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Full Length Research Paper

Democratization and armed conflicts in post-cold war Africa (1989-2012)

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The coming of the "Third Wave of democratization" to Africa in the late 1980s and early 1990s coincided with the dramatic increase of armed conflicts on the continent. The purpose of this study is to revisit the connection between democratization and occurrence of armed conflicts, and to address specifically the following questions: To what extent has Africa been democratized since the end of the Cold War? To what extent could the democratization process contribute to the increase of armed conflicts on the continent? And under what conditions could a democratization process lead to an armed conflict? This study finds that the democratization since the end of the Cold War has been limited in space and depth in Africa, and could not be considered the major factor that led to the increase of armed conflicts on the continent. Nevertheless, in the context of democratization, an armed conflict could break out under the following conditions: overlapping social cleavages, incomplete democratization, mobilization of armed groups (or militia), and intense power struggle among political leaders or groups.

Key words: Africa, democratization, armed conflicts, Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, Guinea-Bissau.

INTRODUCTION

According to Samuel Huntington, the "Third Wave of democratization in the modern world began, implausibly and unwittingly, at twenty-five minutes after mid-night, April 25, 1974, in Lisbon, Portugal, when a radio station played the song 'Grandola Vila Morena' (Huntington, 1991). Since then, this powerful wave swept many other countries all over the world. As a result, the number of democratic countries around the world jumped from 44 in 1974 to 65 in 1990 (Freedom House 2013c). It was oscillating between 85 and 88 at the end of the 20th century, before stabilizing around 89 since 2005 (Freedom House, 2013c). However, it was only at the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s that this "Third

Wave of democratization" started to shake seriously the foundation of the African dictatorial regimes. The end of the Cold War, which brought to an end the rivalry between the two superpowers and their shameless supports to dictatorial allies in Africa, helps explain why some of the African dictators were driven out of power. Additionally, the pressures from the African peoples themselves and the new conditionality imposed by the international donors (which included democratization, respect of human rights, rule of law, etc.), constrained the most reluctantly of them to embrace some forms of democracy. Consequently, the number of democratic regimes on the continent slowly moved from two in 1989

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to nine in 1996, before reaching the plateau of11 in 2003. (Freedom House, 2013a). Nevertheless, the coming of the "Third Wave of democratization" to Africa coincided also with the dramatic increase of armed conflicts on the continent. Thus, according to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) and the International Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), the number of armed conflicts in Africa rose from 12 in 1989 to 17 in 1991, which means that one out of three African countries was involved in some type armed conflicts (from minor conflicts to full scale civil wars) by the early 1990s (Themnér and Wallensteen, 2013). It was only in 2005 that the number of armed conflicts went down to seven, after oscillating between 10 and 17 since the end of the Cold War. It is also worth noting that the great majority of the post-Cold War armed conflicts in Africa and around the world were intrastate conflicts (including the most deadly civil wars in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo).

Given this coincidence between the "Third Wave of democratization" and the increase of armed conflicts, many scholars and simple observers were quick to establish a causal relationship between the two phenomena. Mansfield and Snyder were among the first to claim that while democratic countries would be generally peaceful (following the so-called "democratic peace theory"), the transition to democracy (or democratization) could be dangerous and could lead to bloody interstate and intrastate armed conflicts (Mansfield and Snyder 1995; Mansfield and Snyder 2002; Mansfield and Snyder 2005; Snyder, 2000). Since then, some scholars assumed that there was a consensus about the danger of democratization, while others argued that such consensus did not exist (Daxecker 2007; Hegre and Sambanis 2006).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concerning the causes of armed conflicts in general (either interstate or intrastate), scholars are divided not only between those who use quantitative methods based on large number of cases, and those who use qualitative methods based on small number of cases; but also between those who emphasize the feasibility (or opportunity) factors of armed conflicts, and those who underscore the motivations (or grievances) factors. In recent years, the field of research on armed conflicts has been dominated by scholars who used quantitative methods and emphasized the feasibility factors. Among these scholars, Paul Collier and his associates, including Anke Hoeffler and Nicolas Sambanis, produced a large body of literature on the feasibility of civil war, and particularly on the so-called "greed theory." (Collier and Hoeffler 2000; Collier and Hoeffler 1998; Collier et al. 2008; Collier and Sambanis, 2002; Collier and Sambanis (eds) 2005). According to this theory, opportunities for primary commodity predation (looting or smuggling) by rebel groups in any given country would cause a civil war

(or rebellion against the incumbent government) in that country (Collier and Hoeffler 2000; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004).

Different scholars have been critical of the methods used by Paul Collier and his associates, along with the results they obtained on the feasibility aspects of armed conflicts (Boas and Dunn 2007; Fearon 2005; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Ratsimbaharison H 2011). Particularly, in revisiting the greed theory, the author of this study reached the following conclusion: "Although the greed theory may be based on some statistical evidence, it does not provide a good explanation as to why many civil wars have occurred in Africa in the post–Cold War era. Moreover, it could not possibly help resolve the ongoing civil wars." (Ratsimbaharison, 2011).

