

Military influence on democratization

A comparative study of Benin and Nigeria

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Abstract

This thesis aims to address the military's role in democratization studies by identifying the variable that determines whether the military's role in the transition is successful or unsuccessful. The study has been done through a comparative study by most similar case design, by studying Benin and Nigeria. By looking at previous literature and thus structuring the thesis around their theories, the empirical section investigates four main aspects; civil-military relations, military action and capabilities, gains for democratization and relation to the new government. By identifying the main difference in the two cases which pointed to the fact that in Benin the military were fractured prior to the democratization process, while in Nigeria, the military were unitary which thus proves that this variable determines whether the military's involvement is successful or unsuccessful. This study also showed that the variables are connected through a chain of events.

Key words: Democratization, Military, Benin, Nigeria, Comparative study

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1 Introduction

The 20st and 21st century has seen a widespread democratic change on a global scale. While we might have determined that these transitions have been for the better, there remains certain cases which have remained authoritarian states. The path to democratization has long been an interesting area for political science. Many researchers believe that there are many different factors to take into consideration when studying countries transitions to democracies, for example economic development and education which researchers believe has a vital role to play in democratization (Geddes 2013). However, there is also a certain agreement regarding different actors' involvement within democratization studies. These studies might thus refer to charismatic leaders as a vital part in democratic transitions. Although, that is not the aim of this study, instead I intend to highlight the role of the military within democratization processes. I seek to understand what vital role the military play in democratization and discover the factor which might cause the military to successfully or unsuccessfully aid a country in its transition to democracy. I will go into more detail in the next section.

This area has long been of interest to me, ever since the news of authoritarian regimes cracking down on human rights or securing their own internal power. As for the armed forces, which has been of interest to me as long as I can remember, I saw this as an opportunity to study something that really appealed to me.

1.1 Research Purpose

The Purpose of the study will be to examine the role of the military in democratization processes. Although the subject regarding democratization is a rather larger and well explored within the area of political science, I highly believe that there is a void to fill about the matter of how the military successfully or unsuccessfully may implement democracy, or much simpler put; to clarify what variable(s) that governs this outcome. Therefore, the study will look at two countries which has gone through a democratization process, whereupon one of the countries has successfully undergone a transition to democracy while the other has failed. I will use a comparative study, through the most-similar case design, since I believe this will help me identify the variable that differ and thus find the variable that cases the military's role to be either successful or unsuccessful. I will explain these choices further down this paper.

1.1.1 Research question

The research question I aim to answer in this study may be defined as follows:

What determines whether the military's involvement within the democratic transition is successful or unsuccessful?

1.2 Delimitations

Democratization studies tends to be rather large, as they may be looked at through many different perspectives and they can be studied throughout the entire world. Therefore, it seems reasonable to me to make certain limitations. This thesis will only rely on studying the military's role in democratization processes, and disregard other factors which academics also believe to be of importance. The emphasize will be on how the military can influence the outcome to be either successful or unsuccessful.

2 Literature review

As I previously stated regarding this field, there seems to be a lot of well written literature regarding democratization processes in a general sense. However, the area I have chosen, regarding the role of the military, there seems to be lacking within this subject. While there might be already written literature, I would, with respect to previous researchers, argue for that it is rather vague or lacking in certain areas and needs to be redefined. There are a lot of studies suggesting certain relationships between the state and the military, nevertheless it seems few of them touch how the military influences democratic transition and thus is the reason I find it appropriate to dig deeper into this kind of literature.

There seems to be a general idea about democratization studies in general, the consensus amongst researchers seems to point to that there is a lot of different factors to take into consideration when studying democratization processes (Geddes 2013). The already established framework, thus provides us with great insight to democratization process in general sense, nevertheless the literature regarding which role the military plays within this process from my perspective is less developed.

2.1 Literature on the military democratization connection

Earlier works on the topic as the article written by *Blair* (2012), suggest that a major concern for the military, regarding whether they are willing or not to keep following the same dictatorship, plays a key role in the transition process. Since he argues that if the armed forces are willing to support the authoritarian regime, then there will most likely not be a transition. However, if the military does support the opposition, the democratic transition is more likely to occur (Blair 2012). *Woo* (2014) also points to the fact the military needs to submit to the newly elected democratic leaders. As such there needs to be an agreement, because otherwise the military can simply oppose the democracy (Woo 2014), which might then backtrack to the previous form of government. This would also seem to suggest that the main point from *Blair* would become apparent.

Houngnikpo (2000) places heavy weight on the role of civil society as one factor which has the potential to either bring democracy down or keep it up and running (Houngnikpo 2000, p. 211-213). *Houngnikpo* also suggest with references

to earlier literature that there are different kinds of democratizations, there are those that occur from the bottom and up which implies the popular struggle, then there is the democratization from above which is caused by the elites. But then again, *Houngnikpo* also makes suggestion to how the military should be implemented within the transition, that they have a key role to play, and without the military the transition might fail. This fact also implies that a strong connection between the civil-military relations is also something that needs to be considered. *Bruneau & Matei* (2008) regards this as a matter of utter importance. They argue that if we understand civil-military relations we will most likely better grasp the thinking on how the military can help shape democratic transition. One of their most important points is that “[d]emocratic civilian control is necessary; all of the literature in CMR and democratic consolidation recognize this fact” (*Bruneau & Matei* 2008, p. 924). *Bruneau & Matei* reference Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, when they mention the importance of different groups within the military to emphasize different actors within the military as a cause for change (*Bruneau & Matei* 2008, p. 912).

