

DEMOCRATIZATION AND POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA AND GHANA 2003-2012

Nwosu, Jude Donald Ikechukwu, Ph.D

Department of Political Science, Imo State University, Owerri

&

Amaechi, Louisa Ngozi, Ph.D

School of General Studies, Federal University of Technology, Owerri

&

Sekpe Sheneni Samuel

Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

Election is universally considered as the hallmark of democracy, especially since the current wave of democratization in Africa. However, most elections in Africa are characterized by violence particularly post-electoral violence. Moreover, the study examined the nexus between democratization and post-electoral violence in Nigeria and Ghana. Though scholars have interrogated democratization and electoral violence yet little attention have been paid on how the mode of democratization account for the different levels of post-electoral violence more in Nigeria than in Ghana. Therefore, the paper ascertained how the mode of democratization accounted for the different levels of post-electoral violence in Nigeria more than Ghana. The study made use of qualitative method of data collection and analysis; it relied on secondary sources of data. To address the issues raised, the study was anchored on the theory of post-colonial state. The study noted that electoral mal-practice led to occurrence of protest and riots more in Nigeria than Ghana, and weak democratic institutions account for political kidnappings and assassinations more in Nigeria than Ghana and also ethno/religious voting pattern triggered destruction of lives and properties more in Nigeria than Ghana. All these are rooted in the high premium or stakes Nigerian politicians attached to politics unlike their counterparts in Ghana. The study recommended among others, that the electoral process should be free, fair, and credible. The electoral commissions of both states particularly Nigeria should be more organized to avoid electoral malpractice, and Nigerian politicians should place less premium on politics.

Keywords: Democratization, Post-electoral Violence, Elections, Electoral Commission, Political instability

Introduction

Election is universally considered as the hallmark of democracy, especially since the third wave of democratization in Africa in the late 1990's. As a result of its importance, it has occupied the centre stage among scholars of democracy and democratic-based institutions (Huntington, 1993; Ake, 2002; AfroBarometer, 2006; Freedom House, 2011). Election is a viable mechanism for consummating

representative government and facilitating leadership succession. It promotes political accountability, citizens' participation and gives voice and power to the people (Agbaje & Adejumobi, 2006). Any political acts that surround leadership succession and regime change constitute a serious aspect of political life in any society. In political systems in general, and in African politics in particular, such act constitutes an important index of democratization (Whitehead, 2002). In similar vein, Alemika & Omotosho (2008) posited that the nature and character of elections in a state is one of the major yardstick or mechanisms for gauging the extent of democratization. Against this backdrop, elections occupy a central position in the process of democratization because its freeness and fairness constitute the central factor in ensuring democratic survival. This is because the lack of free and fair elections often tends to threaten the democratic process as a result of legitimacy question, on the other hand, the presence of free and fair election is a strong ingredient in the consolidation of the democratization process (Omodia, 2009).

It is pertinent to state that democratization is a broad phenomenon which is not only political but also economic and social. But this paper places more emphases on the political i.e. the procedural approach which is centered on free, fair and credible political participation and contestation as it relates to election. To this end, elections are considered very central to the current wave of democratization in Africa, in terms of its transition, where democracy was absent, and consolidation, where the existing democratic institutions need to be strengthened. However, a recurring decimal among scholars is that election is a strong indices of measuring the extent of democratization in Africa. As Diamond (2002) submitted, election is the litmus test of a democratic political system.

Meanwhile, election does not automatically guarantee the consolidation and sustenance of the democratic process, yet it remains a central element in the process of democratization, though elections and democracy are not synonymous (Bratton, 1999). Election however, remains a fundamental pillar not only for installing democratic government, but also as a necessary requisite for democratization. For as Luquman (2009) noted that nothing emphasizes the centrality of elections to democratization than the fact that there can be elections without democracy, whereas there can never be democracy without elections. Sadly, the electoral process in many of Africa's democracies (Nigeria and Ghana) has been characterized by violence.

The Problematique

Recent manifestations of electoral violence in Africa have assumed an unprecedented magnitude and changing form and character, with negative implications for democratic stability and consolidation (Omotola, 2006). Electoral violence remains the most stable kind of violence seen on the continent, occurring at a relatively constant rate between 2003 and 2012. The frequency of electoral violence in Africa has provided empirical evidence to back the linkages between democratization and elections in the continent (Straus 2012). More so, Nigeria and Ghana do share a lot of similarities, which include but not restricted to the following, first of all both Nigeria and Ghana share similar colonial experience because they are

both ex-British colonies which entail they got their independence from Britain roughly during the same period, Nigeria in 1st October, 1960 and Ghana in 6th March, 1957 (Omezia, 2009). These shared historical experiences of colonialism not only influence both countries but also shape their socio-economic as well as political development.

Again, Nigeria and Ghana are both similar because both countries experienced post- independence military intervention; Nigeria in January 1966, July 1966, July 1975, December 1983, August 1985, November 1993 and Ghana in February 1966, January 1972, July 1978, June 1979 and December 1981 (Babatope, 2008; Boafo-Arthur, 2008). The shared experience from these dictatorial, brutal and despotic military regimes left a bitter tale in the history of both countries and like a bad spot have refused to fade making such odious experience to lurk behind the memory of the citizens of both countries especially those that witnessed the authoritarian nature of such regimes. Human right abuse was flagrant and widespread during military rule in both countries (Babatope, 2008; Boafo-Arthur, 2008).

Also, Nigeria and Ghana share same socio- cultural, political and religious similarities in terms of political dichotomy, ethnic and religious composition of its population. Also both countries are located in West Africa. Ghana is politically divided into Northern and Southern region, with over 100 different recorded ethnic groups with Akan, Mole-Dagbon and Ewe constituting the three major ethnic groups. Ghana is also divided on religious affiliation with Christianity, Muslims and traditional religion being the three major religions while in Nigeria, there are over 300 recorded ethnic groups with the largest ethnic groups being the Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba. Politically, Nigeria is also divided into two broad regions which are the Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria, also the Nigerian state is skewed along religious line whereby there are Muslims, Christians and practitioners of African traditional religion (CSI-Nigeria, 2007, CSI-Ghana, 2006).

Additionally, both Nigeria and Ghana embark on the train of democratization within the same period of time, Ghana in 1992 and Nigeria in 1999. Both countries operate multi-party system and have also held elections consecutively. Since 1992, Ghana has held six consecutive elections in December 1993 and 1996 which Lt Colonel Jerry Rawlings won, in December 2000 and 2004 which John A. Kufour won, in December, 2008, John A. Mills won the election and the December, 2012, which John Mahatma won while since 1999 Nigeria have also witnessed four consecutive elections in February 1999, April 2003 both won by Olusegun Obasanjo, also, the April 2007 election was won by Musa Yar'Adua and the April 2011 election which Goodluck Jonathan won (Oladipupuo, 2011, Majeed, 2011).