Beyond greed and grievances, poverty and ethnicity (which may also include ethnic nationalism or ethnic rivalry) have been identified by many scholars as major factors or determinants of armed conflicts. (Baten and Mumme (n.d.); Brainard and Chollet, 2007; Draman, 2003; Rice et al., 2006). However, there is no agreement on how or under what conditions exactly these factors could lead to conflicts. For instance, Rasheed Draman argues that: "Poverty leads to conflict in direct and indirect ways. The direct ways include the psychological theories of frustration-aggression and relative deprivation; and the indirect factors include economic arguments that demonstrate that conflicts in Africa and most of the developing world are fuelled by greed rather than grievance" (Draman, 2003). For their part, Fearon and Laitin draw the following conclusion in their study on "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War":

We show that the current prevalence of internal war is mainly the result of a steady accumulation of protracted conflicts since the 1950s and 1960s rather than a sudden change associated with a new, post-Cold War international system. We also find that after controlling for per capita income, more ethnically or religiously diverse countries have been no more likely to experience significant civil violence in this period. We argue for understanding civil war in this period in terms of insurgency or rural guerrilla warfare, a particular form of military practice that can be harnessed to diverse political agendas. The factors that explain which countries have been at risk for civil war are not their ethnic or religious characteristics but rather the conditions that favor insurgency. These include poverty—which marks financially and bureaucratically weak states and also favors rebel recruitment—political instability, rough terrain, and large populations (Fearon and Laitin, 2003).

In general, democratization does not appear in the literature as a major cause of armed conflicts in Africa or elsewhere. However, following the works of Mansfield and Snyder, mentioned earlier (Mansfield and Snyder, 1995; Mansfield and Snyder, 2002; Mansfield and Snyder 2005; Snyder 2000), many other scholars also find that

democratization is to blame for some specific armed conflicts. Nevertheless, we have to recognize once again that there was no consensus on how or under what conditions exactly democratization could lead to armed conflicts. Among the conditions that would make democratization conducive to armed conflicts, some scholars point to the fact that the type of democratization, either complete or incomplete with reversals, could play an important role (Daxecker, 2007; Mansfield and Snyder, 2002). Particularly, Ursula Daxecker argues that:

No clear consensus has emerged on whether regime transition either increases or decreases conflict propensities. Employing a logit specification with splines and robust standard errors, this research analyzes the conflict behavior of transitioning states for the 1950—2000 period. The results indicate that `rocky' transitions or democratic reversals increase the likelihood of conflict occurrence (Daxecker, 2007).

Furthermore, others scholars argue that democratization *per se* may not be the problem, but democratization in combination with other factors or conditions, such as elections, ethnic nationalism, nationalist rhetoric, political uncertainty, etc (Cederman et al., 2013; Mansfield and Snyder, 2005; Savun and Tirone, 2011). Particularly, Lars Cederman and his coauthors draw the following conclusion in their study on "Elections and Ethnic Civil War":

Distinguishing between types of conflict and the order of competitive elections, the authors find that ethnic civil wars are more likely to erupt after competitive elections, especially after first and second elections following periods of no polling. When disaggregating to the level of individual ethnic groups and conflicts over territory or government, the authors find some support for the notion that ethno-nationalist mobilization and sore-loser effects provoke postelectoral violence. More specifically, although large groups in general are more likely to engage in governmental conflicts, they are especially likely to do so after noncompetitive elections. Competitive elections, however, strongly reduce the risk of conflict (Cederman et al., 2013).

In sum, the review of literature reveals that there is no consensus, neither on the causes of armed conflicts in general, nor on the connection between democratization and armed conflicts in particular.

Research questions

Given this ambiguous connection between democratization and armed conflicts in post-Cold War Africa, the purpose of this study is to address specifically the following questions:

1) To what extent has Africa been democratized since the end of the Cold War? and
2) To what extent could the processes of democratization contribute to the increase of armed conflicts on the continent?
3) Under what conditions could a process of democratization lead an armed conflict?

METHODOLOGY

In order to appropriately answer the above research questions, this study combines the analyses of quantitative and qualitative data on democratization and armed conflicts in post-Cold War Africa. Concerning the quantitative data, Freedom House's data on "freedom in the world" are used in connection with the data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) and the International Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), UCDP/PRIO, on armed conflicts (Freedom House, 2013b; Freedom House, 2013d; Themnér and Wallensteen, 2013).[1] These two datasets have been merged and recoded to capture the instances of political transitions (either to democracy or to autocracy) and armed conflicts based on country-year observations in the post-Cold War Africa.

In line with Freedom House's methodology, *democratization* which is also referred to as "transition to democracy," is simply defined in this study as a "process leading toward a more democratic regime." It is measured in terms of improvement of citizens' political rights and civil liberties, and classified into two types:[2]

1) A *full democratization*, when the status of the country moves, following Freedom House's terminology, from the status of "Not Free" (or autocratic) to "Free" (or liberal democracy), or from "Partly Free" (or electoral democracy) to "Free" (or liberal democracy).
2) A *partial democratization*, when there are improvements of the citizens' political rights and civil liberties without changing the status of the country to "Free" (or liberal democracy). In other words, in a partial democratization, the status of the country remains either "Not Free" or "Partly Free."

In connection with the data provided by UCDP/PRIO, which is also referred to as "UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset," *armed conflict* is defined as "a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths."[3] UCDP/PRIO's classification between minor conflicts (resulting in 25 to 999 battle-related deaths in a given year) and wars (resulting in at least 1,000 battle-related deaths in a given year) will not be taken into consideration in this study, since we are only interested in the occurrences of any type of armed conflict.