Furthermore, as *Griffiths* (1996) states, that before we can build these civil-military relations, the military must first be put under civilian control. He also suggests three main points which governs the civil-military relations. 1. Concerns demobilization and integration into society, 2. Restructuring military personal and mission and 3. “institution of firm civilian control over the military” (*Griffiths* 1996, p. 474). These are the main points which he deems controls the civil-military relations and thereby governs if it will be possible to establish this relation. There are then of course studies which implies that the military should have a say in the process, because without them there won’t be a transition anyway (*Stepan & Linz* 2013, p. 20–21). We might even take this aspect even further. Some work seems to rely on the relationship between the military and power, that is the military desires power for themselves. *Bjørnskov* (2017) argues that some military leaders in power might seek greater power for themselves. And thus, seek to both protect and control the military. To make themselves president *Bjørnskov* argues, would make them able to constitute a constitution where they can both limit the new governments influence on their own politic and control the military (*Bjørnskov* 2017, p. 1-6). This would also suggest that the military would be the first potential ally to the government. Capable of either bringing them down or keeping it stable (*Allen* 2019, p. 247).

Cottey et al. (2002) states instead that it is not as much as taking the military under civilian control and bringing order to the armed forces. Instead what governs this aspect is the that the new government can execute a high level of governance over the military and defense sector (*Cottey et al.* 2002, p. 31-32). This would therefore imply that the government needs to be strong and able to control the military, despite while being fragile in the early stages of development.

Likewise, there is some literature which of course suggest that the military should remain idle. Instead of taking charge of the whole transition, *Ojo* (2000)

suggest that the relationship between the state and the military should primarily be focused on the civil society. He implies that the transition cannot be successful if the military is in the lead. Because this would only create a race in which different actors would compete for power (Ojo 2000, p. 1). It is also important to notice the threat from the military of the may gain to much control, or if they are to strong. *Özkri & Akkir (2019)* clarifies that the military holds the tool to alter civilian's life. The argue that the if the military is given control of the governments or even services within the country, they may influence the policies of the government and effect civilian life (*Özkir & Akkir 2019, p. 413*).

Furthermore, as *Burke (2002)* states, the theories and literature on the subject are vast and many, containing a lot of different methods and approaches. There are a lot of different factors which needs to be considered before we can actually apply as well as understand a theory of civil-military relations *Burke* claims. Amongst some things are to structure the military's effectiveness, study through a normative perspective and a federalist approach (*Burke 2002, p. 1-2, 22-24*).

While discussing the main points of these researches there seems to be a connection with most of them. That implies if the military does not approve of the democratization, it will not occur. If they do approve of transition to democracy, then it will most likely occur. At the same time a lot of the literature suggest that to better understand the influence the military has upon democratization, the civil-military relations also needs to be highlighted. Then there is also the factor of different individual actor within the military which for several reasons might seek change within the government. On the other hand, there are also many different factors within to consider as they might affect the end result.

2.2 Agreements and disagreements within the literature

If we regard the content of the earlier section, we may find certain similarities from different researchers, as well as disagreements. Some researchers seem to agree on some aspects while others either complete agrees upon the same thing or disagrees. If we should try to categorize them and put them against each other, we have to do so with a watchful eye and with respect to their research.

Almost all of the literature agrees upon that the military does indeed affect the government and the transition process, as well as being fully able to act under different circumstances. One of the main concerns of prior literature was the importance of understanding the military within a civil-military relation. Thus, prioritizing the relation between the military and government have been of interest

to many (Bruneau & Matei 2008; Griffiths 1996; Cottey et al. 2002; Ojo 2000; Özkri & Akkir 2019; Burke 2002). Although, within this aspect, there are also several differences. Some scholars believe that civil-military relations are to be studied by looking at how institutions effect governmental policies and how the military might be influenced by it. However, most scholars agree upon certain main points. For starter, the military needs to be brought under civilian control, secondly there needs to be a restructuring of armed forces in accordance to the new governmental rule (Griffiths 1996; Cottey et al. 2002; Bruneau & Matei 2008). While other scholars seems to take the different approach, instead suggesting that the aim should be to study from another perspective, as things may not always act accordingly within the civil-military relations as well as being a give or take game from the military, as they can choose the outcome they prefer (Burke 2002; Blair 2012).

Another suggestion the literature make is to suggest how the new form of government should look. While most argue that the government will most likely be decided by the outcome of the military's commitment to the process, which I agree upon, others mention that the military might seek to alter the government for their own gain (Bjørnskov 2017). Then again, there are also those that suggest the form of an agreement or a treaty to balance the newly formed government and the military (Woo 2014). It therefore seems crucial to investigate the military's intention for the government. This would lead to two options. The first would be to gather greater power for themselves and/or seek to control it. The second option would then suggest protecting the government and follow their lead. So, either the military lead or follow.

The current literature on the subject appears to agree on most matters. While some have different approaches, most of them tends to think in the same direction. It is important to notice that the differences do not obscure the fact that the result may still be the same.

The problem with the literature is that researchers on the subject are torn on what the most important factor is. The outcome of the military's influence on democratization, they suggest, are dependent on different aspects. While I aim to find this aspect that has the most significance and thus determines whether the military's influence can be successful or unsuccessful. Instead of trying to determine the several different aspects that might have an effect on the outcome.

