political upheaval in the world. It has provided conceptual and theoretical explanations to the Huntington’s third wave democratization. But it is increasingly clear that reality is requiring new explanations to the existing model to conform to events unfolding as the societies consolidate.

Internal Conflicts: Politics or Politicking?

Political rallies and elections may trigger violence, and democratization can evolve a huge militarization, which mostly end in civil war, especially if the political bodies are not ready to adapt to the rules of engagement at their level of involvement (Huntington, 1968). So, without any instrumental mechanism, it is widely acknowledged fact and common knowledge in most academic documents that democratization and institutional transition can trigger or encouraged armed conflicts (Marc, 2014). According to Hegre et al. (2001), poorer states are usually at risk to civil war than richer states, and one of the main reasons is that the significant situation that place state escalating into poverty was revolutions or transitional regime, because revolution that often causes political instability has incredible effect on economic development, deteriorate income sharing and spreads poverty which makes state become low-income state (Abubakar&Majeed, 2019).

For the reason of explaining how democratization causes political instability that entrench

persistent poverty in state, the study provides formal and informal features of political instability. Formal political instability occurs due to constitutional transformations and elections, while the informal political instability begins with revolutions, killings, eliminations, strike, uprisings, upheaval and violent conflicts (Nauro&Menelaos, 2008). These both formal and informal conflicts have been connection with political instability that also connects with democratization.

Democratization develops ethno-political polarization, such ethno-political polarization causes ethnic conflict or ethno-religious conflict which are one of the main instrument of internal armed conflict, although it synonym are named ethno-political conflict that has to do with conflict between two or more ethnic groups or national groups of people, like what happened earlier in Nigeria, South Africa, Northern Ireland, Chechnya, Rwanda, Sudan and ongoing armed conflict of Niger Delta, Darfur, Somalia, Congo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and recent armed conflict that are taking place around the world such as, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Libya and many other cases. These conflicts end in political obscurities as well as violence in the kinds of ethnic purification, war, genocide, terrorism, or other kinds of massacre (Donald, 2015).

The example of this polarization can be provided from Nigerian ethno-political polarization between the North and South which made elections and ethnic unrest becoming synonymous, because it is crucial and necessary to note that all the ten general elections held in Nigeria since it independent in 1960 plus (1964, 1979, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 elections) have been ruined by several level of ethnic aggression. Hence, elections are crucial instant when surveying the historical trends of demonstration and hostility in Nigeria. The antidemocratic forces fueled the embers of disunity and hostility between northern and southern regions in Nigeria during the 2011 national elections, contested between a northerner and southerner. Many lives and properties were lost and destroyed after presidential election results were released in favour of GoodluckJonathern against Muhammad Buhari.

Similarly, somescholar likeOjibara (2016),Akande (2017), Babayo (2019) andOsaretin (2019)logically link the present wave of Biafra tension and the recovery of violence in the South and Niger Delta, correspond to the victory of presidentBuhari from Northern part of the country in the 2015 election, contested against the president from Southern part. There is still incredible ethnic unrest which relates the president from Northern part of the country as reelected in the 2019. There has been equally a spread of Biafra's protests and agitation of Igbo-land since the 2019 elections (Ogabogbo 2009 & Babayo 2019). Additionally, this also showed the link between elections and ethnic unrest. Generally, election is observed as the core democracy. However, elections can mar or strengthen democratization. A free, fair and credible election nurtures democratization, while elections that lack integrity activates tension, hostility and violence. For example, the elections in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria and Pakistan have considerable contestation and aggression.

The electoral conflict is a kind of political conflict displayed before or after election which always take the nature of political stealing of ballot box, killing, aggravated kidnaping, arm attack on apparent officials of election and opposition as well as electoral stakeholders, and burning of meeting centers and office for the purpose of achieving political benefit. But all this violence mostly end in lasting internal armed conflict, because the primary sources of these fighting are and sectional in politics and ethnicity (Dorian & Stephanie, 2017). These examples affirmed that democratization has usually served as a major potential cause of most of the factors which favors internal armed conflict. However, the apparent and important links between democratization and internal conflict has occurs when the transition of from an authoritarianism political system result in semi-democratic political system, a type of political regime is regularly discovered to be more exposed to brutal encounter than **fully democracy and upgraded authoritarianism as most studies emphasized that fully democracy and**

upgraded authoritarianism doesn't favor domestic conflict, as Hegre et al. (2001) argue that strictly authoritarianism and logical democracies have rare civil wars, but transitional governments are the most conflict prone. Political transformation also appears to be linked with civil war, irrespective of whether that change transformation is in relation to better democracy or upgraded dictatorship.