Concerning the qualitative data, we collected the narratives on selected cases of democratization followed by armed conflict. In the identification of the cases selected in this study, we took the following steps:

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[1] See Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), International Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) (2013a). UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset Codebook v.4-2013 (1946 – 2012). Uppsala, Norway Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), International Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) (2013b). UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset v.4-2013, 1946 – 2012. Uppsala, Norway.
[2] To understand how Freedom House's measurement of political rights, civil liberties and country status, see Freedom House (2013d). Freedom in the World 2013: Methodology - Summary. Washington, D.C.: Freedom House.
[3] Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), International Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) (2013a). UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset Codebook v.4-2013 (1946 – 2012). Uppsala, Norway.

Table 1. Frequencies of political transitions in post cold war Africa (1989-2012).

		F	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	No political transition	904	69.5	72.5	72.5
	Transition to democracy (democratization)	203	15.6	16.3	88.8
	Transition to autocracy (autocratization)	140	10.8	11.2	100.0
	Total	1247	95.9	100.0	
Missing	System	53	4.1		
Total		1300	100.0		

Valid Percent	72.5	16.3	11.2
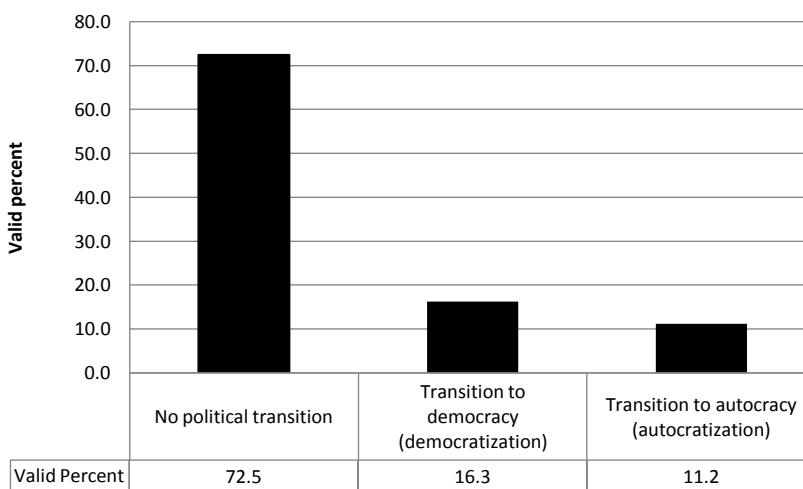
Figure 1. Political transition in post cold war Africa (1989-2012).

1) First, all instances of democratization followed by armed conflicts within five years have been automatically identified.[4] This procedure generated a list of 76 instances that have occurred in 25 countries.

2) Next, in order to be consistent with one of the most important rules of causation in social science, with stipulates that "a causal relationship exists [if, and only if,] the cause precedes the effect in time" (Babbie, 2007). All instances of democratization that have been preceded by any type of armed conflict or have occurred in the context of ongoing armed conflicts have been dropped. This procedure generated a final list of four countries, which are included in the comparative case study. These countries are: Algeria, Congo Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire.

In order to address the question of how the process of democratization could lead to armed conflicts, we undertook a comparative analysis of the above four cases, referring consistently to the narratives provided by *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia*, (Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP, 2013) and applying the method of "structured, focused comparison," championed by Alexander George and Andrew Bennett (George and Bennett 2005). It is worth noting that the application of this research method requires some consistency regarding the qualitative data (or narratives) we are comparing. This is why we consistently refer to

the qualitative data provided by *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia* which is one of the most rigorous and reliable research institutes in the identification and analyses of armed conflicts around the world. Indeed, according to its own website, "The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) has recorded ongoing violent conflicts since the 1970s. The data provided is one of the most accurate and well-used data-sources on global armed conflicts and its definition of armed conflict is becoming a standard in how conflicts are systematically defined and studied."

In addition to the method of "structured, focused comparison," the techniques of conflict analysis, suggested by Paul Wehr (Wehr, 1998) and Peter Harris and his associates, (Harris and Reilly, 1998) were also used in the comparative analysis. From these techniques, we determine that the most appropriate way to analyze qualitatively an armed conflict is to focus on the following conditions or factors: context of the conflict, actors (or parties) involved in the conflict, issues (or incompatibilities) involved in the conflict, and triggers (or direct causes) of the conflict.

FINDINGS

Statistical analysis

Africa has remained largely autocratic or "Not Free" (according to Freedom House's terminology) since the end of the Cold War. Indeed, as shown in Table 1 and Figure 1, based on country-year observations, 72.5% of

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[4] The time frame of 5 years following the transition to democracy seems to be reasonable to link the occurrence of armed conflict during that time period to the transition to democracy. We also noticed that other researchers are using the same time frame.

Table 2. Types of democratization in post-cold war Africa (1989-2012).