3 Theory

The theory for this study will be derived from previous literature regarding the subject. Thus, the theory will be based upon what previous researchers believe to be of major importance when studying the military's role in the democratization process. As such, much that will be written here may also be found in the section prior to this. The hypothesis of earlier researches will be presented and discussed below, which will then be applied on **Table 1**, which will work as my theoretical approach, whereas these will be linked to the two cases.

Much of the literature seems to suggest the same thing, that the military's key role within the process is to be brought under civilian control and to accept the new government. In theory, then both Blair (2012) and Allen (2019) would be correct in their assumptions that the acceptance of the new government matter and will accordingly ensure the democratic governments survival or downfall. This would also suggest that the new democratic government will be able to bring the military under control, as well as be able to implement new reforms to either strengthen or diminish their power (Griffiths 1996, p. 474). On the contrary, this can also imply that the new government might have the support of the military but can also be that the military don't care for the government. This could potentially alter the outcome of the new regime. Then again, it may not be the only factors that must be taken into consideration. Since the other literature suggest that civil-military relations are of great importance. Due to the high importance of this matter I will seek to better understand the relation between the government and the military.

Probably the biggest concern for the literature, as I cannot stress this enough, is the importance of civil-military relations. So far almost every literature I have talked about has mentioned civil-military relations. Consequently, it seems reasonable to study the two cases based upon civil-military relations. However, this will be done in connection with the approaches made from previous academics that I have previously mentioned. There are a lot of different ways to study the cases from this aspect, however, I will most likely have to use Griffiths approach regarding three different aspects to consider, 1. Concerns demobilization and integration into society, 2. Restructuring military personal and mission and 3. "institution of firm civilian control over the military" (Griffiths 1996, p. 474), since they seem to connect well to every other aspects mentioned by other academics. Also, a broader perspective of the civil society and how the relationship in is in general between the civil and the military which other researchers mention, should be studied (Ojo 2000, p. 1). It might also be profitable to look how the two cases has integrated the military within the new

government and society. Although several researchers suggest that there are deeper meanings within civil-military relations that also needs to be investigated, it may be profitable to, due to the time limit of this thesis, to disregard a few of them.

Another part of the literature suggests looking at the military as an actor and its capabilities. When studying this part, I believe there is two distinctive factors to consider. Firstly, I believe it to be the entire military as an institution, acting on its own accord, secondly, I also believe it may be certain individuals or groups within the army acting on their own or acting in relation to the military. The latter would also correspond well to earlier literature which also suggest (Bruneau & Matei 2008; Bjørnskov 2017; Ojo 2000). While the literature suggests that the military might seek about change on their own accord (Bjørnskov 2017, p.1-6), there are also those that seek to understand how certain individual within the military can alter the government, as we have seen already in other cases. This would also highlight the case if the military has anything to gain from the process. If they would stand to lose something if the transition happened, then it might be less likely to happen. Based upon this I therefore conclude that it might be worthwhile to study the gains as well. On another note, this also highlights that the actions made by the military, should be brought to light in accordance with their capabilities. Since this determines how they can act, in what strength they may utilize their own power.

My own hypothesis for the successful or unsuccessful involvement of the military, would be that the military capabilities and actions would be the most advantageous variable to determine the outcome of the democratization process. I would suggest that if the military has more power within the country prior to democratization, then the process itself would be less likely to succeed. This would assume that if the military's power was weak prior to democratization, the outcome would be more successful. However, I would also agree upon previous literature, that the military's role in the process might also be determined by their actions during the process itself. As well as be determined be various factor governing the relationship between government and the military.

The theories made from previous literature, that I have described here will be the theoretical framework I will use for the study. Based upon this I will hence use their theories to structure my own work. They will also summarize the variables I am looking for and which I believe needs to be examined to find what truly determines if the military's part in democratization processes is successful or unsuccessful. Or if they play any part at all. The disposition for the analysis will be structured accordingly to the main points that are of concern. That way it will be easy to trace the different steps and see the difference in how the cases may handle certain aspects differently.

The void I would be trying to fill, as I previously mentioned would be to find the single variable that determines whether the military has a successful or

unsuccessful influence on democratization. Since previous academics suggest several different variables that is of concern. That is why I came about to study this thesis, to fill this gap within the literature and hopefully be able to find a variable that determines if the military's involvement in a democratization process is successful or unsuccessful.

3.1 Main points of the theoretical framework

While there may be a lot of different material from previous researchers that needs to be considered, I decided upon a smaller area of the field. As stated in previous chapter, the main points within the theory that I believe will be of importance for this study and which I will focus on can be summarized as the following;

- Civil-military relations
- Actions and capabilities
- Military acceptance of new government
- Military gains

3.2 Theory in practice

Table 1: Variables of theoretical framework

Variables/Countries	Benin	Nigeria
Civil - military relations:		
Military action and capabilities:		
Military gains for democratization:		
Relation to new government		

Table 1 will serve as the main figure head for this thesis, as it shows the main points that is of concern for this paper. The purpose of **table 1** will thus be to show how the variables differ in the two cases. While also providing an easy and clean way to see the differences between the two. For this reason, **table 1** will simply be provided here to showcase these variables. Further in the paper, in the empirical analysis, I will come back to this. Although, at that time I will hopefully have provided enough empirical evidence to fill out the boxes under each case. Whereupon I might be able to come to a conclusion for this subject and thereby presenting an answer to the research question around which this paper circulates.

