

GHANA:

A COUNTRY REPORT BASED ON PILOT-STUDY DATA

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About V-Dem

Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) is a collaboration hosted at the Department of Political Science at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden; the Kellogg Institute at the University of Notre Dame, USA. The Principal Investigators are Professor Michael Coppedge from University of Notre Dame, Professor John Gerring from Boston University, and Associate Professor Staffan I. Lindberg from Gothenburg University and University of Florida.

With four Principal Investigators (PIs), eleven Project Managers (PMs) with special responsibility for issue areas, seventeen Regional Managers (RMs), a set of Research Assistants (RAs), and approximately 3,000 Country Experts (CEs), the V-Dem project is collecting data on 329 indicators of various aspects of democracy tied to seven core principles of democracy: electoral, liberal, majoritarian, consensual, participatory, deliberative and egalitarian.

A pilot study in 2011 tested the preliminary set of indicators and the data collection interfaces and procedures. Twelve countries from six regions of the world were covered, generating 462,000 data points. In the main phase, all countries of the world will be covered from 1900 to the present.

The resulting database will be the largest of its kind, and make possible both highly detailed, nuanced analysis of virtually all aspects of democracy in a country, and quick, summary comparisons between countries based on aggregated scores for the 7 core principles of democracy.

The data will be downloadable from a public V-Dem website. Users from anywhere will also be able to use sophisticated but intuitive and accessible online visualization and analysis tools. All data and tools will be public goods. Students and media across the world will benefit from the nuanced comparative and historical data. Governments, development agencies, and NGOs will be able to make much better informed decisions, and even go back in time to re-evaluate aid efforts.

The Pilot Phase was financed principally by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Sweden with supplementary funding provided by the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, University of Gothenburg, and the Kellogg Institute at University of Notre Dame. In with the support of Hegre's Conceptualization and Measurement of Democracy project at University of Oslo, the Canadian International Development Agency, the European Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DK, and in partnership with International IDEA (with support from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden), data collection is underway in over 100 countries.

For further details and information, see <http://v-dem.net>.

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Executive Summary

- What can be learnt from Ghana? This report takes advantage of data from the pilot phase of Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem). The data collection in the pilot phase was restricted in terms of the scope of indicators, range and number of each country expert, and model for aggregation. Nonetheless, it is possible to take a first and preliminary look at the potential for understanding processes of democratization in much more detail and with a nuance that extant data sources does not allow. This report conducts such an exercise on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark.
- The V-Dem aggregation scheme is not finalized so a caveat is that the aggregate scores provided here are not only just based on pilot-study data but are also aggregated in a simplified and merely intuitive way. When the official V-Dem aggregation scheme is complete and the full data for Ghana has been collected in the main phase of the project, results may come to differ from what is presented here.
- The diversity of V-Dem indicators show improvements in selected areas even as early as 1985. A series of early improvements in a few civil liberties and in the media, as well as in government consultation with civil society, occurred in 1989-1990 preceding the more monumental change around 1992. Institutional improvements supporting the electoral process, the judiciary, and the parties and party system were fundamental to Ghana's early democratic development. A stronger civil society seems to be more of an effect of successful democratization, than a cause of it.

Introduction

When the 'third wave' of democratization hit the African continent at the end of the Cold War there was an outburst of observers voicing hopes for a 'second liberation' that soon turned into sour commentaries on the lack of 'real' change. The picture today is mixed with some countries moving ahead and becoming more free (e.g. Ghana) while others drag their feet (e.g. Angola) or regress (e.g. Zimbabwe). About a quarter of all the world's states are found on the continent and it accordingly has produced a wide variety in terms of political institutions and outcomes. Out of sub-Saharan Africa's 48 countries, fifteen to twenty can today be considered relatively democratic depending on one's choice of minimum standards, while another twenty or so are electoral authoritarian in various guises from Nigeria to Zimbabwe, and a few countries are closed autocracies or in flux, e.g. Ivory Coast, Eritrea, Mali, Somalia, Swaziland (Lindberg 2009a).