		F	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Full democratization	13	1.0	6.4	6.4
Valid	Partial or incomplete democratization	189	14.5	93.6	100.0
	Total	202	15.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1098	84.5		
Total		1300	100.0		
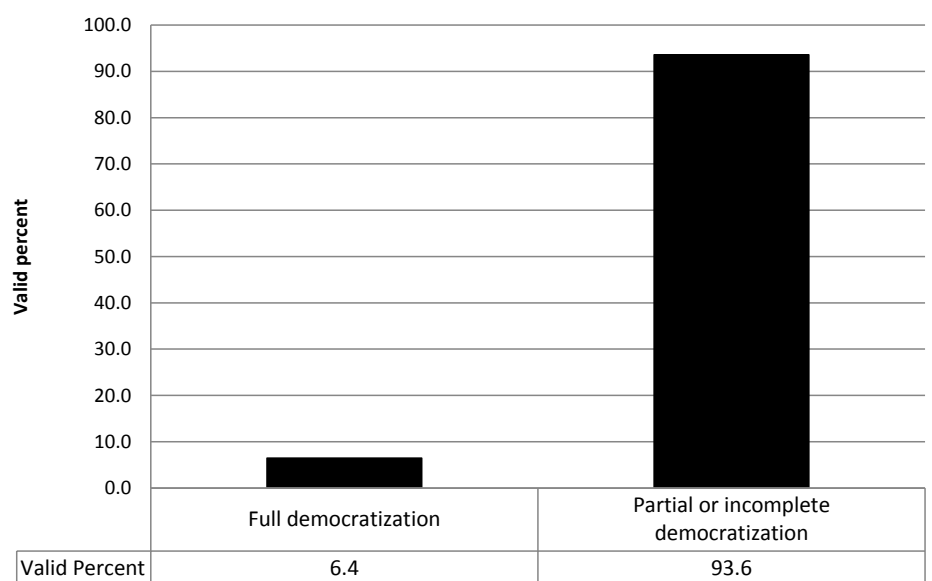
Figure 2. Types of democratization in post cold war Africa (1989-2012).

the time, there was no political transition throughout the continent. The transitions to democracy (or democratizations) occurred only 16.3% of the time, and the transitions to autocracy (or autocratizations) 11.2% of the time.

It is true that almost all African countries have initiated some types of democratization since the end of the Cold War. However, as shown in Table 2 and Figure 2, most of the transitions to democracy have been limited in depth. Indeed, only 6.4% of them can be classified as full democratizations, and have led to the changes of country statuses, either from "Not Free" (autocracy) to "Free" (liberal democracy) or from "Partly Free" (electoral democracy or pseudo democracy) to "Free." In other words, 93.6% of the transitions to democracy, which have occurred in Africa since the end of the Cold War, were incomplete or partial, and did not result in the changes of country statuses to "Free." Consequently, as shown in Table 3 and Figure 3, the number of "Free" countries in Africa increased slowly from two in 1989 to 11 in 2003, before declining to 9 in 2010. In the meantime, the great majority of African countries have remained either "Partly Free" or "Not Free" (respectively 43% and 29% in 2012).

Concerning the occurrences of armed conflicts, it can be argued that, contrary to the dire predictions made by some observers at the end of the Cold War (Kaplan, 1994), most African countries have been relatively peaceful since the end of the Cold War. Indeed, as shown in Table 4 and Figure 4, there was no armed conflict 76.2% of the time, compared to 23.8% of the time with armed conflicts. Besides, most of the armed conflicts were concentrated in a few countries (including Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Sierra Leona, Liberia, and Algeria), and a great number of African countries (with a total 22 countries) have never experienced any type of armed conflict since the end of the Cold War.[5]

With regard to the connection between political transitions and occurrence of armed conflicts, it can be argued that, for the most part, the transitions to democracy have been more peaceful than the transitions to autocracy and the lack of transition. Indeed, as shown

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[5] Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) and International Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), "Ucdp/Prio Armed Conflict Dataset V.4-2013, 1946 – 2012," (Uppsala, Norway2013)

Table 3. Frequencies of regime types in post-cold war Africa (1989-2012).

Survey edition	Free		Partly Free		Not Free	
	No of Countries	Percentage	No of Countries	Percentage	No of Countries	Percentage
1989	2	4	12	26	32	70
1990	3	6	11	24	33	70
1991	4	8	15	32	28	60
1992	8	17	19	40	20	43
1993	9	19	23	49	15	32
1994	8	17	15	31	25	52
1995	8	17	17	35	23	48
1996	9	19	19	39	20	42
1997	9	19	19	39	20	42
1998	9	19	18	37	21	44
1999	9	19	20	42	19	39
2000	8	17	24	50	16	33
2001	9	19	24	50	15	31
2002	9	19	25	52	14	29
2003	11	23	21	44	16	33
2004	11	23	20	42	17	35
2005	11	23	21	44	16	33
2006	11	23	23	48	14	29
2007	11	23	22	46	15	31
2008	11	23	23	48	14	29
2009	10	21	23	48	15	31
2010	9	19	23	48	16	33
2011	9	19	22	46	17	35
2012	9	18	21	43	19	39