According to survey of civil war in 152 states in the period 1818-1992, the study finds out that intermediate regimes are most horizontal to civil war, even when they have close to steady form of regime change (Hegre et al. 2001). And all of the 21st century ongoing armed conflicts have happened as a result of democratization. Consequently, being strong democracy is more settled and steadier than being dictatorships, and being dictatorships is more settled and steadier than being intermediate regime, then strong democracy is more apparent end-point of the process of democratization. Eventually, all these scores concluded that democracy don't expedite to domestic violence, but process of democratization accelerate to domestic violence (Hegre et al. 2001).

Although there are studies that find out that even strong democracy and upgraded authoritarianism can effect armed conflict, because there are some documents which demonstrate that democracy authoritarian regime increase income inequality (Hegre, Ravening&Gleditsch, 2003). Dan (2004) argues that there are many armed conflict in states that are not amongst the low-income states and most authoritarian of the world. Similarly, there are states that are both very poor and crushed, yet in which there is no war. This paper argues that democratization may activate internal armed conflict, because even some countries that Dan(2004) declared that they are richer and most authoritarian on the globe have armed conflict. Most of them the cause of their conflicts can be part of fighting for their freedom and liberty, which are the core of democratization. And likewise, some few poor states that have no conflict can have freedom and liberty, and income equality strengthen their political system (Lindert, 2005).

Furthermore, there are several findings discovering the relations between democratization and conflict (Hegre et al. 2001; James&Laitin 2003; Collier &Hoeffler2004). Even though there are other analysis that show the negative effect of democratization on conflict, the explanation about the link between democratization and political instability is strong evidence. Some authentic analysis discovers that 113 states that their GDP growth lower than the other are in incredible political instability. This analysis also disclose that political instability is connected to the regime breakdown rate (Henryk& Lukasz, 2013).

The case of the Middle East region shows that democratization is found to be endangering peace and promoting armed conflict, or any kinds of conflict. The type of political regime, autocracies and democracies, and also some revolution place some countries in poverty, and poverty is usually linked with a more chance of civil war. If we compare 5 Arab republics that the popular revolution of 2011 overthrows their long authoritarian leaders, 2 of them the outcome of 2011 Arab upheavals did not lead them to civil war, because in the case of Tunisia, which is regarded as the most successful case, The Arab upheavals have led to democratic transitions, so there is no civil war. While in the case of Egypt the Arab uprising have led to civil disorder and later upgraded authoritarianism. The remaining 3 which are Syria, Yemen and Libya have tumble into more dangerous than even before, as a result of transitions towards democratic practice (Spierings, 2019).

Democratization: the Ideal Formula

The study analyzes the significance of establishing the nexus between democratization and internal conflicts. Elections as core component of democratization, if properly conducted, can develop update and devise civil dialogue, political commitment, support and increase regime awareness, motivate opposition party and empower diplomatic and peaceful resolution of political conflict that causes several types of conflict (Pippa, &Grömping, 2019).

Electoral integrity refers to regular and basic acceptable principles that pertains collectively to states in each electoral cycle - pre-election days, on voting day, and post-election time. Democratization depends on the attention pays on reliable free and fair election procedures as election integrity is very much significant and related to modern principle of democracy. Political researchers have been involved in development of justice and due process of electioneering, especially in states that are in democratization process or transition and those sorts as democratic. There have been developments and academic idea on the principles of political party formation, campaign, rallies, elections and political institutions, with reliable, free and fair election. The state also raises and endures the prospect of enhancing democratic transformations, democratic societies, and responsibility to democratic institutions (Bako, 2019).

The crucial ways to build democracy are elections, but reliable, fair and free elections are necessary and vital instruments to promote secure and assurance to democratization. It is important to observe and say that no matter how weakened a democratizing nation is, involvement of electorates in the procedure of campaigning regulate how they recognize the electoral integrity effect as well as the acceptability and the legality of the system of government (Kerr, 2018). The contribution of citizens in a procedure of election improve political hope and commitment, mostly if the election is fair and free. And the practical fairness idea describes how citizens partaking and contributing in an election that is reliable, free and fair supports the trust of political players on the regime, and bestows the validity and sincerity of whole process of democratization (Marc & Dieter, 2016). Pragmatic study shows significant role played by the electoral integrity in the process of democratization. There is growing notion that democracy don't take root until at last three national elections have been held successfully.