4 Method & Data

For this section I will explain my given choices regarding both countries and the model for which this study will be based upon. This will also serve as my background for all data gathered during this work, to discuss how to best proceed and how to interpret everything. Apart from the selection of cases to study much of this section will be based upon my own motivations for choosing different paths to take for this thesis. This study will emphasize on a comparative method using most similar design. The reason for this is because using a comparative method will help me identify variables that differ, which could lead to potential proof of what determines whether the military is successful or not in democratization processes. Using most similar case design thus provides insight into which variable is different in the two cases I have chosen based upon their different outcomes.

4.1 Selection of cases

The primary focus for this study will be Benin and Nigeria. These countries will be the main focus and will help me how the military might influence democratic change. My main point will be that Benin will be regarded as my successful case as, many researchers, well everyone in general, seems to agree that Benin is one of the strongest democracies in Africa, and has been for quite some time (Freedomhouse 2017). As for Nigeria, there seems to be a bigger concern regarding its actual status and how the military might have influenced it. There seems to be a view that tends to highlight the military's role on influencing the democratization process (Obihoa 2016, 251) while other studies argue for that the process has reached a stalemate and that democracy might never be fully implemented. Thus, is it not regarded as a full democracy (Freedomhouse 2019). The two cases are however very interesting, as they have developed completely different despite while also being neighboring countries.

This thesis will of course look at the cases through a certain time period, which both is in relatively close proximity to when the democratization occurred. There are also several different factors to consider when selecting cases since I am using a most similar method. It probably be impossible to find two cases which shares the exact same variables on all accounts, therefore I have given myself permission to expand it, but not to much as that would defeat the purpose of the study. Below you will find a list of variables that will govern the different aspects

that for one, will be taken into account when studying, and second will also serve as main points for discussion.

4.2 Variables of the two cases

Table 2: Country variables

Variables/ Countries	Benin	Nigeria
Geographical location:	Western - Africa (neighbor to Nigeria)	Western - Africa (neighbor to Benin)
Post Colony:	Yes	Yes
Military power:	Fractured Military	Unitary military
Military position within country pre democratization:	Strong position	Strong position
Military ties to government pre democratization:	Strong ties	Strong ties
Civil-military relations pre democratization:	Weak civil-military relations	Weak civil-military relations
Military has something to gain from transition:	Yes	Yes
A transition occurred:	Yes	Yes
Opposition offered to participate in process:	Yes	Yes
Democratic status:	Full democracy/ Free	Low democracy /Partly free
GDP (per capita) (US-dollar):	386 (1991) 404 (1999)	503 (1991) 498 (1999)
Year of democratization:	1991	1999

Note: Variables in a comparative perspective in accordance to research design.

Source: Table compiled by author. GDP gathered from Globalis.

4.2.1 Case explanation

In this shorter section, I will briefly motivate my cases regarding the democratic aspect, as well as explaining some of the variables, because I believe many of them are self-explanatory. I've stated in early in this paper that I will look at the case through a most similar method. I realize that to find a perfect example, where every variable is consistent with the latter is most likely impossible. As such, I have concluded that there must be some space for where these may lie and still be concluded as similar.

Nigeria

As I stated before, Nigeria has undergone a democratic transition that many researchers believe has failed or reached a stalemate. While there is also an agreement upon that the military has indeed had a part to play. Much of the evidence that is stacked in my favor, regarding my approach Nigeria, tends to suggest that Nigeria has struggled to reach democracy or still is. There is also some literature which talks about Nigeria's militarized democracy and how it has failed. It is worth mentioning that Nigeria had made some serious progress towards achieving democracy, however they are not there yet. Therefore, I will study them from an unsuccessful case.

Benin

In contrast to Nigeria, Benin is regarded as one of the strongest democracies in Africa. There is no disagreement to Benin and its democratic status. Although the country has been plagued by military coups, the country has enjoyed a stable democratic rule since the democratization during 1991. The military also played a vital role in securing democratic rule and thus I believe it to be a great case to study as a successful democratization and to compare with Nigeria.

4.2.2 Variable explanation

Some variables might require further explanation which will shortly be provided below. Further information is provided in empirical section.

Military might: Whilst the Nigerian armed forces are considerable stronger than that of Benin, it is also important to know that population wise, Nigeria's population is also considerable higher. Compared to the internal military power within both countries, taking both population and military factors into account, things are a lot different, and seems more reasonable.

Military position within country pre democratization: This is simply a determination of how strong the military is within the country. If they are strong

enough to act or if they have a lot of power already within the government. In both cases the military was strong pre democratization.

Military ties to government pre democratization: This factor is determined by how close the military and government stands. Since in both cases, the military is connected to the government they are considered strong.

Civil-military relations pre democratization: This determination is based upon the favorable conditions that existed prior to the democratization process in both cases. Since the military and the government were so closely connected there were many bonds connecting them and thus strong.

5 Empirical analysis

The structure of the analysis part will be based upon the **table 1**. Since they contain the variables that I will study, these will make up a section each whereupon I will gather evidence for each case. During the discussion chapter, I will talk about how they differ, if they differ from each other, by again bringing in **table 1**.