Source: Freedom House. "Country Ratings and Status by Region, Fiw 1973-2013 (Excel)." Freedom House, http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Country%20Status%20and%20Ratings%20By%20Region%2C%201973-2013_0.xls.
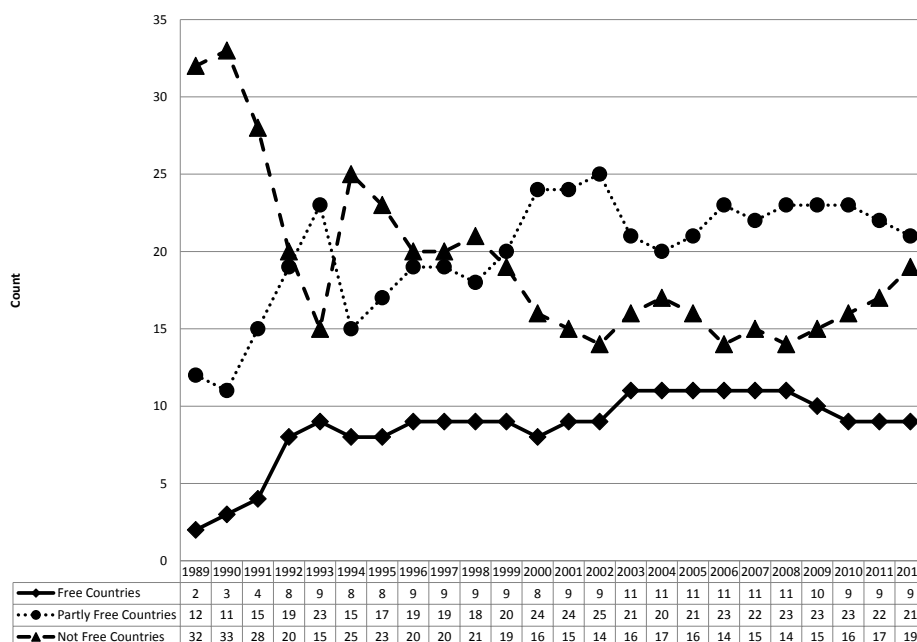
Figure 3. Regime types   in post cold war Africa (1989-2012).

Table 4. Frequencies of armed conflicts in post-cold war Africa (1989-2012).

		F	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No armed conflict	990	76.2	76.2	76.2
	Armed conflict	309	23.8	23.8	100.0
	Total	1299	99.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.1		
Total		1300	100.0		

Valid Percent	No armed conflict	Armed conflict
	76.2	23.8

Figure 4. Armed conflicts   in post cold war Africa (1989-2012).

the crosstabulation in Table 5,   66.3% of the transitions to democracy have been peaceful, compared to 57.9% of the transitions to autocracy and 65.5% of the lack of transition.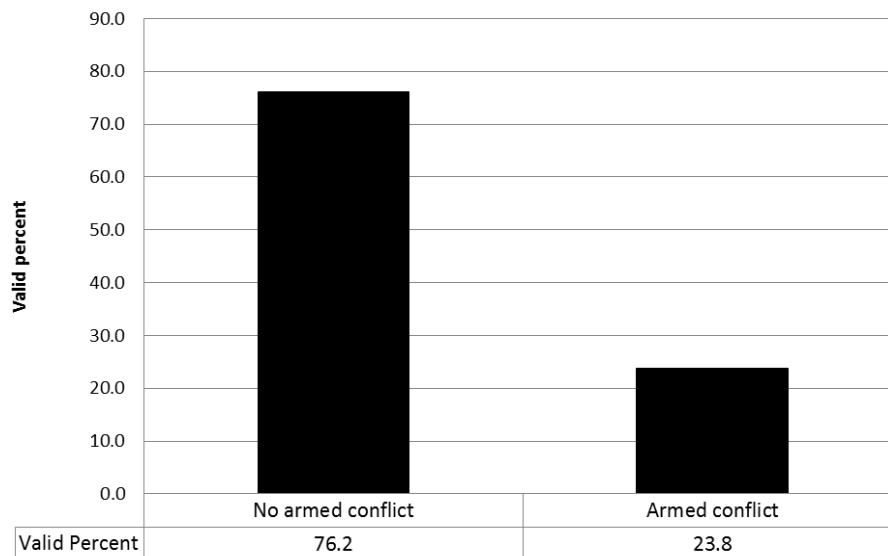 Thus, even though the relationships between political transitions and occurrence of armed conflicts were not statistically significant, this crosstabulation clearly indicates that the transitions to democracy may have generated fewer armed conflicts than the transitions to autocracy and lack of transition: only 33.7% of the transitions to democracy have been followed by armed conflicts within five years, compared to 42.1% of the transitions to autocracy and 34.5% of the lack of transition.

In sum, even though most African countries have initiated some types of transitions to democracy, since the end of the Cold War, these transitions have been limited in space and depth and have been for the most part peaceful.   Consequently, it can be reasonably argued that the transitions to democracy were not one of the major factors leading to the increase of armed conflicts in Post-Cold War Africa. Nevertheless, we have to recognize at the same time that some of these transitions to democracy have been actually followed by armed conflicts within five years. We address in the next

section the conditions under which a democratization process can lead to an armed conflict.

Comparative analysis

As explained in the methodology section above, four clear cases of democratization followed by armed conflicts have been identified in this study.   These cases are: Algeria, Congo Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire. We apply the method of "structured, focused comparison" in this comparative analysis, and take into account the following conditions or factors: contexts of conflict, actors (or parties) involved, issues (or incompatibilities), and triggers (or direct causes).

Contexts of conflict

In analyzing the contexts of conflict of the four cases, we find in each one of them the following conditions, which have been also identified by other scholars as highly conducive to conflicts: overlapping or reinforcing social cleavages, (Goodin, 1975; Lijphart, 2012; Lijphart, 1975;

Table 5. Crosstabulation of political transitions and occurrence of armed conflicts within 5 years (1989-2012).