Ghana is considered a success story of democratization in Africa. Since 1992, there have been two alternations in power across five national elections and both of the two main parties have now managed to return to office after previously losing. In the last election in December 2008, the two-term ruling party that lost a presidential election run-off by less than one half of one percent of the vote gracefully accepted defeat.¹ After democratically ousting the NDC, and former authoritarian ruler and president, J. J. Rawlings' hand-picked successor, in 2000, the NPP was in turn forced out of office by the ballot box. (Weghorst&Lindberg 2011). In other words, Ghana had finally passed the classical "two turnover test." Turnover in the legislature has been even more common with the share of new MPs in each new legislature, after the first took its seats, averaging almost 52% (Lindberg 2009b).

While Ghana's experience may not be typical for Africa (yet), it can give us a first take of what makes democratic procedures prevail. Moreover, Ghana is not entirely unique. As of 2010, 33 of the countries in Africa have held at least three successive elections without a coup, civil war, or other interruption. More than 20 countries have held four elections or more in a row and 12 have completed an uninterrupted sequence of five multiparty elections. Among countries that have held at least three successive elections, we find no less than at least 15 clearly democratic regimes while another four or five countries are competitive electoral authoritarian regimes with relatively good prospects of becoming democratic in the future (Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, and perhaps Gambia). That about one third of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa have experienced legislative and/or executive turnovers of power make the Ghanaian case less atypical than one might first think.

What can be learnt from Ghana? This report takes advantage of data from the pilot phase of Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem). V-Dem will eventually provide a full set of 329 indicators of seven core principles from electoral- to deliberative and equalitarian democratic values. The data collection in the pilot phase was more restricted in terms of the scope of indicators, it did not use the full range and number of country experts to do the coding, and the model for aggregation of indicators to components and indices of the seven principles is yet to be finalized.

We can, however, use the pilot-data on a series of indicators to take a first and preliminary look at the potential for understanding processes of democratization in much more detail and with a nuance that extant data sources does not allow. This report conducts such an exercise on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark.

V-Dem and Its Competitors

Two of the most widely used databases concerning democracy are Freedom House's study of freedom in the world and Polity's democratic and autocratic state indicators. Though popular, these measures suffer from several drawbacks, including coverage issues, a too limited conceptualization of democracy, component aggregation concerns, and concerns about data replicability.

Freedom House (FH) rates 191 different countries according to two components: political rights and civil liberties yet these are hardly independent. It only extends back to 1972 and is also measuring democracy limited to the question of political and civil equality within a citizenry (see Coppedge et al. 2001, 254) ignoring other aspects such as institutional progress. As Bosin elaborates, "A heavy emphasis on human rights leads to biases against young, transitional and post-conflict democracies. In such democracies, the establishment of liberal values dramatically lags behind the establishment of electoral system... Not surprisingly, young democracies have lower freedom ratings than full-fledged democracies" (Bosin 2007, 9-10). As we will see, Freedom House does not sufficiently portray the great democratic achievements initiated when head of state, John Jerry Rawlings, launched Ghana's Democratic Fourth Republic in 1992. Finally, Freedom House scores are based on an extensive use of expert coders coupled with ambiguous coding rules and no inter-coder reliability tests making them impossible to replicate. The resulting overall scores are highly aggregated and mysterious constructs.

Polity IV provides 'democracy' scores for independent nations from 1800 to present using a purely institutional, and extremely narrow definition of democracy. Ted Robert Gurr originally constructed this dataset to test the durability of states (Casper and Tufis 2003, 197). Polity scores nations on both democratic and autocratic scales and the Polity2 variable is created when these two scales are combined to form a 21-point scale. The coverage of Polity IV makes it useful but the dataset suffers from several other limitations. First, non-independent nations, regardless of degree of self-government, are not scored. Ghana did not achieve independence until 1957, and Polity scores do not begin until 1960 for example. This may not concern policy-makers looking at the present but is a severe limitation on the ability to draw sound scientific inferences about cases and effects of democracy that policy can be based on.