5.1 Civil-military relations

Civil-military relations as mentioned by a lot of the literature has the potential to either destroy or bind the country together. In both cases civil-military relations, seems to be of great concern. Under this chapter the civil-military relations in both cases will be studied and clarified. The emphasized approach will be to look at it during the transition and thus find evidence according to the theoretical approach.

5.1.1 Benin

Benin's transition to democracy occurred from a military rule during the early 1990s. It is today highlighted as an extremely successful case of democratization. Since the military had been in rule for many years the ties between the military and the government should be considered strong. Nevertheless, as Gisselquist notes in her paper how mounting political instability and unrest led to the gathering of several actors within civil society and the government to bring about change to a multiparty rule. To understand the change from the perspective a great factor needs to be considered. The National conference is probably the most important factor to consider. During 1990 the national conference helped pave way for a process that would eventually bring both sides together (Gisselquist 2008, p. 789, 794).

The civil-military relations in Benin has remained relatively strong for a long time. While the military has ruled Benin for quite some time, the relationship between the military and the civic society aided in the transition process. Before the transition even occurred, there were some unrest in Benin, particularly due to social factors that eventually led to the National conference.

During the ten days the conference lasted, the civil-military relations were strengthened in accordance to what Griffiths has mentioned before (Griffiths 1996,

p. 474). As Julien Morency-Laflamme indicates in his paper *A question of trust: military defections during regime crisis in Benin and Togo*, the civilian supporters for democratic change began implementing several reforms and began convincing the military to agree upon the transition. Civic society leaders began with convincing military personal to support the opposition in the transition process during the conference, some were even offered amnesty if they sided with the democratic opposition. They also offered to re assign several divisions and disband and assign new leadership within several parts of the army (Morency-Laflamme 2017, p. 473). This would concern point number two on Griffiths theory, that in order to ensure a good civilian-military relationship, there needs to be a restructuring of military personal and missions (Griffiths 1996, p. 474). Julien Morency-Laflamme also concludes that an alliance between the military and the civil society was one of the reasons the current president at the time agreed upon regime change and transition to more democratic terms (Morency-Laflamme 2017, p. 473). There are other factors which relates to civil-military relationship but which I believe will be better suited under a different section. The national conference also set the foundation for the new constitution which would bind the military and civil society all together even further (Constitution 1990).

We could conclude that the civil-military relations in Benin were being both created anew and strengthened during the transition process. As a result of the national conference which resulted in a success for the opposition in creating a democratic government under civilian rule.

5.1.2 Nigeria

As with the case of Benin, the Nigerian civil-military relations might be considered strong due to the close relationship between the military government rule, although the reality might be different. As the transition occurred, the government failed to put the military under any firm control with legislative governance or impose any other form of power over them. Yagboyaju argues for that the new government were simply to weak and fragile to contain the necessary ingredients for a sustainable transition and to create strong bonds of civil-military relations (Yagboyaju 2011, p. 96-98).

In accordance to previous literature with regards to Griffiths, the newly formed government failed to impose control over the armed forces (Obioha 2016, p. 262-263), which was deemed necessary for a successful transition. Although the process itself saw several policy measures through that would impose control of the subordinate military institution, further, the head of state would act as chief commander, and the executive and legislative arms would have control of the government (Lawal Tafida, 2015, p. 184-185). As with Benin, the new constitution in Nigeria was able to implement certain policies over the military to tie the bond between government and military personal. However, as mentioned it proved to be relatively weak (Lawal Tafida 2015, p. 185-188).

Since the military had have a long history of ruling the government, the civil-military relations are and remain relatively weak. The Nigerian effort to achieve a strong democracy would lie in the military's role in the government. The military still holds onto some power in the government and may well instead be about to bring it down (Ojo 2009, p. 688).

Another factor to determine is the redistribution of military personal within the government. As many retired military officers and other people with connections to the armed forces finds themselves more or less as a majority within the political parties and the ruling government in Nigeria (Hoel 2008, p. 41-42). As mentioned in previous works on civil-military relations in Nigeria, the majority of Nigerians prefers democratic rule to military autocracy, as such there seems to be a relationship between the growing relations within this aspect in Nigeria. As the civil society grows and the civil-military relations expand (Ojo 2006, p. 267-268).

5.1.3 Civil-military relations in a comparative perspective

It appears as the civil-military relations remains strong in Benin, since the transition initiated a stronger bond between the civil leaders and the military. While the civil-military relations in Nigeria has made considerable effort to bring about change, it gives the impression of not being fully developed as Benin. With reference to Griffiths, the Nigeran case failed to follow his three main points, while Benin succeeded. However, despite this fact, there has been made changes that favors stronger civil-military relations in Nigeria, and as such it has to be noted that there has been some success in this regard.

5.2 Military action and capabilities

This area will highlight how the military has acted during the transition process. It will examine if the military has been a driving force of the process, a meddler in between or neutral on all accounts etc. It will also focus upon the capabilities of the military, if they could act in full strength or not. This section will thereby not use any specific theoretical approach and will instead simply focus on their actions and capabilities during the process.

5.2.1 Benin

While the military can be considered one of the leading actors in the transition, since they were the government before the transition. It could also be argued the

other way around. Once the governmental rule had been handed over to civilian rule, the military almost completely withdrew.