			Political transition followed by armed conflict within 5 years		Total
			No	Yes	
Political transition, either toward democracy or toward autocracy	No political transition	Count	588	310	898
		% within political transition, either toward democracy or toward autocracy	65.5	34.5	100.0
	Transition to democracy (democratization)	Count	134	68	202
		% within political transition, either toward democracy or toward autocracy	66.3	33.7	100.0
	Transition to autocracy (autocratization)	Count	81	59	140
		% within political transition, either toward democracy or toward autocracy	57.9	42.1	100.0
Total		Count	803	437	1240
		% within political transition, either toward democracy or toward autocracy	64.8	35.2	100.0

Yang, 2003) and incomplete or rocky transitions to democracy (Cederman et al., 2013; Daxecker, 2007; Mansfield and Snyder 2002).

In the case of Algeria, the religious cleavage between Islamists and secularists was reinforced by a socio-economic cleavage between the poor and less educated majority, on the one hand, and the elite, well-educated and rich minority, on the other hand. In addition, the Islamist political parties (particularly, the *Front Islamique du Salut*, FIS) and armed groups (particularly, the *Mouvement Islamique Armée*, MIA) took advantage of these cleavages, and recruited their followers and supporters among the poor majority. The secularists, for their part, were well represented among the members of the military, the dominant political party (*Front national de Liberation*, FNL) and the bureaucracy. The situation became explosive in 1991, when the military staged a coup and cancelled the second round of the parliamentary elections, after the FIS won the majority of the votes in the first round. Above and beyond these cleavages, the transition to democracy was incomplete, and did not result in the institutionalization of democratic mechanisms of conflict management. Instead, it was followed by a huge reversal, which took away the political rights and civil liberties of the poor majority, and reinstated the autocratic practices of the FNL and the military (Martinez, 1998).[6]

In the case of the Congo Republic, in addition to the cleavage between the different ethnic groups, there was also a regional rivalry between the North and the South.

Furthermore, instead of cross-cutting these pre-existing cleavages, the political parties, created during the democratization process in the early 1990s, reinforced them. As *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia* puts it:

Political parties were created by appealing to ethnic and regional loyalties and soon three main blocs could be discerned. PCT (Parti Congolais du Travail) was led by former president Denis Sassou-Nguessou and drew most of its support from the northern Mbocho group. MCDDI (Mouvement congolais pour la démocratie et le développement intégral), for their part was relying chiefly on the votes of the numerous Lari population, from which its leader, Bernard Kolelas, came. The third political party was UPADS (Union Panafricaine pour la démocratie sociale), led by Pascal Lissouba and mainly drawing support from the Nibolek province. The latter won the county's first democratic elections in 1992.[7]

As in the case of Algeria, the transition to democracy in Congo was also incomplete. It did not result in the granting of full political rights and civil liberties to all citizens, nor did it lead to the institutionalization of democratic mechanisms of conflict management. Consequently, when the dispute over the re-run of the legislative elections in May 1993 occurred, there was no democratic mechanism to stop the conflicts between mobilized and armed political parties.

The social cleavages in Guinea-Bissau were not as overlapping as in the two previous cases, but the gap between the elite in power and the poor majority was huge and exacerbated by the economic difficulties of the

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[6] For more information on the Algerian case, see "Algeria," in Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) (2013). UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia, June edn. Uppsala, Sweden: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University.

[7] "Congo," in ibid.

early 1990s. Consequently, when one of the military leaders, General Ansumane Mané, was dismissed by the newly elected President Viera, he was able to gather around him a massive group of angry supporters from the military and the general population. Similarly to the cases of Algeria and Congo, the transition to democracy was also incomplete in Guinea-Bissau, and did not result in the institutionalization of democratic mechanisms of conflict management. As a result, there was no democratic mechanism to settle the conflict between the two major actors, Ansumane Mané and President Viera.[8]

The case of Côte d'Ivoire mirrored more those of Algeria and Congo than that of Guinea-Bissau. Indeed, in addition to the fragmentation between the 60 or so ethnic groups, there were overlapping regional, religious, and economic cleavages between the Northern people, who were largely Muslims and relatively poor, on the one hand, and the Southern people who tended to be Christians or animists, and more affluent, on the other hand.   Furthermore, during the transition to democracy, there was also a tendency of some political parties to play with these different social cleavages, and to discriminate against some groups by applying the so-called criteria of "*Ivoirité*" (or quality of being an Ivorian) As a result, after the death in 1993 of President Houphouët-Boigny, who had the skills to manage the different types of conflicts, the clashes between these different groups along regional, religious, and economic lines were unavoidable. Besides, since the transition to democracy was also incomplete, there was no democratic mechanism to stop the armed conflicts between these groups. Thus, according to *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia*:

In 1999 the first coup in the country's history was staged, reflecting the breakdown of state authority and loss of political stability. However, the main coup-maker General Robert Guei, agreed to hold elections in late 2000, which he subsequently lost. On 19 September 2002, tensions exploded as MPCI [Mouvement patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire; Patriotic Movement of Ivory Coast], a rebel group consisting mainly of mutinous northern soldiers, launched a rebellion. The group was soon joined by two further rebel movements, emerging in western Ivory Coast. By 2004 these had joined together in FN (Forces Nouvelles, New Forces).[9]

Actors (or parties) involved

With regard to the actors, we find in each case the preexistence of armed groups before the outbreak of the conflicts. Depending on each case, these armed groups might have ties to the political parties or the militaries, and they might also have support from foreign governments and organizations.