Secondly, the narrow institutional focus of the Polity dataset ignores social indicators of democratization and makes for a very coarse reading of democratic developments. For instance, perfect scores of +10 are granted to the United States for most of history, including periods when African-Americans and women were disenfranchised. Sweden has a perfect score

on Polity IV since 1917 suggesting that nothing has changed with democracy in Sweden since that time.

Finally, the components that underlie the rankings remain abstract, coder rules are not provided, and coding thus appears open to interpretation. Polity previously conducted inter-coder reliability tests, but experts required a great deal of training before acceptable levels of coding accuracy were achieved (Coppedge et al. 2011, 251-252). Unclear coding rules and coding consistency concerns both contribute to the general unreproducibility of this dataset.

Varieties of Democracy contributes to the comprehensive measurement of democracy in four ways. First, this approach understands that democratic tendencies often originate back in time, and this database provides scores extending back over 110 years to 1900. Second, everything in V-Dem will be transparent and open for scrutiny. Data on individual indicators, organized by expert coder scores and their own estimates of confidence, are provided, as well as explicit aggregation rules for the components and aggregate principle-scores. Finally, unlike Freedom House and Polity that provide rather narrow conceptualizations of democracy, V-Dem will provide aggregate scores for seven core principles of different models of democracy emphasizing distinct values. As a result, a diverse array of indicators are measured, organized along over two dozen components, to measure the seven democracy principles.

At present, the aggregation scheme is not finalized so a caveat is that the aggregate scores provided below are not only just based on pilot-study data but are also aggregated in a simplified and merely intuitive way. When the official V-Dem aggregation scheme is complete and the full data for Ghana has been collected in the main phase of the project, results may come to differ from what is presented below.

The Development of Democracy in Ghana

What can we learn from Ghana? To begin with an overall comparison at the highest aggregate level, Figure 1 provides a standardized score comparison of a Varieties of Democracy aggregate score, Polity2 scores and Freedom House scores for Ghana. While Polity2 and Freedom House scores begin at 1960 and 1972 respectively, the V-DEM measure extends back to 1912. The V-Dem aggregate is a composite but not along the lines of the seven principles that will eventually be produced (as noted above) but is for illustrative purposes only.

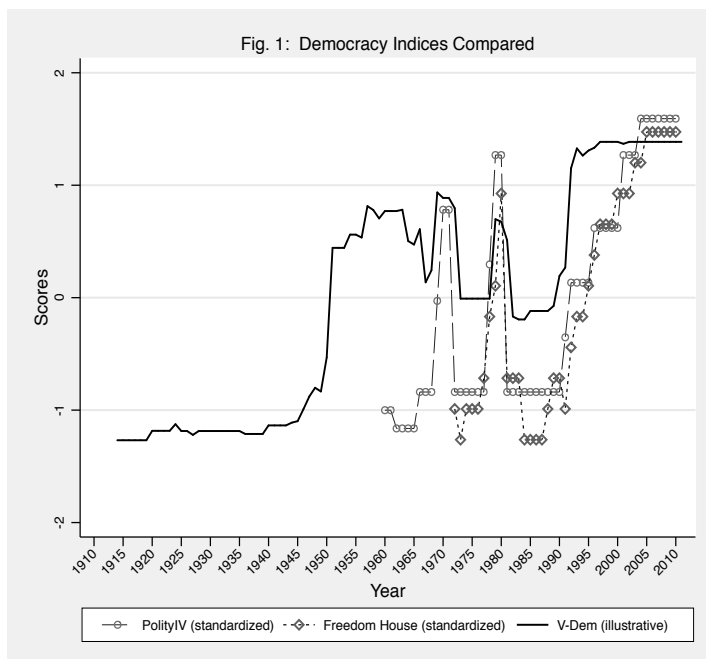
After achieving independence from Great Britain on March 6, 1957, Ghana experienced a rocky path to its current democratic constitution, adopted in 1992. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first President and Prime Minister initially came to power upon popular support from Ghanaian citizens and his government made significant democratic progress for the country. As his tenure went on, however, Nkrumah somewhat lost this popular momentum and was eventually deposed in a coup, by Major-General Joseph Arthur Ankrah, on February 24, 1966.