Most of these elections have been marred with electoral violence, particularly in Nigeria where high premium is placed on capturing states powers. Although, elections in Ghana are not devoid of electoral violence or intimidation of political opponents, rather the level or extent of such violence or intimidation is minimal or minute. On the other hand, electoral violence is a recurring decimal in Nigeria's elections that has affected the integrity of the democratization process in Nigeria (Omotola, 2014; Gyimah-Boadi, 2010).

Therefore, electoral violence is an enduring feature of African democracy. Moreover, the most frequent form of electoral violence plaguing the African continent is post-electoral conflict. According to Orji & Uzoadi (2012) post-election violence is a specific form of electoral violence that occurs immediately after polling and it is usually during or after collation and announcement of election results. However, despite the similar socio-political and economic tapestry between Nigeria and Ghana, and the strong premium placed on election to strengthen and consolidate democracy in both countries, the democratization process in Ghana have fared better than in Nigeria (Skanning, 2008; AfroBarometer, 2006; Freedom House, 2011). This assertion is based on how peaceful, free, fair and creditable the electoral process in Ghana has been when compared with that of Nigeria since 2003.

These contradictory trajectories between Nigeria and Ghana as regards democratization are situated around free, fair and credible elections. Comparative scholars like Omeiza (2009), Majeed (2011), Omotola (2010), Oladipupo (2011), among others identified electoral violence as a key difference in the democratization process between Nigeria and Ghana, given its frequent occurrence in Nigeria since the third wave of democratization. They argued that lack of free, fair and credible elections coupled with the existence and presence of electoral violence in Nigeria since 2003 have made Ghana to fare well in democratic ratings than Nigeria. On the other hand, non-comparative scholars from Nigeria and Ghana such as Gyimah-Boadi (2008), Dwauni (2010), Onyeoziri (2011), Bofo-Arthur (2012), Orji & Uzoadi (2013), among others while using either country as a point of reference/inference have interrogated separately, the relationship between democratization and electoral violence: causes, forms and character. However, none of these studies have adequately paid systematic attention to the linkages between democratization and post-electoral violence in Nigeria and Ghana in comparative perspective. They tended not to have paid adequate systematic attention in explaining how the mode of democratization account for the different levels of post-electoral violence more in Nigeria than in Ghana. On the basis of this gap in the literature, this study addressed the following research question:

- Do the mode of democratization accounted for the different levels of post-election violence more in Nigeria than in Ghana between 2003 and 2012?

Theoretical Framework

There is hardly any valid research that has no theoretical construct. Meanwhile, the essence of theorizing is to explain in order to reach generalization, predict and control. It is on this note that the study adopted the neo-Marxist theory of the post-colonial state which is an offshoot of the classical Marxist political economy approach. The major tenets of the theory of post-colonial state are generated from the works of Ekeh (1972) Alavi (1973); Ake (1985); Ekekwe (1986); who among others are the Marxist epigenists that have contributed to the explanation and understanding of the character of states in the periphery.

The central focus of the theory is on understanding the nature, structure, history, composition and character of the (Nigerian and Ghanaian) state in order to

ascertain the dynamics of political development and processes within the state and this dynamics include democratization and post-electoral violence with their various manifestations. They argued that it is the state that occupies the centre stage of politics and therefore is the major determinant of the most societal processes including democratization and elections. The theory suggests that the post-colonial state is a creation of imperialism, dictated by the interest of imperialist and its local allies, not by those of the majority of the indigenous population, the post-colonial states, therefore has created for itself a deep crisis from which it can hardly extricate itself without fundamentally changing its present nature and this affirms the reason why Marx and Engels (1939) cited in Omoyibo (2014:23) saw the state as nothing but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

Similarly, Alavi (1973:146) had opined that “post-colonial states and its apparatus are instruments of primitive accumulation by the dominant class and their collaborators”. According to Ekekwe (1986), the post-colonial states rest on the foundation of the colonial state, this, in turn, had incorporated some important elements of the pre- colonial rudimentary state structures. The main goal of the colonial state was to create conditions under which accumulation of capital by the foreign bourgeoisie in alliance with the ruling elite would take place through the exploitation of local human and other natural resources. It was on this basis that the post-colonial state emerged.

Given this context, the stakes and struggles for state power are very high and often assume 'a zero-sum game approach. Therefore, elections become the only game in town in the democratization process. Hence the high premium placed on it. The limited autonomy of the post- colonial state in Africa leads to an exclusive politics articulated in the struggle for power based on efficiency norms rather than legitimacy norms; the triumph of the vicious over the virtuous circle; centralization of power; imposition of domination and political control; alienation of leaders from their masses; and the deployment of extremism in the exercise of power are all hallmarks of the postcolonial state which in effect, the ‘people tendentially retreat into primary groups which become the beneficiary of their residual loyalty and explore other ‘extra-juridical’ and ‘non-state means,’ which often have very high conflict potential. In the process, society becomes deeply divided and alienation is endemic, while distrust and anxiety among the contending groups are so pronounced that the state stumbles and totters on the brink of disaster, almost headed for disintegration in a cycle of political violence, recrimination and war (Ake, 1982). The intensities or the frequencies of the above forces in African states affect the operationalization of democratization.

Under these circumstances, state-building is subverted and becomes the political equivalent of primitive accumulation ‘in a rather violent form’. It entails conquest and subjugation, since it is projected as arbitrary power. It revokes the autonomy of communities and subjects them to ‘alien rule’ within an otherwise independent political system: (i) by laying claim to the resources of subordinated territories and (ii) through its exertion of ‘legitimate force’ in counteracting resource wars and pro-democratic resistance. State-building in Africa thus assumes a rather

violent character as groups or social classes jostle for power and resources (Ake, 1997). He further argues that an understanding of the history, nature and character of the state is very important for capturing the dynamics of socio-economic formations, their configuration and transformation (including the democratization process and even post-electoral conflicts). And that the basic character of the state in Africa is that it has very limited autonomy. This means that the state is institutionally constituted in such a way that it enjoys limited independence from the social classes, particularly the hegemonic social class, and so, is immersed in the class struggle that goes on in the society which does have an overbearing influence on the democratization process of. According to Ake (2000:115-16):

For the most part, at independence, the colonial state was inherited by the indigenous elite rather than being liquidated or transformed. As was the case with the colonial state, the distinguishing characteristic of the post-colonial state in Africa is its lack of autonomy; power was highly fused and used by those in control of the state simply as the instrument for serving their own interests.