As mentioned before, the national conference could be seen as one of the greatest military actions in Benin in the name of democratization. Considering that the military was partly in charge of the government and decides to let it happen speaks for their actions towards a democratization process (Morency-Laflamme 2017, p. 473). However, the government did issue the military to intervene during the protests against the opposition, to try and ease tensions (Morency-Laflamme 2017, p 472-475). While it had great effects at first, military personal actually started to emphasize with the protesters and thus turned against the regime.

This shows that the military in Benin showed a great willingness to cooperate and thus aided in a peaceful transition (Houngnikpo 2000, p. 217-219). Even still after the national conference, different military personal continued to act in favor of democracy. Even the new constitution proclaimed that the military should act in defense of the government and aid in developing the country (Constitution 1990). Yet they also seemed to favor the democratic government, since the opposition leaders managed to sway them further and cause them to act after the process, by granting rights, integrating them into certain committees, redistribution of missions and the promise of a say in defense politics, it could be seen that the alliance struck between the opposition and military personal, where one of the reasons the transition to democracy took place (Morency-Laflamme 2017, p. 473). Even though they had been ordered by the government in the beginning of the process, to send in troops to ease the protest (Morency-Laflamme 2016, p. 85), which might have done little to aid their cause, they still acted out against the regime. One of theses major factors might have been due to the fact that the army was split into separate faction, which would speak in favor for why the army failed to support the government which was of a different military faction. This would prove, that the military might have been to weak to act on their own accord, and saw the oppositions promises as something that could renew the military structure.

Despite this fact, the army seemed rather neutral after the process had occurred and did not interfere in the political game. They had certain reassurances which meant that they could continue to act in accordance with the government, since they were granted positions in committees, they would help create some polices.

We could on this conclude that the military played a large role in the beginning of the process and during it's transition. Although their presence decreased when the government had endorsed the new constitution and accepted the regime change. Nevertheless, they were active and showed their support for a democratic transition and acted accordingly to their power.

5.2.2 Nigeria

In the case of Nigeria, the military was one of the main actors within the process. As Obioha notes in his paper *Role of the military in democratic transition and succession in Nigeria* the military has had a long history of military coups which some refers to in the name of democratization. Ever since their independence the military has had a hand in the political game. Which in truth might be the profound reality to why the government have remained heavily reliant on the military to act in their favor (Obioha 2016, p. 251, 256-259). The military institution has seen Nigeria through four republics, as they are referred to. Each of them with their own history. The fourth and current republic is said to have begin with the sudden demise of the previous ruler, whereupon the military once again took action, which this time lead to the governmental rule we see in Nigeria today.

While the military has been a strong actor during the processes to democratization, it is worthwhile to know that during certain parts of the process certain individuals within the army has made significant actions to improve the condition of democracy in Nigeria. Or so they claim.

The most prominent was General Abdulsalami Abubakar, whom managed to succeed in a certain democratic transition to which we refer to as the Nigerian government today, the fourth republic (Abdullahi 2014, p. 179). The purpose of this action was to transfer power to a civilian controlled government and allow parties to register into official elections (Abdullahi 2014, p. 179). Once the transition was complete the military withdrew from governmental offices and the power was transferred to civilian rule.

Another factor is that certain soldiers within the army wanted to bring down the military rule, as it was a negative factor for Nigeria, and thus the transition process would bring about change within the army (Ubani 2018). However, in contrast to Benin, the Nigerian army was still a unitary force. While there might have been some doubt among solders, it is not uncommon for the soldiers to be. This would also prove that the military hade more resources to act with more might than their counterpart in Benin.

It can therefore be concluded that the military has been of great significance in the transition. However, it might not have the effect as the military and civilians had hoped for. This of course stands for both cases, still it seems more of a positive action in Benin than in Nigeria.

5.2.3 Actions and capabilities in a comparative perspective

If we compare the two, the major distinction would relate their actions and capability in the process. In the case of Benin, the military were fractured and weaker, and thus could not act with the same force as the military in Nigeria.

Further, they firstly sided with the government but then supported the opposition in the transition, since they were offered gains for their support.

In the case of Nigeria, the military could act with greater strength and were also in charge of the transition process, since they were a unitary force. Thus, they had a larger amount of resources at their disposal and could act with more determination. This would also explain why they stood to gain less as well as why they could control the democratization process.

5.3 Military gains for democratization

For this section the military's goals or what they aim to gain from the transition will be highlighted. If the military has anything to gain from the democratization process, they will most likely be more willing to help achieve it. Otherwise they might not act in their full power, since they believe they have nothing to gain and instead has something to lose.

5.3.1 Benin

On a first glance, it seems as if the military stands to gain nothing, nor achieve anything from the democratization process, on the contrary however, there were things to gain for the military. It could also be argued for that the military had everything to lose and everything to gain at the same time. In the new constitution that was written during the national conference it was marked that the military would fully submit to the new government and that the new head of state would usher full control of the armed forces (Constitution 1990). Thereby it could be considered a threat to the military to fall under civilian rule, thus losing the power they have had since independence. However, the reality is much different.

Africa has long been plagued by armed conflicts, not to mention the number of military coups. It would stand to reason that in both cases, the military would have seen it self as a dominant power for a long time. The case is not different in Benin, as such it might seem as if the military stands to lose power if the transition occurs. Benin's military was split under different factions under the period and rivaled one another, which the opposition promised to reform, and only a few years later, the factions were indeed united and created a professional army for Benin (Morency-Laflamme 2017, p. 472-475). As Julien Morency-Laflamme (2017) marks, the armed forces also stood to gain amnesty for past crimes and also granted near veto-power for new military reforms (Morency-Laflamme 2017, p. 473). Thereby, we can conclude that the military stood to gain a lot of perks for accepting the transition.