This affront to democracy is reflected in the V-DEM-based aggregate democracy score, but not in PolityIV data available for those years and FH does not record this period at all.

Major-General Ankrah ruled for three years before another military coup by Brigadier Akwasi Afrifa in 1969. After a little over one year of rule, Ghana was returned to civilian rule by elections and Prime Minister Kofi Abrefa Busia took power. Busia, and largely ceremonial President Edward Akufo-Addo, were deposed in a coup initiated by Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong on January 13, 1972. All three democratic indicators demonstrate democratic declines during this time period. But it is clear that the more broad-based measurement of democracy by V-Dem captures that important aspects were not completely denigrated, hence, the higher average of V-Dem than the others who miss this important variation.

As Chairman of the National Redemption Council, and later Chairman of the Supreme Military Council, Acheampong ruled Ghana until he was deposed in a coup on July 5, 1978 by another military leader, Lieutenant-General Frederick Fred William Kwasi Akuffo. Akuffo's rule was largely seen as a continuation of Acheampong's corrupt military reign. On June 4th, 1979, Flight-Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings deposed Akuffo in a coup and acceded to Chairman of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). Taking power for a little less than 5 months, Rawlings publicly lamented what he saw as the corrupt misuse of power by Ghana's former leaders. On September 24, 1979, Rawlings returned Ghana to civilian rule, but not before the firing squad execution of former Heads of State Afrifa, Acheampong, and Akuffo.

Dr. Hilla Limann was the president during Ghana's Third Republic elected on the People's National Party ticket in 1979. All three democratic indicators demonstrate a democratic spike during this time. Limann, however, was largely perceived as a weak moderate leader and corruption, misrule, and abuse of power set in quickly. V-Dem's aggregate score picks up on these limitations to democracy in this period whereas the PolityIV and FH scores both largely indicate a much more coarse picture of a close to perfect situation.



J.J. Rawlings conducted a second coup on December 31, 1981 installing the Provisional National Defense Committee (PNDC) and reversing the trend. The aggregate V-DEM score, however, picks up on the gradual restoration of democracy that started long before the reintroduction of

multiparty rule in 1992. PolityIV and FH almost completely miss this variation. We note that the Rawlings-regime started work with the National Commission on Democracy (NCD) in 1986 led by former Supreme Court judge Justice D. F. Annan (later the first Speaker of Parliament in Ghana's Fourth Republic). Local competitive (but no party) elections were held in 1987 and 1988 and freedom of expression was increased in this period.

In 1991, hearings were held across the country under the auspices of the NCD and eventually Rawlings agreed to multiparty elections at the national level in 1992. Rawlings ran for President as the candidate for the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and won in an election whose 'free and fairness' is generally questioned. Nonetheless, these elections marked the beginning of Ghana's Fourth Republic.

Since that time, Rawlings won a second term in office in 1996. In a momentous move, Rawlings then followed the constitutional rule of law, and stepped down after the completion of his second term. In 2000, opposition party leader, John Agyekum Kufuor of the National Patriotic Party (NPP) won the Presidency. He served two terms as a NPP candidate. The NDC, then in opposition, led by Dr. John Evans Atta Mills, was successful in the 2008 national elections and is currently gearing up for a re-election bid in this year's 2012 national elections. This political tradition is now largely accepted to be an institutionalized two-party system democracy.