Ekekwe (1986:12) notes that “the distinction between states in advanced capitalist societies and those in post-colonial formations is that whereas the state in the former functions to maintain the economic and social relations under which bourgeois accumulation takes place (democracy) in the later, factors which have to do with the level of development of productive forces make the state direct instrument of capital accumulation for the dominant class or its elements.

From the above submissions, it can be stated that the neo-Marxian theory of post-colonial state is relevant in interrogating democratization and post-electoral violence as both variables are implants of neo colonialism. In recent time, this theoretical framework has been used by scholars like Arowosegbe (2001), Oladipupo (2011), Ugwu & Chukwuma (2013), among others, to investigate political phenomenon like democracy, ethnicity, poverty, underdevelopment, good governance conflict, among others. Therefore, this theory is not only in vogue but also relevant in the examination of germane issues like democratization and post-electoral violence.

Application of the Theory

The linkages between democratization and post-electoral violence are better explained in the light of neo-Marxian theory of post-colonial state. This framework unravels the hidden relation that accounts for the difference in democratization and post-electoral violence in Nigeria and Ghana. The importance of this approach in interrogating democratization and post-electoral violence in both countries lies in the following. First, this theory enables us to go beyond analyses whose account are limited to the features, origin, types and potentials of democratization and post-electoral violence. The theory mirrors vividly the actual state of democratization between Nigeria and Ghana because it is the nature and character of the Nigerian and

Ghanaian states that ultimately encourages post-electoral violence. Although both states are post-colonial states, however, there exist a difference in the nature and character of both states.

Unfortunately, the nature and character of the Nigerian state typifies this ugly picture yet finds it difficult to cross the hurdle. Alluding to this, Onyeoziri (2005) reiterated how the characters of the Nigerian state, especially its authoritarian and Unitarian tendencies discourage the practice of good governance. For instance, according to Oladipupo (2011) statement credited to former President Olusegun Obasanjo, that the 2007 General Elections were going to be a do-or-die affair for the ruling party, is unimaginable and detrimental to transparent leadership succession. Little wonder, Onyeoziri opined that when the institutions of the state are too weak to enforce fairness, justice and the rule of law, thus allowing crude power politics to reign, then, there is no end in sight yet as far as electoral misfortune is concerned. This weakness disallows the state from thriving, democratically. The major headache is located in crude electoral processes which is a reflection of the character of the Nigerian state. Unlike Ghana, the Nigerian situation is aptly captured by Isa & Arowosegbe (2002) as cited in Ugwu & Chukwuma (2013:235) when they note that:

Since independence era, the Nigerian state has been undergoing several forms of crisis and conflict situations-both political and socio-economic. Others equally abound which are ethno-religious dimensions. At different points under postcolonial arrangement and under various regimes (and/or administrations), these situations have severally tempted the total paralysis of Nigeria federal structure and the weakening of its democratic spirits. In particular, contemporary Nigeria is replete with division of her people along various ethnic and religious constituencies.

The above scenario is different in Ghana; though sharing similar historical and socio-cultural experiences of colonialism, ethnicity and religious division with Nigeria yet is free from ethno-religious and even threatening political crisis (Buchberger, 2011). According to Buchberger, Ghana is way ahead of its West African neighbors in terms of democratization. He noted that:

Since the introduction of the 1992 constitution, Ghana has made constant progress towards the consolidation of its democracy. After the re-introduction of multi-party democracy, the ratings for Ghana's political system constantly rose and have remained high on an almost perfect level for the last decade (Freedom House 2011). Also political scientists see Ghana on a good path towards democratization, although some challenges remain (Abdulai, Crawford 2010). Especially in contrast to the last elections in neighboring Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria, Ghana stands

out with its set of five consecutive peaceful and successful parliamentary and presidential elections. While the first two still had some flaws, their quality constantly improved over time and still continues to be improved. Although the last elections came very close and highly contested, they still remained peaceful and led to broadly accepted results (Buchberger, 2011:2).

The reason for this two contrasting scenario between both countries in terms of democratization is tied to the differences in the Nature and character of both states. The Nigeria states suffers from predatory, parasitic and non-productive ruling class who see politics as a zero sum game and at such strongly possess a winner takes all mentality (Oladipupo, 2011). The concept of Godfatherism, weak opposition, rigging of election, cross-carpeting and defection are well pronounced and documented in Nigeria more than in Ghana and these are attributed to the high premium placed on capturing state power in Nigeria (Omeiza, 2009). Secondly, this theory refocuses, realigns and engineers a paradigm shift from mere examination of the democratization process in both countries and post- electoral violence to the nature and character of the state as a determinant factor in both variables. Therefore, this theory examines the missing link between democratization and post-electoral violence in both countries and brings to fore what accounts for the differences in post-electoral violence. Lastly, this theory studies the democratization/ post-electoral violence on one hand and the state in dialectical manner, in which the very nature and character of the state affects both variables. The term 'dialectical' emphasizes that one shapes the other in a simultaneous and continuous process of constant action and reaction, even within the unequal power relations between the post-colonial state and democratization/post- electoral violence.

Empirical Verification

Electoral Mal-practice and Occurrence of Protest and Riots

Elections are instruments of democracy; they are instrumental in linking the preferences of citizens to the behaviour of policymakers (Powell 2000). In short, peaceful, competitive and periodic elections are one of the tenets of democratization. Although the criterion of peaceful, periodic and competitive elections as a yardstick for democratic consolidation has being attacked from many flanks by scholars like Diamond (1996), Bratton & Van der Walle (1997), Rose & Shin, (2001), among others. For Diamond (1996:3) 'in many of the world's new democracies (Nigeria and Ghana), competitive elections have not ensured liberty, responsiveness and the rule of law' while Rose & Shin (2001:23) opines that 'institutionalizing electoral competition is not sufficient for democratization'. Despite the correctness of their assertions, dismissing peaceful, competitive and periodic elections as a strong force because to a very large extent, it plays a vital role in the process of democratization.

According to Orji & Uzoadi (2012) elections involve a set of activities leading to the selection of one or more persons out of many to serve in positions of

authority in a society. The process of democratization provides the citizens the power of choice through elections to politically decide who governs them and also influence governmental policies. It is correct to posit that through elections also, a democratic system gives sovereignty to the citizens to take total control of forces that will determine their welfare. Yet elections in Africa are characterized by mal-practices which includes but restricted to padding of voters register with invented names, creating more polling units to favour a particular candidate, banning of a political opponents, among others. And this has led to protest and riots. Electoral mal-practice has been noted to be an enduring feature of democratization in Africa, a major cause of riots and protest which is a form of electoral violence. Most post-election violence are precipitated by the occurrence of electoral mal-practice. The socio-economic and political make up of African states, particularly, their colonial origins can provide a window to understanding why Africa is prone and vulnerable to elections malpractice and disputes (Brandt and Turner, 2003). There is sometimes a conscious attempt to deny the impact of colonialism and now neo-colonialism in certain events in Africa (Brandt and Turner, 2003). Elections cannot be one of them. Electoral politics in post-colonial African states is very much linked to the character of the post-colonial state as the basis for the primitive accumulation of capital and for amassing economic power and wealth (Chikwanha and Masunungure, 2007). In other words, the character of the post-colonial African state encouraged a winner takes all mentality to competitive electoral politics and by extension, the violation of the rules of democratic engagement, particularly political succession.