In the case of Algeria, the Algerian national army was facing different Islamist armed groups even before the full-scale civil war broke out in 1992. Some of these armed groups were created in the 1980s, before the transition to democracy, by Islamist leaders who went underground. Describing the creation of these armed groups, *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia* states that:

During the early 1980s, following a brutal clampdown on demonstrations held for the introduction of sharia, a number of Islamist leaders went underground. One of them, Mustapha Bouyali, subsequently set up MIA (Mouvement Islamique Armée/Armed Islamic Movement), an armed group aiming to topple the regime and introduce an Islamic state. After some years of inactivity, the group re-emerged in 1992, soon becoming the dominant armed force.[10]

Many other armed groups were created in the 1990s and joined force with MIA and FIS, after the military coup in 1992. It is also notorious that, while the Algerian government and military received support from foreign governments (including Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, France and the United States), these armed groups benefited also from the support of other Islamist organizations in other countries.[11]

In the case of the Congo Republic, when the multi-party system was introduced, each one of the new political parties also created their own militias. As *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia* puts it:

To make credible claims to power, the three main parties mobilised youths from their respective ethnic constituency into armed militias - the Cobras (PCT), the Cocoyes (UPADS) and the Ninjas (MCDDI: Mouvement congolais pour la démocratie et le développement intégral, the Congolese Movement for Democracy and Integral Development).[12]

In the case of Guinea-Bissau, the leader of the opposition was able to create his own armed groups with elements from the regular army and the general population. Thus, *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia* reports that: "In 1998 General Ansumane Mané formed the popularly and militarily supported Military Junta for the Consolidation of Democracy, Peace and Justice (MJCDPJ) and began an armed struggle with the aim to overthrow the Vieira government". It is also known that both the Viera government and the MJCDPJ benefited from external support. Indeed, whereas the Viera government received military support from the governments of Senegal and Guinea, the MJCDPJ was supported by the MFDC (*Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance*; Movement of the Democratic Forces of the Casamance),

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[8] See "Guinea-Bissau," in ibid.
[9] "Ivory Coast," in ibid.
[10] "Algeria," in ibid.
[11] "Algeria," in ibid.
[12] "Congo," in ibid.

which was a rebel group in Senegal.

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, following the military coup in 1999 and the presidential election in 2002, a group of discontent Northern soldiers created the MPCI (Mouvement patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire; Patriotic Movement of Ivory Coast) and launched a rebellion against the national government. According to *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia*, "the group was soon joined by two further rebel movements, emerging in western Ivory Coast. By 2004 these had joined together in FN (Fources Nouvelles, New Forces)". Many foreign governments and armed groups were also involved in the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire. However, according to *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia*, "the only foreign state overtly involved in the Ivorian conflict was France."

Issues (or incompatibilities)

In analyzing the issues involved in the armed conflicts, we find that, in each case, the real issue had to do with intense power struggles between individuals or groups. This was actually the main issue, despite the fact that the conflicts occurred in the context of the transition to democracy and following an election.

In the case of Algeria, facing the prospect of an electoral victory of the FIS, the military officers feared that they would lose the power and prestige they enjoyed within the current system. Consequently, they staged the military coup and cancelled the second round of the parliamentary elections, in order to prevent the electoral victory of the FIS. Thus, by stopping the democratization process at this juncture, they were actually denying the FIS and the Islamists in general the right to rule the country. According to *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia*:

ANP (Algerian armed forces), traditionally the power base of the government, wielding considerable influence, had formally withdrawn from politics in 1989, but remained watchful on the sidelines. With FIS poised to win the second round of voting in 1992, the army intervened and installed a military government, which ruled by decree.[13]

In the case of the Congo Republic, after the electoral victory of the UPADS in May 1993, the other political parties refused to accept the election outcomes, alleging irregularities. However, the protests against the election results quickly degenerated into a bloody armed conflict. Thus, *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia* states that:

In May 1993, following a turbulent first year of multi-party politics, a re-run of legislative election was held. This was won by Lissouba's UPADS, but the opposition refused to accept the results, arguing that the election should be nullified due to irregularities. What started out as a massive campaign of civil disobedience soon turned into

violence along political and ethnic lines. The three main parties subsequently all created armed militias: MCDDI set up the Ninjas, PCT's the Cobra militia and UPADS, the "Réserve Ministerielle", the "Aubevillois" and the "Zoulous". UPADS' three groups were later consolidated as the Cocoyes.[14]

In the case of Guinea-Bissau, the issue was simply a power struggle between the newly elected President and a dismissed military general. Thus, even if the armed conflict occurred in the context of the transition to democracy, it did not have anything to do with the democratization process at all. As *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia* puts it:

In early 1998, President Viera dismissed General Ansumane Mané, accusing him of gunrunning to Casamançe. It has later been disclosed that Mané was made a scapegoat and that the president himself, together with his presidential guard, condoned and ran the illicit arms transactions. In June 1998, amidst popular unrest due to the deteriorating economic condition and a political crisis, Viera sent troops to arrest Mané, and fighting erupted. The majority of the population, disillusioned with the politics of Viera, supported Mané and his troops and the armed conflict was soon a fact.[15]