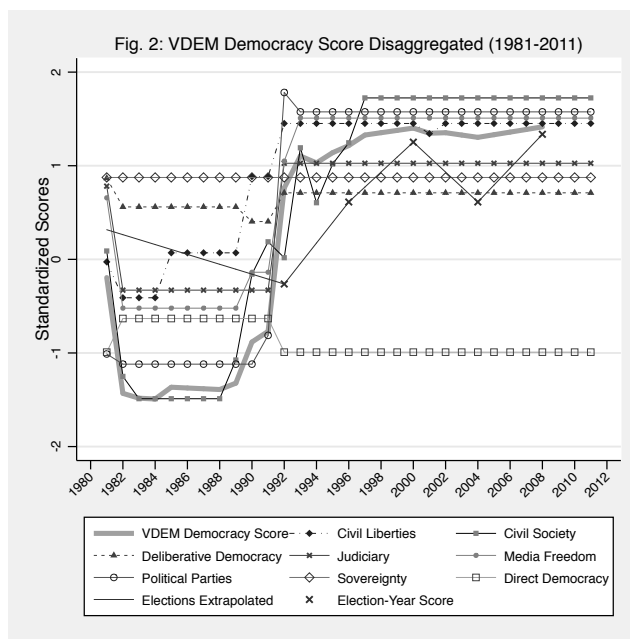
As Figure 1 shows, V-DEM, PolityIV and Freedom House each measure the events leading up to, and through, the Fourth Republic differently. The divergence between V-DEM and these other two measures about the 1992 point in time marks the most significant disagreement about Ghana between these measures. Polity2 and Freedom House both increase in step-like process after 1992. It may be that democratic progress occurs continually, with improvements every year as Polity2 and Freedom House show. It may also be, however, that these step-by-step increases are really increases in expert's confidence that Ghana is actually democratizing. In other words, the improvements may be more of a reflection of the passage of time than actual measurable democratic improvements. Similarly, while one might fear that V-DEM exhibits too large a spike at the initial beginning of the Fourth Republic, we can address these fears by analyzing the disaggregated data composing our aggregated measure, which V-DEM makes available. These other measures cannot be easily investigated further. From now on we will concentrate on the last period of democratization from the 1980s to the present.

Democratization Disaggregated in Ghana – Drilling Down....

Figure 2 presents the results for the eight components that make up the illustrative V-Dem aggregate democracy score for Ghana showing definite variation. During J.J. Rawlings rule (1981-1992), for instance, this disaggregation suggests his authoritative rule was more repressive on individual civil society, the political system, and on direct democracy, while the trend of civil liberties, and deliberative democracy suggests less relative repression in these areas. It is noteworthy that the deliberative aspect rates somewhat favorably, suggesting that country experts agree that Rawlings effort at some form of people's participation in the rule,

and consultative processes to go with it, actually materialized to some extent. Meanwhile, this did not include civil society that was harshly repressed, and political parties that were banned.

Similarly, while democracy indicators generally improved with the creation of Ghana's Fourth Republic around 1992, the direct democracy component scores actually slightly decreased in 1992 and has stayed lower throughout the democratic period than during Rawlings' military rule. This is one example of how V-Dem's disaggregated component indices can portray nuances and variation in emphasis of different democratic values. Rawlings' regime encouraged direct democratic values, whereas such provisions have been disregarded in the new democratic era.



Most interesting perhaps is to look at what changed first. It is clear that it is the civil liberties that expand, already back in 1985, then again with a dramatic spike in 1989 with the conclusion of the local assembly elections, and the work of the NCD under Justice D. F. Annan coming to fruition. The improvement of civil liberties paved the way for the other changes.

The next big change occurs simultaneously in the institutional aspects. The electoral framework, political parties, the judiciary, and media become free quickly reaching the high levels of democratic quality they have kept since. These are the dimensions that pull up the aggregate and illustrative democracy score discussed above.