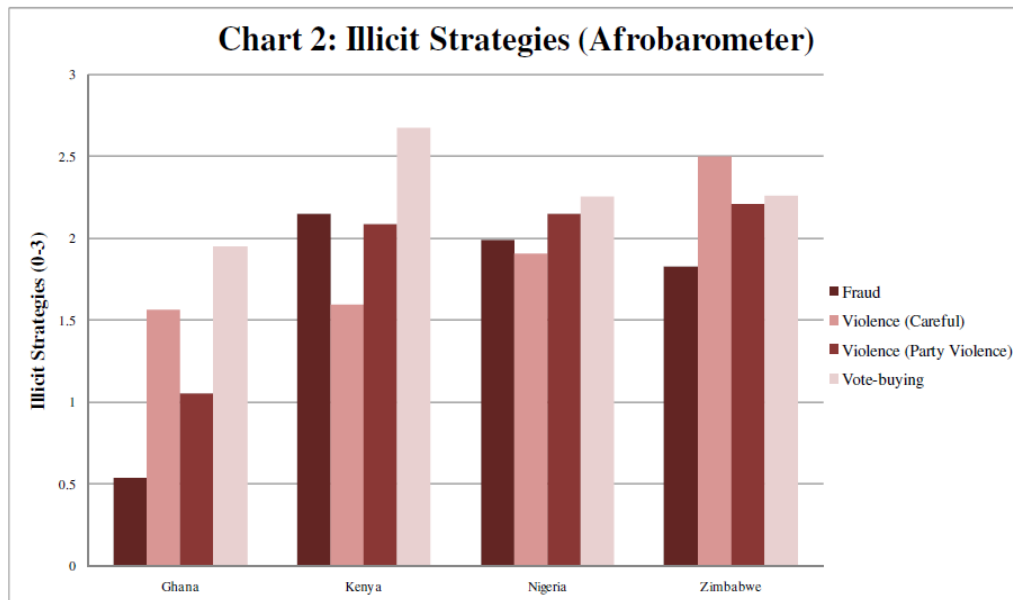
In Nigeria, since the start of the current wave of democratization in 1999, no elections have come and gone without being marred with some form of electoral mal-practice. From 2003-2011, three general elections have being conducted and there were allegations of electoral-mal-practice. The 2003 and 2007 elections were particularly marked by dissatisfaction of candidates, voters and observers (Ibrahim and Ibeanu 2009). Dissatisfaction with the 2003, 2007 and 2011 general elections reflected in the barrage of litigations brought before the election tribunals and courts as well as the number of election results that were nullified. Over 1,250 petitions were brought before the electoral tribunal (INEC, 2007, Ugochukwu, 2009, Fabiyi, 2011). The electoral process has been crises-ridden since 1999. It seems each successive election since then has been worse than earlier ones. The 2003 general election that got President Olusegun Obasanjo re-elected was marred by fraud and violence which prompted the runner-up, retired General Muhammadu Buhari, the presidential candidate of the now defunct All Nigeria People's Party to challenge Obasanjo's victory in court. After President Obasanjo's failed attempt at amending the constitution to get a third term in 2006, he influenced the outcome of 2007 elections through electoral fraud and violence (Freedom House, 2008).

The result is that governments emerge with a baggage of crises of legitimacy, which often complicates the dynamics of federalism. This was what happened after the 2003, 2007, 2011. Electoral mal-practice such as massive organized fraud do engender violent upheaval, before, during and after elections and also when an unpopular candidate is declared the winner of election, riots and protest always

greeted such announcement in Nigeria. To be specific, the announcement of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan as the winner of the 2011 general elections led to massive protest and riots in northern Nigeria where he was so unpopular. Ironically, The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) opines that Nigeria’s 2011 election is arguably the best run since the beginning of the fourth Republic. This assertion is however, likely to be hotly contested by some, especially against the backdrop of the violence that engulfed parts of the country in the aftermath of the 18th April 2011 presidential elections, because according to the Human Rights Watch Reports (2011), not less than 800 persons were killed, more than 65,000 others misplaced and over 350 churches either burnt or destroyed in the violence that proceeded the announcement of the 2011 general elections in Nigeria.

Ghana, on the other hand, from 2003-2012, has conducted three elections that have consistently improved on their fraud and violent free record. According to Amankwaah (2012) the level of electoral mal-practice in Ghana’s electoral process has reduced with each election. The adherence to the constitution by President Kufour not to cling to power after the expiration of his tenure in 2003 and the alternation of power between NPP and NDC, the two main political parties in Ghana speak volume about the nationalist and patriotic nature and character of politicians in Ghana (Freedom House, 2013). This view about Nigeria and Ghana is in tandem with the findings of a survey carried out by Afrobarometer in 2008 involving four (4) countries on illicit strategies employed to win elections.

Figure 4.1: A Perception about Electoral Malpractice in Selected African States



Source: Afrobarometer (2008).

The above chart, Nigeria scored more than Ghana on countries where dubious techniques are employed to win elections. Nigeria surpassed Ghana on all variables used in the study with a relatively high score and this confirms the assertion that electoral manipulation and violence are widespread in Nigeria than in Ghana which is a result of the high premium Nigeria ruling class placed on capturing state powers through elections.

Ghana too has witnessed pockets of electoral violence because according to Frempong (2008), in 2004 election in Ghana, there were episodes of violence in Tamale, the Northern Regional capital. The arrest and subsequent death in military custody of Alhaji Mobila, the Regional Chairman of the Convention People's Party (CPP) was perhaps the darkest spot in the 2004 elections. There were also incidents of attacks on electoral officers and the burning of ballot materials as well. However, other than that, the election was peaceful, the 2008 general election received world commendations and praise because it was not marred by much violence and witnessed the transition of power to the opposition party. Like-wise the 2012 general elections that was far peaceful than any previously conducted elections in Ghana (Amankwaah, 2013). The above assertion is not that the elections in Ghana did not witness electoral violence but that it was not widespread because there were bits and pieces of electoral violence unlike Nigerian elections that witnessed widespread electoral violence.