Another important condition revolves around diplomatic and peaceful transition of regimes or transfer of power from one political party or government to the other or opposition party. Such process of democratization or transition is important because it shows that main political authorities in the states are ready to resolve and reconcile their differences without conflict, and there is a high prospect for such country to be out of internal conflict or civil war risk, and to be stable and peaceful democratic country (Charles, 2003).

Moreover, one other reason of armed conflict is caused by ethnic division, because when the society is ethnically divided, then political and other interest tend to become controlled and guided into ethnic sentiment. Ethnic division is mostly develop and erupt into conflict during democratization, when structural societal problems such as poverty, inequality, injustice, marginalization, unemployment, illiteracy, social class stratification, underdevelopment, among others, prevails in the process of democratic setting. Feeling of deprivation by the people provides "breeding grounds for rough political developments in common and psychological warfare, particularly civil conflict" (Pettigrew, 2019).

The developments that follow the spreads of liberalization and social change in the course of democratization also improve ethnic polarization, which cause ethnic conflict. Some politicians in democratic states and hybrid democracies use politics of divide and rule for their selfish interest to pursue unjust policies. Some propagate racial differences like in the US and South Africa, some promote populism like in France, Germany and Netherlands, some ethnic and regional differences like in Nigeria, Kenya and Congo. Currently, democracy and pluralism are under attack, as it was mention in Freedom House report of 2019 that several free elected leaders are significantly limiting their interests to a restricted understanding or version of the public benefit, thereby increasing the level of violence in different ways in various countries. Thus, the basic principles of democracy and constitutionalism must be adhered to for enduring democratization. Politicians should play politics within the confine of rule of law.

Ideal democratic process promotes civil rights, political liberty, rule of law and commitment to

democratic institutions; thereby minimizing harmful nature of power in people. It also reduces the rate of corruption in state, rebellion voiced at the beginning of transition to democracy. An established good democratic regime makes leaders and followers enjoy justice and the chance of getting lasting peace, or to reach to the needed and creative conflict resolution.

Conclusion

Many scholars like Emmanuel Kant argue that democratic political processes normalize clash among groups with opposing views. Even though much of the opposition appears quietly and peacefully within existing political actors, resolution of hostilities and violence can be simplified by electoral process and practices; when the political regime is opposed from inside by groups hostile against the regime, and when it is opposed from without and on border of national or political difference. Thus, regulating other conflicts like ethnic, religious, sectional and interstate conflicts are what new democratic government tend to prioritize most.

However, democratic transition in developing societies like Nigeria has separately formed a factor of generating internal conflicts. The nature and pattern of political practice in such polities turn away from ideal democracy to the excesses of the political elites and selfishness of ruling elite. The paper submits that political developments and democratic practice are basically linked as they influence, shape and involve the characters of conflict in our societies. The result of this study further indicates that not only process of democratization is substantial and crucial in activating and developing deadly ethnic, religious and civil wars or political violence and instability; but has also produced different brands of democracy and slow consolidation of democracy.

Although, the rise of non-state actors and couple with ongoing political violence, internal armed conflicts in some of the developing democracies, it could be logically deduced that internal armed conflict has not been given the desired attention. Arguably, with the devastating consequences on lives and properties caused by internal armed conflicts in countries like Nigeria, Sudan, Rwanda, etcetera; which aroused the attention of many analyst and inevitably become a global academic topic of discussion especially within the realm of peace studies and peace building. In view of the above adumbrated arguments, therefore, internal armed conflict is more disastrous than interstate armed conflict, in the long run it usually turns into civil war which at the end creates a conducive atmosphere for terrorism and political instability.

Thus, the paper advocates for proactive measures that will prevent further escalation of conflicts; while at the same time solving existing conflicts through: electoral integrity, rule of law, justice for all and transparent democratic political institutions in line with the basic principles of democracy. Political actors' compliance with the rules of engagement can eliminate or minimize tension and hostility, facilitate smooth democratic transition and consolidation of democracy.

Significantly, the study provides a qualitative study on the relationship between democratization and internal conflicts, with particular reference to Nigerian democracy. It also opens room for further research on quantitative and theoretical perspectives towards consolidation of democracy in developing democracies.

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