The civil society index, on the other hand, varies until 1997. It seems clear that in the case of Ghana civil society has *not* been a driver of the democratization leading up to institutionalization, but rather an effect. This has important policy implications.

Also noteworthy is that the transition to democracy depressed the direct democracy score, such that from 1991 to 1992, this score decreased and has remained relatively low through Ghana's Fourth Republic.

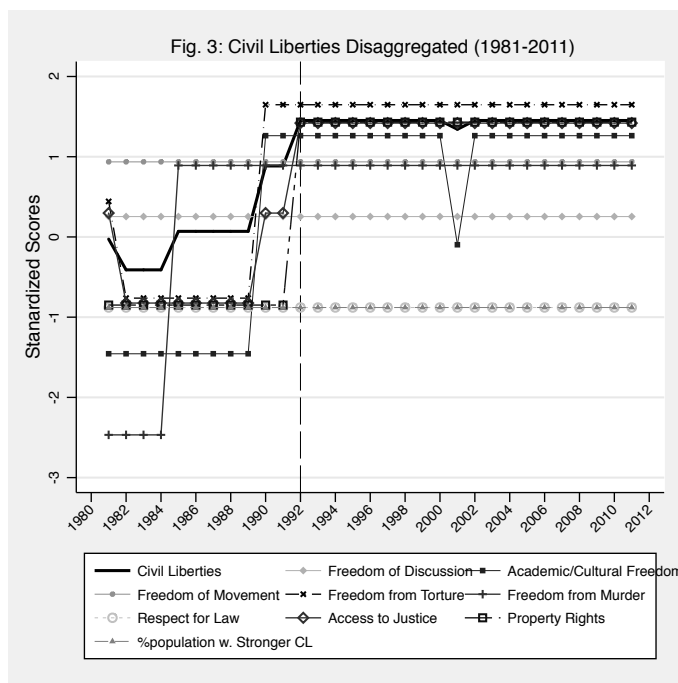
All this in itself provides much more detailed picture than indices such as PolityIV and FH can provide. Yet, we can drill down further to the individual indicators that make up each of the

components discussed in Figure 2, to look at precisely *which specific* indicators drive the development of each of these aggregate components.

Civil Liberties – Drilling Down Further....

We saw that the expansion of civil liberties was the first aspect of democracy that started to change, long before anything else. What happened?

Figure 3 displays the Civil Liberties score along with its component indicators. We have also included a reference line at 1992, the year of the first presidential and parliamentary elections. The first big change was a significant increase in the freedom from political assassinations around 1984-1985. This is also around the time Rawlings regime commits to engage with the IMF and the World Bank with an economic recovery plan, and it is likely that the two are connected.



But other specific aspects of civil liberties also changed before 1992. Between 1989 and 1990, significant improvements in freedom from torture, freedom of academic and cultural expression, and access to justice manifest, and these are driving the displayed changes in the aggregate index. This is the time when the NCD is conducting their hearings and consultations across the country to discuss the future political system and when the Constituent Assembly deliberates to shape a new constitution. Protection of property rights and an additional increase in access to justice further improved in 1992, the year of the election and the adoption of the proposed constitution.

These civil society indicators have since remained relatively consistent throughout the Fourth Republic. A significant decrease in freedom of discussion occurred in 2001, notably after the opposition had taken over power – a typically unstable and tense period – but only lasted for that year.