The above difference between Nigeria and Ghana lies in the nature and character of both states. While Nigerian politicians are neck bent on retaining their seats or handing over to their party bearers, using all means possible, hence the crude nature of electioneering in Nigeria. Therefore, it remains a predatory and parasitic state one that exists for the oppression and the exploitation of its own people. The crude nature of electioneering politics in Nigeria typifies the nature and character of post-colonial states where by much emphases is placed on the compulsive urge to acquire, consolidate and demonstrate state power over people and development. Given the authoritarian, absolutist, intensely hegemonic and comprehensively intrusive and totalizing character of the post-colonial state (Young 1992:39), it seeks total domination and control of the socio-economic and political space (Harbeson 1992:287), and public realm and is unwilling to share the space with any competing interest. To this end, the high presence of electoral mal-practice transmuted to protests and riots. While Ghanaian politicians are to a very large extent, nationalistic and patriotic, therefore, most political contest in the form of elections are not always belligerent. Hence, the low occurrence of electoral mal-practice that can induce protest and riots.

Weak Democratic Institutions and Political Kidnappings and Assassinations

The rising electoral violence in Africa, including its changing form and character, may not be unconnected with the neo-patrimonial character of the African state, the nature of contestation for power, the shadows of military cum authoritarian overhangs over the democratization process, and the weak institutionalization of democratic architectures, including the economic foundations of the democratization

process, political parties and electoral management bodies (EMBs) (Omotola, 2008). Most of the democratic institutions in Africa are known to be weak. In fact, institutional weakness is a recurring decimal in African politics, particularly in the process of democratization. In this context, Elklit and Reynolds (2002) posited that the extent to which political actors see the entire electoral process as legitimate and binding is a strong indices in the process of democratisation. However, most democratic institutions such as judiciary, political parties, electoral bodies and even the fourth estate which is the mass media are not exempted from the ever reaching and over bearing influence of the states. Hence, they are structural weak, political parties, for instance, are bereft of ideologies. In this context, Omotola (2009:2) argued that:

Despite all pretences to the contrary through their manifestoes, as much as the superficial classifications as the “left” and “right”, “progressive” and “conservative” parties, Nigerian parties seem to be bereft of clear ideological commitments. This is predicated upon the relegation of politics of issues to the background across the various republics, and in its place the ascendancy of identity and money politics. Other factors include the rising magnitude of political vagrancy on the basis of selfish and parochial interests, the high level of party indiscipline, absence/weakness of party cohesion and internal democracy, and the high mortality and turnover of party leadership.

Nigerian political parties no doubt are institutionally and structurally weak. Party politics are characterized by constant and violent contestation, hence, the high level of political threats, kidnappings and assassinations in the country. The table below shows the names of prominent Nigerian politicians that have been killed since the return to democracy.

Table 4.1: Examples of Politicians and Public Figures Assassinated in Nigeria

NAMES	YEAR
Bola Ige	2003
Harry Marshall	2003
Funsho Williams	2011
Depo Dinor	2010
Ogbonnaya Uche	2003
Amina Sorai Dokunbo	2004
Andrew Agon	2004
Ayo Daramola	2006
Charles Nsiegbe	2009
Ayo Omorogbe	2010

Source: Compiled and Arranged by the Author (2015)

The killers of the above named politicians have not been convicted, at best, suspects were taken to court and granted bail. Some of the suspects even went ahead to contest elections and even got political appointments. Political parties particularly in Nigeria are everything but democratic. They have lacked not just foundational features of democratic norms but there are profound absence of internal mechanisms, standardized rules and regulations for actual consultation and collective decision making. Therefore, Nigerian political parties are just platforms for personal, sectional, cliental and patronage struggles that and interests that are makers of the nature and character of post-colonial states. These set of parties lack a strong directive, controlling, disciplinary and unifying core that holds together (Omotola 2009:612). This is not peculiar to Nigeria but is common in most third wave democracies. The intimidation and even the assassination of political opponents of the same party or other political parties are rife in African politics. However, political assassination and threats is more common in Nigeria than in Ghana.

In Ghana, democratic institutions are to some extent, strong and institutionalized within the African context. Most of their democratic institutions over the years have internalized democratic tenets that have made them strong and buoyant to democratic shocks and upheavals. Political parties in Ghana are ideological oriented and guided. The National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), two major political parties over the years dominated competitive politics in Ghana. The competitive behaviour is relatively free of the kinds of high-intensity violence that has characterized multi-party elections in some parts of Africa. They are ideologically driven and anchored. In this context, Elischer (2008:191) noted that:

All major Ghanaian political actors have displayed allegiance to distinct political ideologies. The NPP has, from its inception, regarded itself as a follower of the Danquah-Busia tradition, a Ghanaian political strand of thinking favouring the free market and individual enterprise... There are growing tendencies within the NDC to incorporate the principles of social democracy. On various occasions NDC leaders have condemned the NPP's concept of 'property owning democracy' as creating social exclusion.

Nevertheless, the country has recorded localized ethno-political violence in which activists of the main parties clashed yet only one or two cases of high profile politicians were killed. A notable case was the death of Alhaji Mobila, the Regional Chairman of the Convention People's Party (CPP). Though he was not assassinated but died in Military custody however, it casted shadows on the 2004 general elections in Ghana.

The difference in the number of political deaths in Nigeria and Ghana lies in the weakness of democratic institutions in Nigeria than in Ghana. While in Ghana, institutions such as political parties, electoral commission are to some extent

independent of the state. The influence of Jerry Rawlings in determining what goes on in NDC which he formed while in power has weaned over the years. Political leaders in Ghana to some extent do not place high premium in capturing state power and therefore democratic contest do not assume violent nature or character, unlike in Nigeria, where politics is seen as a do-or-die affair. Corroborating this view, Olaitan (2007) noted that nature and character of the Nigerian state which is defined by its lack of autonomy, the immensity of its power and its proneness to abuse that have permeated its politics, constitutes a road block to democracy. According to the then Chairman of INEC, Prof. Maurice Iwu, in a paper presentation in 2007, maintained that “political parties as they exist in Nigeria today can only bequeath grievance to the political process. The parties lack internal democracy, transparency and clear guiding principles.

Indeed the leading political parties are enmeshed in internal crisis with a high level of violence. The leadership of many of them simply see themselves as the party men and the laws they themselves made. Also, many political parties especially parties of the incumbent rely on electoral fraud rather than popularity to stay in power. Therefore the political significance of parties is no longer determined by popular support but by administrative fiat”. Describing the influence of incumbency in Nigerian elections, Nwokoye (2008) maintained that the ruling parties and in most cases the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) work very hard not to convince people to vote for their candidates, but work hard to see that they use police, army, thugs and even election officials to rig elections.