Finally, in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, there were many issues involved in the armed conflict in this country (ethnic division, social inequality, politics of exclusion, etc.). However, it can be argued that the main issue was the power struggle between the different ethnic groups of the country. Indeed, it was after the presidential election of 2000, won by Laurent Gbagbo (a candidate from the South), that the Northern soldiers decided to launch their rebellion, in order to get back in power. Thus, according to *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia*:

The manipulation of ethnic differences and promotion of "Ivorité" effectively marginalised both the Muslim North and the immigrant community. In 1999, the first coup in the country's history was staged, reflecting the breakdown of state authority and loss of political stability. However, the main coup-maker, General Robert Guei, agreed to hold elections in late 2000, which he subsequently lost. All these factors taken together made for a climate of distrust and political uncertainty, and on 19 September 2002, tensions exploded as mutinous northern soldiers launched a rebellion, calling for fresh elections and strengthened rights for the Muslim majority in the north.[16]

Triggers (or direct causes)

Concerning the triggers (or direct causes) of the armed

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[13] "Algeria," in ibid.

[14] "Congo," in ibid.
[15] "Guinea-Bissau," in ibid.
[16] "Ivory Coast" in ibid.

conflicts, we find that they were different from one case to another. This indicates that the triggers could be anything, and would not be the most important factors of the conflicts. In other words, it can be argued that, in the context of a transition to democracy, an armed conflict could break out if the following conditions and factors are present: overlapping cleavages, incomplete democratization, mobilization of armed groups, and intense power struggle.

In the case of Algeria, despite the different factors that might have surrounded the parliamentary elections of 1991, what really triggered the bloody civil war in this country was the coup staged by the military in order to stop the democratization process, and to deny the FIS and the Islamists the right to rule the country. Following this coup, the FIS and the different Islamist armed groups did not have any choice, but to fight back. As *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia* puts it:

When the elections were cancelled and FIS banned, the groups who fought the regime with arms increasingly came to dominate the struggle and the FIS leadership realised that they had lost the initiative. In response, the party endorsed MIA's armed struggle in 1993, and subsequently went on to set up its armed wing, AIS (Armée Islamique du Salut/Islamic Salvation Army), largely made up of fighters from MIA.[17]

In the case of the Congo Republic, as mentioned earlier, it was the civil disobedience campaign following a disputed election in 1993 that triggered the armed conflicts between the different groups in the country. As *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia* puts it:

What started out as a massive campaign of civil disobedience soon turned into violence along political and ethnic lines. The three main parties subsequently all created armed militias: MCDDI set up the Ninjas, PCT's the Cobra militia and UPADS, the "Réserve Ministerielle", the "Aubevillois" and the "Zoulous". UPADS' three groups were later consolidated as the Cocoyes.[18]

In the case of Guinea-Bissau, it was the attempt to arrest General Mané that directly led to the armed conflict in this country. Thus, *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia* argues that:

In June 1998, amidst popular unrest due to the deteriorating economic condition and a political crisis, Viera sent troops to arrest Mané, and fighting erupted. The majority of the population, disillusioned with the politics of Viera, supported Mané and his troops and the armed conflict was soon a fact.[19]

Finally, in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, it was the rebellion launched by the Northern soldiers in September 2002

that trigger the civil war in this country. It is true that these soldiers were calling for new elections and fighting for the rights of the marginalized Muslims in the North and the immigrants, but the end result was a long bloody civil war between them and the government.[20]

Conclusion

Combining the analyses of quantitative and qualitative data on democratization and armed conflicts from Freedom House and UCDP/PRIO, this study finds that, by and large, Africa has been politically stable since the end of the Cold War, and the transitions to democracy have been limited in space and depth. Consequently, Africa has remained largely autocratic since the end of the Cold War, with only nine countries (or 16.6%) classified by Freedom House as "Free" (or liberal democracies) in 2012, along with 21 (or 38.8%) "Not Free" (or autocracies), and 23 (or 42.5%) "Partly Free"(or electoral democracies).

It is true that the number of armed conflicts has increased at the same time. However, given the limitation of the democratization, it can be argued that it was not the major factor that led to the increase of armed conflicts in Post-Cold War Africa. On the contrary, this study finds that the transitions to democracy have been peaceful for the most part, and may have generated fewer armed conflicts than the transitions to autocracy and lack of transition.

Concerning the question of how a process of democratization could lead to an armed conflict, this study finds that, in the context of democratization, an armed conflict could break out, if the following conditions are present: overlapping social cleavages, incomplete democratization, mobilization of armed groups (or militia), and intense power struggles between political leaders or groups. In this context, the trigger of the conflict could be anything: it was the military coup of 1991 in Algeria, the disobedience campaign following a disputed election in 1993 in the Congo Republic, the attempted arrested of a dismissed general in Guinea-Bissau, and the rebellion launched by the Northern soldiers in September 2002 in Cote d'Ivoire.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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[17] "Algeria," in ibid.
[18] "Congo," ibid.
[19] "Guinea-Bissau," in ibid.

[20] "Ivory Coast," in ibid.

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