5.3.2 Nigeria

In contrast to Benin, the military already ruled the government entirely during the transition process. As such, it appears that the transition would thus diminish the influence of the military within Nigerian politics. One could therefore ask what they gained, as it looks like they mostly abandoned all their power.

Nevertheless, the military still commands both power and influence within Nigerian politics. Strangely enough, two of the elected presidents were retired military officers and a third was a brother to a former military ruler of Nigeria. (Ubani 2018). In addition, the military is also more willing to aid these types of ruler than a civilian leader (Obioha 2016, p. 262-263). This would point to the fact that the army has never lost much power after the transition as the state would still be heavily reliant on the support of the military. Another crucial point is that the army themselves saw the military rule as a negative factor for the military as an institution and a transition would have been profitable for the military institutions internal integrity (Ubani 2018).

5.3.3 Gains in a comparative perspective

While the army in Benin were offered profitable gains, the Nigerian army took it upon themselves to see their own gains through. This might suggest that this perspective seem to lack a distinctive factor that causes the transition to democracy to not be as dependent on this factor. Although it is worthwhile to notice, that in Nigeria, the military does indeed still command power within the government.

5.4 Relation to new government

This section seeks to understand how the new government and the military would either stand with or against each other. I will examine the role the military had after or during the transition to see if they would oppose the government or submit to the new rulers. Since many other researchers believe it played a vital role in creating a transition to democracy, it is important to see how the military responded to the transition process.

5.4.1 Benin

Benin's military had had a long history of both supporting and overtopping the government. In the case of the latter, during the transition process, there are two major points to showcase. The first is to establish the relation created by the

opposition to the military which would eventually lead to a bond between the two. Secondly it is also important to note the constitution as a vital factor for altering the relation between the new government and the military. Another noteworthy to mention is also that the military simply accepted the new government as legitimate and accepted their rule.

The new constitution clearly notes that the army should be considered as a tool for the government to rely on in cases of state security, and not be used for something else. Also, there were made considerable effort to promote the interests of the army to improve the conditions and create a stronger sense of bond between government and the military (Constitution 1990). The evidence gathered from various sources, and by looking at the situation today, suggest that the military did accept the new government. And the actions made by the opposition as mentioned in earlier section also helped in creating a strong bond of trust between the two parties. We could thereby note the significance for the relation between government and military. Seeing the long history of military coups in Benin, it is also a welcoming sight to see that the military accepted the new rule of law, which in turn also limited their own power.

5.4.2 Nigeria

It seems rather difficult to survey the relation of the Nigerian military to the new government, especially since many seem to suggest it is corrupt, not working accordingly or experiencing several difficulties which tends to affect the governments effectiveness.

It can be noted that the relations seems similar to Benin, since the military was in favor of the process and saw it through there would have been no one stopping them from adding policies of their own. It is further imbedded in the Nigerian constitution that government may execute power through the political elite, which consequently, also consist of military officers (Aremu & Omotola 2007, p. 61). The military has shown their loyalty to the governments, but as Obioha notes, they seem rather reserved in following a civilian leader. Which was proved during a later time, when fighting Boko Haram, since the military showed little support to aid the government. However, when a retired military general assumed office, the military was quick to assist the government in any way (Obioha 2016, p. 262-263). It does seem rather unlikely that the Nigerian military would reject the government, as they have accepted the civilian rule, although it seems they remain a bit distant.

5.4.3 Government relations in a comparative perspective

In both cases the two countries seem to share a similar relation of approval to their new governments. It is, however, worthwhile to notice, that in Nigeria the military might still be, in possession of power within the government which might have affected the outcome. Since they themselves had power through the transition, while in the Benin case the military did not share the same power as their counterpart. Again, this might be since the military in Benin were fractured and thus weaker than the Nigerian army. Although this may be the case, it should not affect the outcome to a large extent, since the military may simply influence the policies they prefer or need to. And otherwise leave the government to themselves. However, it does not seem as the Nigerian military submitted in the same extent as Benin, to the new government.

5.5 Applying the evidence

Table 3: Variables of theoretical framework including evidence

Variables/Countries	Benin	Nigeria
Civil military relations:	Large civil society, strong civil-military relationship	Civil-military relations are fragile, large civil society
Military action and capabilities:	Partly control of transition process	Full control of transition process
Military gains for democratization:	Stood to gain several reforms, amnesty, a professional army force	Stood to gain little, still commands power however, wanted to go through with a transition
Relation to new government	Good relation, accepted and submitted to new government	Good relation, accepted new government

6 Discussion

As things stand, there seems to be a lot to consider for this thesis, and even with the result discussed here, will it by no means completely and globally define the aspect of democratization through the military. It simply cannot be and would thus require further research into the area, and more specifically into other cases which could provide with other results.

Looking back, the evidence as shown in **table 3**, it does provide with an overview of the similarities and differences. While both processes occurred in the 1990s, both of them are derived from different conditions and are thus prone to be different in some aspect. Although, the objective of this thesis is to find one variable that has a significant impact then studying the military's role in democratization processes, **table 3** might give the impression that several factors affect the outcome.

