unions between Portuguese males and their African slave females (Lobban, 1995, p. 16-17). Nigeria was colonized much later by the British, and formal colonization and administration did not take place until after the 1884 Berlin Conference around the turn of the century in 1900 (Aborisade & Mundt, 1998). Like the Portuguese, the British installed a local governor but, unlike their European contemporary, did not institute a local aristocracy, leaving the indigenous peoples local rule so long as they did not challenge British control (Aborisade & Mundt, 1998). To that end, the British governed Nigeria along racial lines, dividing the country into regions that were dominated by single ethnic groups (Aborisade & Mundt, 1998, p. 10). This ethnic division rapidly became the cornerstone of Nigerian politics and today is the root of Nigeria's ethnic and religious sectionalism (Aborisade & Mundt, 1998; Pierce, 2006, p. 887).

Ethnicity and Politics: Recipe for Disaster

Today, both Cape Verde and Nigeria offer strong contrasts in their colonial legacies that serve as the backdrop to their current political and social landscapes. Nigeria achieved independence in 1960 from Britain, with Cape Verde following in 1975 after a prolonged conflict with Portugal to achieve sovereignty (Ojie, 2006, p. 550; Lobban, 1995, p. 110). Both institutionalized themselves as republics following independence, but the similarities between both nations end there. Today, only Cape Verde is considered a true democracy, achieving a "free" ranking on Freedom House's Democracy Report (2010). Nigeria, on the other hand, is considered only "partially free" on the same index (Freedom House, 2010). The differing levels of democracy in both of these countries offer a clear illustration of greater Africa, as a majority of African states are classified as either "partially" or "not free" (Freedom House, 2010). This disparity in democracy between Cape Verde and Nigeria (and Africa in general) can be found in both of their colonial histories as well as their current political arrangements in regards to the countries' ethnicity.

As the discussion on colonialism above alluded to, Cape Verdean society largely is a collection of mixed African and European characteristics. These characteristics include not just racial connotations, however, as Cape Verdeans today share a similar language and culture, essentially creating one uniform ethnic group from what formerly would have been considered separate entities (Lobban, 1995, p. 57). From this conglomeration, the ethnic identify of *Crioulo* has emerged to become the dominate ethnicity in Cape Verde (Lobban, 1995). This dominance has proven to be enduring, as well, as the Portuguese failed to successfully divide the country along ethnic or racial lines during the protracted struggle for the islands' independence (Lobban, 1995, p. 97). The result has been that Cape Verde, unlike its African contemporaries, has "been free of the violent upheavals" that have plagued other African nations (Meyns, 2002, p. 154). Within the larger African context, therefore, the lack of violence that has emerged due to the absence of a

diverse ethnic heterogeneity in Cape Verde, or in other words the emergence of a homogenous society, has ensured its stability as a democratic nation (Meyns, 2002).

Nigerian colonialism and post-colonial history demonstrate a remarkably different set of events regarding both democratization and ethnicity in the country. Since the start of British imperialism, ethnicity played a central role in governing the colony (Pierce, 2006, p. 894). While governed collectively by a single administrator, locally Nigeria was divided into three regions, each the constituency of one of Nigeria's three major ethnic groups (Ojie, 2006; Aborisade & Mundt, 1998). This division into separate regions based upon a defined ethnic characteristic helped to lay the "foundation for separate political development and ethnicity in Nigeria" (Ojie, 2006, p. 550). Whereas Cape Verde came to be dominated by the *Crioulo* identity group, Nigeria was fractured along the northern Hausa-Fulani, the western Yoruba, and the eastern Igbo ethnic groups (Ojie, 2006, p. 550). These three groups were united by the British, when no such previous arrangement existed. During the colonial era, the local rule employed by the British insulated each group from interacting with each other, essentially allowing each to govern its own territory and people without regard for the other groups' concerns or views (Aborisade & Mundt, 1998). However, upon the consolidation of Nigeria into one united nation, the three groups found themselves competing politically for control of the national government.

Cape Verde did not suffer from this competition along ethnic lines since in reality there was only one ethnic group in the country. While various factions existed within the *Crioulo* ethnic group, the extent of conflict between such factions was reserved for ideological and procedural debates; the *Crioulo* largely kept an intact and united political culture amongst members (Lobban, 1995). Nigeria's political culture, however, was an artificial creation at best and almost immediately was replaced with the pursuits of each of the dominant ethnic groups (Aborisade & Mundt, 1998, p. 55-56). This fractured political culture has turned the Nigerian system of governance into one that has become preoccupied with controlling and channeling the wants and needs of ethnic groups in exchange for the political power that the particular members of an ethnic group can wield, such as votes in the national government (Ojie, 2006, p. 551). However, with three ethnic groups to appease, this approach to politics has resulted in each group alienating the others for their own benefit, and the result has been significant violence and political instability (Vanhanen, 1999, p. 72). While Cape Verde has suffered from one ideological military coup, with democracy being restored quickly thereafter, Nigeria has suffered from six military coups since 1966, all with strong roots in ethnic tensions and conflicts, and only recently has democracy (in some sense of the word) been restored (Lobban, 1995; Aborisade & Mundt, 1998, p. 17).

With the return of civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria has begun the long process of transitioning to democracy, although considerable authoritarianism remains today and still invites ethnic conflict to occur. Today, such conflicts focus more