On this internecine political struggle, politicians rely on the state and not the electorate. Ghana provides a different story as far as free and fair elections is concerned. Speaking on the unbiased and conducive atmosphere provided by the then incumbent government in Ghana during the 2008 election which led to the free and fair elections, Mr. Ishmael Barrfi Baoteng (2009) maintained that: “the hero of these successful projects is President John Kufour who did not behave like most incumbent in Africa. He chose to be a statesman rather than a politician. Certainly, he would have asked the Electoral Commission (EC) boss to falsify the figures for his party like most Nigerian presidents would, but rather he said the elections in Ghana were not a ‘do-or-die’ affair”. In a related statement, the Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP), National Publicity Secretary, Mr. Osita Okechukwu (2009) said “you cannot forget the statesman like John Kufour in keeping his head above waters, refusing to manipulate the elections or allowing himself to be swayed in the face of his party’s defeat”. Ghanaians equally had their own challenges during their primaries. Some people even left their parties to contest as independent candidates but by and large it is not as we have it in Nigeria. To a large extent, their primaries were well conducted; they did not have a situation where somebody would sit in the sitting room and say this is the person that must run and no other person. They had open primaries where people won based on their popularity.

Ethno/Religious Voting and Destruction of Lives and Properties

Ethnicity has characterized African politics, most if not all political parties in Africa are either ethnically disposed or religiously oriented. Hence, the violent character of African politics. This above is due to the cultural and colonial make up of most African states. The preponderance of this party type can be explained by the specific political and social cleavage structure of most African states (Erdmann, 2007). Ethnicity it has been argued (Ake, 1993) is not a bad thing, however it is the politicization of ethnicity or the ethnicization of politics by desperate politicians seeking to capture state power and appropriate state wealth. However, Nigeria and Ghana have the same socio-cultural, economic and political history as regards regional, ethnic and religious dichotomies that have manifested virulently in both states. Nigeria is politically divided into southern and northern region, populated by over 300 diverse ethnic groups that are also divided on religious affiliations with Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion being the three main religions. Also, Ghana is politically divided into Southern and Northern region, with over 100 recorded ethnic groups with Akan, Mole-Dagbon and Ewe constituting the three major ethnic groups, also, the population is divided along religious lines and it is between Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion (USAID- Ghana, 2013; USAID-Nigeria, 2013).

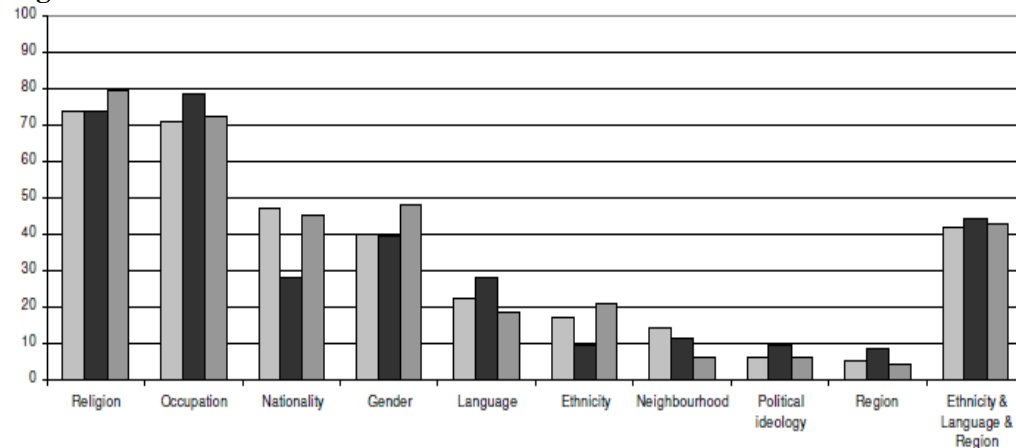
However, Nigerian political parties are ethnically, religiously or regionally manipulative. That's largely manipulating ethnicity to acquire power. Even the People's Democratic Party (PDP) can be said to be a broad based political party, yet it has the penchant of manipulating ethno religious identities. For example, the 2011 general elections, particularly the presidential election was regionalized, ethnicized and religiously induced. The other major political parties are not broad based given their strengths among some particularly regions, ethnic groups and religion. The All Progress Congress (APC) is seen as a Muslim party and is also regarded as anti-Igbo given the few Igbo leaders in the party and its lack of institutionalized structures in the south east when compared to other major ethnic groups and regions like the Hausa and Yoruba's and south west and northern Nigeria respectively. The All Peoples Grand Alliance Party is seen as a Christian party and also an Igbo party because of its structures only in the south eastern part of Nigeria. These have led to veracious forms of ethno/religious violence in Nigeria and it is rooted in the politics of who get what, when and how.

Ghana despite having litany of ethnic groups have strived to institutionalized political parties that are nationalistic in nature and character inter and inner party rivalry are not coloured with ethno/religious sentiment. According to Elischer (2009) inner-party rivalry is driven by different conceptions about the future direction of the party, a debate, which is linked to different party leaders. As in the NPP ethnicity neither divides the NDC nor do the major party factions coincide with ethnicity. This is not to rule out the overreaching influence of ethnicity in Ghana because it is a constant feature of African politics; however, the dynamics and manifestations of ethnicity have not been manipulated like the case of Nigeria to acquire, disrupt, demonstrate and consolidate power. Focusing on Ghana, Whitfield (2009) noted that

intra and inner party competitions have increased during each election with rise in the percentage of votes recorded by parties in regions that are not their stronghold. Ethnicity is important, but it is not the only variable that matters in Ghana democratic consolidation. One important factor that contributes to the success of Ghanaian elections in the period under review is the ‘Ghanaian factor’. The Ghanaian factor typifies a deep sense of patriotism to national symbols, including democracy and its institutions. This partly informs an amazing sense of belief in the power of the votes. An average Ghanaian believes in the *kokromatie* power, an *Akan* word meaning the power of the thumb. This belief in the power of their votes, in a sense, amounts to the passing of a vote of confidence on the EC and other core actors/stakeholders in the electoral process. It also explains the high level of participation in the electoral process, measured in terms of quality and quantity (Agyeman-Duah, 2005).

Despite growing economic disaffection, Ghanaians still see democracy as the best form of government for the protection of their civil liberties. Ghana, also alluded to this strong belief and trust in the power of the thumb by Ghanaians is the optimism which has been partly attributed to the possibility of power alternation inherent in a democratic system, allowing the people to pass judgment on the party in power in the last four years preceding the election (Gyimah-Boadi, 2002).