It is also noteworthy that some indicators have not changed much at all, quite surprisingly so. The freedom of discussion has not changed at all and was as free in the Rawlings era as in the

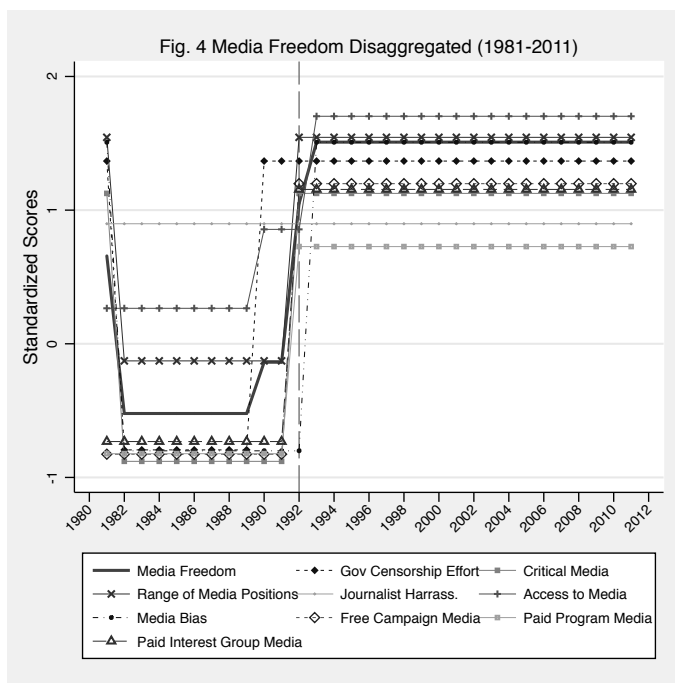
democratic period. The respect for law is as limited today as it was then, and the protection of civil liberties has been fairly equal across the regions throughout.

The Media – Individual Indicators

The freedom of the media was among the next changes that occurred before formal democratization began with the elections in 1992.

Our media index is comprised of nine V-DEM indicators. With these we can say what actually changed and when, with more precision. Figure 4 shows that a dramatic relaxation of government censorship came first, already in 1989 -1990, along with a more modest improvement in the general public's access to public media. These were the openings that made the rest possible.

The election year of 1992 then made other changes possible and more visible. The range of media perspectives, free campaign media, government censorship efforts, paid interest group media, critical media, and paid program media all improved significantly and have stayed constant since then. The last two indicators to reach their most democratic levels were access to media and media bias, both taking place in 1993. Very early and broad-based expansion of democratic media seems to have been a critical aspect of the Ghana success story.



Electoral Processes – Individual Indicators

V-DEM's elections indicators were not included in the overall aggregate democracy score because only thirteen elections have occurred in Ghana's history, and including this score would have restricted the aggregate democracy data to those specific thirteen years. The thirteen years for which V-DEM scores elections for Ghana are 1951, 1954, 1956, 1960, 1964, 1965, 1969, 1979, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008. As previously mentioned, the 1992 national elections essentially marked the beginning of Ghana's Fourth Republic.

The V-Dem elections component is constructed from three-subcomponents: representation, electoral regime, and electoral participation. Figure 5.1 shows the results for Ghana for the aggregate and the subcomponent scores with the 1979 elections displayed as a reference point.

The 1992 electoral regime and its implementation in practice was far from perfect but in many respects was better than in 1979, giving credence to the claim that practice makes perfect when it comes to electoral processes (Lindberg 2006). Only participation was lower which draws down the aggregate score.

Electoral participation improved in 1996 and 2000. This subcomponent stumbled in 2004, but regained its 2000 position in 2008. The representation subcomponent has remained constant since 1992, only to improve with the most recent election in 2008. Finally, the electoral regime subcomponent increased drastically in 1996, from 1992, and maintained a relatively high level through 2008. This reflects in part the work of the Inter-Party Advisory Committees established after the debate about the creditability of the 1992 election. The donor community (in particular the Danes and the Americans) were very active in this process that played a very important role in stabilizing democracy in Ghana.