6.1 Democratization process as a chain of events

The process it self can be described from a chain of events, were the most significant factor is to determine the rest and thereby govern the outcome of the entire process. As the foundation itself for the thesis is the interest in the military, the events that has followed must be a consequence of said outcome. I will state my arguments in accordance to my variables and my hypothesis based upon the empirical findings.

By studying the two cases, a major concern which causes problem is the strength of the military. While their forces measure up for the country's capacity, their internal power is different from each other. In Benin the military is fractured while the Nigerian military is unitary. Because of this we can determine that the military cannot act in the same strength in Benin as in Nigeria, thus it would stand to reason that the military can act more aggressively in Nigeria. This would also speak for the fact why the military in Benin decided to side with the opposition against the government.

If we were to determine that the military in Benin were fractured and their power was relatively weak in that regard, then it stands to reason they would have more to gain than their counterpart in Nigeria. The army in Benin were promised several rewards for their support in the transition process, a few things of the

rewards were a restructuring of the armed forces, which would in the long run provide benefits for the army. On the other hand the Nigerian army did not stand to gain as much, since they were already unitary and held onto power in Nigeria. Accordingly, the army had not the same to gain which would also be the reason the gains for the military during the transition would be a consequence of the military strength and their actions in both cases.

The variables themselves form a chain where they are based upon each other. The gains for democratization are based upon the fact that the military was either fractured or unitary in the two cases. Therefore, the military in Benin stood more to gain, which would eventually lead to the fact that the military in Benin accepted and submitted to the new government since they were promised several rewards for their support, while in Nigeria, they were offered rather little rewards and thus showed less support for the government.

While many researchers believe civil-military relations are of great concern it did not matter in this case. However, they are of course important, I do not deny that fact. The role of civil-military relations might very well cause great effect for the military's influence on democratic transition. Although, I believe it is not of the same importance to this case and could thus be prone to change. Instead, I would argue that the civil-military relations are created during the transition. As in many cases, when a new type of government is created, many factors and policies are prone to changes, hence creating new types of features that need to be examined in the civil-military relations.

If we look further to investigate the variables, the last one mentioned, the acceptance of the new government, should of course differ from the very start, since it is directly linked to whether the case is successful or unsuccessful, which thus stands to reason in both cases. Therefore, it appears to be of little interest to examine as a potential variable to have influence in shaping a successful or unsuccessful democratization. This would be based upon the fact that the military in Benin fully supports the new government, while their counterpart in Nigeria has shown less support for their government.

The event chain could be described as following:

Benin:

Military is fractured → weak and low action capability → democratization offers more advantageous reforms for the military → accepts new government and submits → strengthening of civil-military relations.

Nigeria:

Military is unitary → Strong and high action capability → democratization offers less advantages → accepts new government → civil-military relations are strengthened to an extent.

To this extent, the chain links all variables together as a chain, where one was followed by the other. This would make the variables within the chain obsolete. It can hence be concluded that military action and capabilities, was the effect with the biggest impact and thus determined whether the military's role in the process had a successful or unsuccessful outcome.

If we were to examine previous literature on the subject, I believe that most of their theories did not matter for this thesis. While I exceedingly believe they certainly have an impact in shaping democracies, I do not believe they have the same impact on how the military can help create democracies.

7 Conclusion

This thesis has tried to examine whether it is possible to find one variable that causes the military's role in a democratization process to be either successful or unsuccessful. The main findings of the evidence prove that there is enough evidence to support one variable. Which would regard the military standing in the country before the transition occurred. The research shows that the four variables that I examined does have an impact. However, if the military is weak and does not have much power already, before the transition, then it will most likely result in a success. If the military is strong and already commands power, then they are more likely to be unsuccessful.

The emphasis must be put on examine the role of the military through their actions, in accordance to their capabilities. For example, if the military is weak, they will not be able to act with force. On the other hand, if they are strong, they will most likely act with strength and as such make the process better suit their own needs. The other variables this thesis has studied does provide a valid point in influencing the military's role in a democratization process. However, this thesis also provides insight into the fact that they might be better suited to explain the outcome or other factors that is related to the process.

If we compare Benin to Nigeria, the distinction becomes clear between the variables. While they do differ in some regard, which they should since no country is 100% like another, the variables show a similar result in all but their government rule. The only variable that thus differ from the start and as such is one of the independent variables, would be the military might.

The reason for the failure in Nigeria and the success in Benin is because of the military structure prior to democratization. The governments are controlled by the military in both cases (apart from a weaker one in Benin), thus the civil-military relations are not a strong as they should be in a full democracy. While the military in Benin is weaker, they have more to gain from the democratization process, on the other hand, the Nigerian military is stronger and already have what they need, thus they have less to gain. We then know that the democratization failed in Nigeria, since the military did not completely accept the new government while the opposite occurred in Benin. The civil-military relations are also based upon the relation between the government and the armed forces. The relationship will most likely not be strong if the military does not accept the government. Therefore, it is concluded that the independent variable to influence the cases is the military's might and their capabilities during the process.

7.1 Recommendations for future research

While the study has showed that there indeed might be a variable that has more significance than others and that might prove whether the military's involvement is successful or not. There are of course still areas to be examined. Firstly, I believe the cases should be expanded. To gather further evidence and to support the findings, it might be prudent to study through the same model with different cases. Secondly, future research should expand the variables to be able to determine more closely the impact certain aspect within the military's internal standing and might has on democratization. As this would narrow it down to be more precise.

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