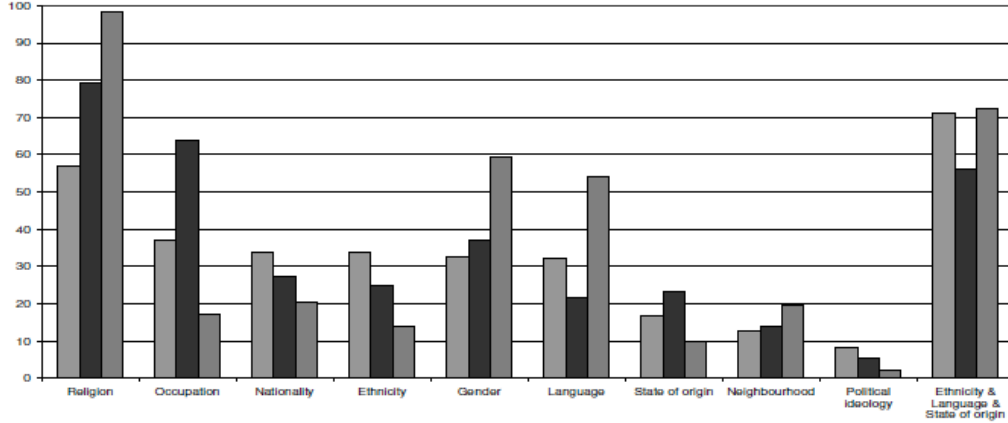
Figure 4.2: Forms and Levels of Self-identification in Ghana



Source: Center for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (2007:210).

From the above, religion and occupation is the most important form of self-identification in Ghana. While ethnicity, region and language ranked among the least form of self-identification in Ghana. The reverse is the case where religion and ethnicity are the most important forms of self-identification in Nigeria. The chart below represents the forms of self-identification in Nigeria.

Figure 4.3: Forms and Levels of Self-identification in Nigeria

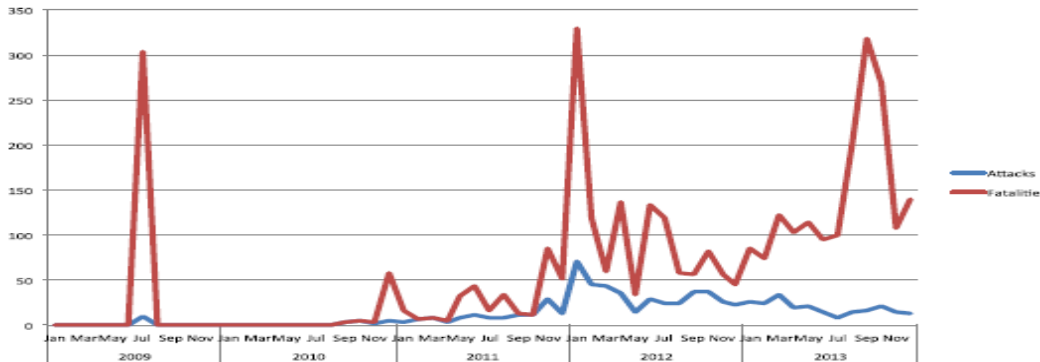


Source: Center for Research on Inequality, Human security and Ethnicity (2007:216).

From the above, religion, ethnicity, language and state of origin are the most important forms of Self-identification. Hence the high level of their manipulation and manifestations in Nigerian party politics by power drunk politicians. Most political parties manipulate the high level of ethnic and religious identification in Nigeria to capture state power. Ethnic and religious inclinations influence who gets what in Nigeria; it is so central and seems to perpetuate the virulent conflict witnessed in the Nigerian state.

This does not presuppose that the dynamics of ethno-religious cleavages does not manifest in Ghana yet Ghana has not witnessed widespread ethno-religious conflicts. Nigeria on the other hand is a hot bed or cease pool of ethno-religious violence that have political undertones. The Boko Haram crisis that has killed over six thousand Nigerians is enmeshed in ethno-religious (Onuoha, 2014) sentiment whipped up by desperate politicians in north eastern Nigeria. The graph below shows the attacks and fatalities of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, 2009-2013.

Figure 4.4: Boko Haram Attacks and Fatalities, by Month since 2009-2013



Source: Onuoha (2014)

From the above figure, the attacks over time have become more fatal because from 2011 to 2013, the extent of violence and destruction that has been associated with the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has been horrific. It is estimated that since 2009, the conflict has killed over 7,000 people and caused destruction of invaluable amount of public and private property, and leaving over 650,000 displaced persons in north-eastern Nigeria (Human Rights Watch, 2014). There is unanimity amongst writers that the political culture of Nigeria is characterized by the ethnicity, illiteracy, poverty, violence and corruption. In an article titled: *Nigerian Electoral Challenge: What is to Blamed, the Ballot Box, or the Political Culture?* Okafor (2006) maintained that “while one acknowledges that there is no perfect political culture anywhere, one is also constrained to say that the ills associated with past elections in Nigeria were due more significant defects in the political culture than to the instrument employed in the voting system”.

Attributing the Nigerian failed elections to poor political culture, Ibrahim (2007) maintained that “the reason for failure was that Nigerian political parties and most of the political class have an antidemocratic political culture”. Yusha’u (2007) argued that the “Nigerian political culture is a juxtaposition of skepticism, ethnic, regional and religious loyalty”. The skepticism according to him is in the lack of hope on political office holders. Political leaders are seen as opportunists who use the state as a means of enriching themselves. Nigerian electorates have typically been marred by distrust, apathy and violence that have resulted in losses of lives and properties and untimely increased in the odds against the establishment of democracy and democratic project that they claim to engage in.

While the political culture in Ghana is underscored by a high level of voters and civic education, a pro-active media and a functional democratic environment that provides a congenial atmosphere for free and fair elections. Section 231 of the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana provides for the establishment of National Commission for Civic Education, whose duty is partly to encourage citizens to participate in the political process including elections. The Carter Centre noted that Ghana enjoys a vibrant civil society including churches and other religious organizations which provided a variety of pro-election voter education programmes and pro-peace initiative that has a genuine impact on the electoral process. They further maintained that Ghana enjoys a diverse and pluralistic media environment that allows voter to receive a variety of view points and political perspective.

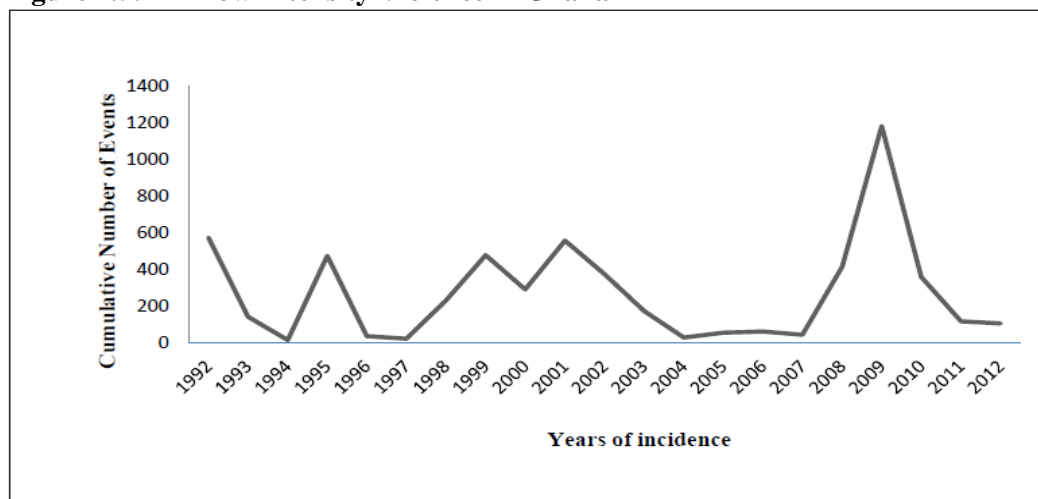
Similarly, in a book titled: *The Press and Political Culture in Ghana* by Jennifer Hasty (2006), “Ghanaians are said to be very inclined to news and thus well informed on the political happenings: wake up in your house any morning in the bustling Ghanaian capital of Accra, you are immediately drawn into the local discourse of news, whether you walk, take a taxi, or ride the bus to work, someone around you is reading, listening or discussing the news, usually adding context and commentary and inviting your participation. Once read, a newspaper is never thrown away but passed around for others to read, reaching as many ten readers who may relay that news to a network of hundreds”. The Ghanaian electorate, the electoral

commission, the judiciary and all other institutions of the state by their various conducts put the nation first before other considerations.

According to Ojo (2000), “the Nigerian electorate have their own share of the blame for the problems in Nigerian elections, “they are inactive and acquiesce to manipulation and exploitations in the hands of their leaders”. He further maintained that no reform and definitely no change can take place in Nigeria if we do not change the mindset of the average Nigerian.

The situation is quite different in Ghana. Ghana electorate recognized that their votes could make a huge difference in their social and economic lives; they queued in the sun for hours, were vigilant and stock around to ensure that their votes were counted in their presence. Ghanaians insistence on voting the right people into power has given birth to a phenomenon called **skirt** and **blouse** voting in Ghana, a situation where party supporters vote against their party, when a national or regional candidate is perceived to be of poor quality”, Obanikoro (2009). Voters showed considerably sophistication with many splitting their ticket between presidential and parliamentary races called skirt and blouse voting. The level of either ethnic motivated or religious motivated killings masterminded by politicians is relatively low. Most political violence in Ghana is of low intensities and not ethno-religious oriented (Bob-Millar, 2014). Bob-Millar (2014) noted that low-intensity electoral violence as election-related disturbances or infractions occurring during the pre-vote and post-vote periods in which there are no more than ten election-related deaths; violence is localized; and, there is no large-scale displacement of human beings and dispossession of assets and these has been the recurring decimal in Ghana elections. This was confirmed by the graph shown below.

Figure 4.5: Low Intensity Violence in Ghana



Source: Bob-Millar (2014:138)

The above figures illustrate the cumulated number of incidences in Ghana and the occurrence and the intensity of violence to coincide with crucial national elections. However, lives lost through these incidences have not reached 200. Though there are pockets of ethnic crises like the Fantes and Ewes clash in 2012 but it was put to stop by government (Mahama, 2013). However, the difference in the genesis and exacerbation of such violent conflicts in Nigeria is rooted in the struggle for socio-economic wellbeing among various groups manipulated by the ruling class. And this violent struggle is rooted in the nature and character of the Nigerian state. From the foregoing analysis, the research question which state “Do mode of democratization accounted for the different levels of post-electoral violence in Nigeria and Ghana” has been validated.

Conclusion

In this study, we have investigated democratization and post-election violence in Nigeria and Ghana. The study ascertained whether the mode of democratization accounted for the different levels of post-election violence in Nigeria and Ghana.

The study noted that difference in the level of electoral mal-practice in both countries is responsible for the dissimilarities in the occurrence of protests and riots. Also, most democratic institutions in Nigeria are not institutionalized unlike in their counterpart in Ghana, hence the high rate of political kidnappings and assassinations in Nigeria than in Ghana. And lastly, occurrence of Ethno/religious voting pattern more in Nigeria than in Ghana is a key factor to explaining why Nigeria experience more ethno-religious violence than Ghana. To a very large extent, this is attributable to the nature and character of the Nigerian state which is parasitic and predatory unlike their counterpart in Ghana.

Recommendations

In the light of the above findings of the study, the following recommendations are put forward to the policy makers in Nigeria and Ghana for implementation by states (judiciary legislative and executive) government, donor agencies, researchers, stakeholders and civil society organizations:

- If democratization entails a broadening of political space, an expansion of political participations for political mobilization and the establishment of credible processes and institutions that allow for change or renewal of political leadership through elections (Famunyaoh, 2001:42-43), then the PDP led government have consecutively failed to uphold any of these tents as discussed above, therefore the practice in Nigeria is far from being synonymous with democracy.
- Party politics in both countries (Ghana and Nigeria) should be practice in accordance with the major tenet and guidelines stipulated as basic reasons and conditions for setting up political parties. Politicians and political parties are therefore enjoined to seriously consider and insist that the purpose and functions for which political parties are instituted should be strictly followed to the later. These very salient steps, in the opinion of this paper, will seriously aid in enshrining lasting democratic

systems in both countries and Nigeria in particular. Good governance is essential to achieve development while true participatory democracy ensures that development is equitable and sustainable.

- Public institutions need to be able to manage public resources and conduct public affairs in a manner that is free of corruption and abuse that upholds the rule of law and that protects and promote the realization of people right. The true meaning of good governance is the ability of government to realize people human rights and deliver sustainable and equitable development.
- Nigerian politicians should not see politics as a do-or-die. They should not resort to group or ethnic cleavages to heat up the polity. Their Ghanaian counterparts are worthy examples who times without numbers have placed the state above personal interest.
- The Ghanaian government despite recorded democratic achievement should be careful and watchful against democratic rollback as regards the proclivity of politicians to manipulate ethnic and religious cleavages in order to acquire, consolidate and demonstrate power.
- The first and the second wave of democratization in Ghana coupled with the heated ethno religious conflicts in neighbouring countries should always serve as a constant reminder to politicians who want to toe that path.
- Democratic institutions should be strengthened in both countries, particularly in Nigeria, where political parties, INEC, among others are besieged by structural and institutional weaknesses.

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