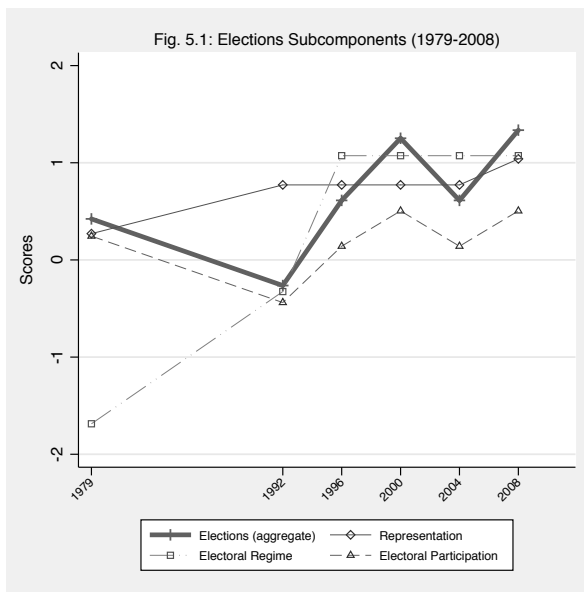
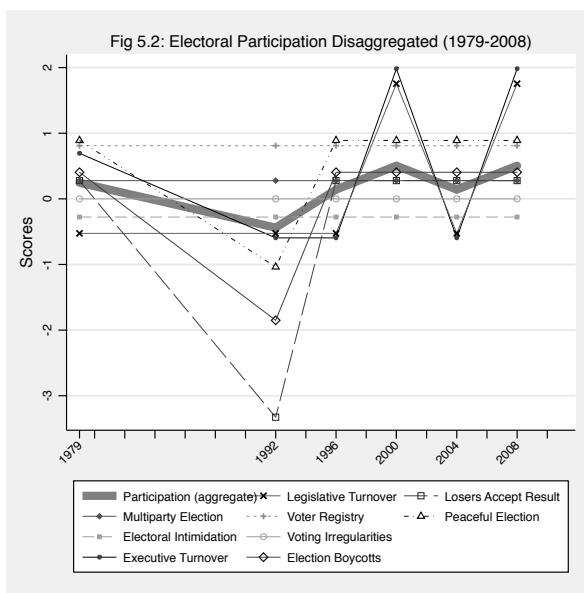
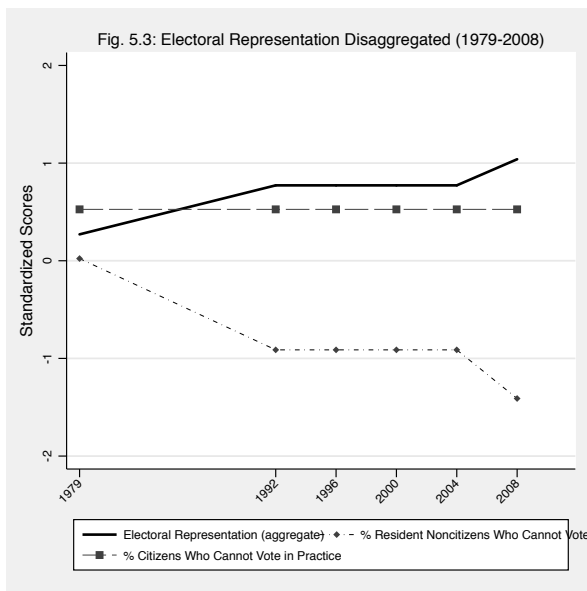


Figure 5.2 shows the the electoral participation subcomponent further disaggregated into its constituent nine indicators. A few indicators (multiparty election, voter registry, voting irregularities, and electoral intimidation) remained unchanged from 1979 through 2008. Ghana’s elections, when they have occurred, have typically been multiparty events. Throughout the Fourth Republic, the voter registry has consistently been relatively accurate, there have a relatively low level of voting irregularities, and there has consistently only been scattered instances of harassment and/or intimidation. So these aspects cannot explain the improvement of elections in Ghana and hence, their contribution to stabilization of democracy in the country.

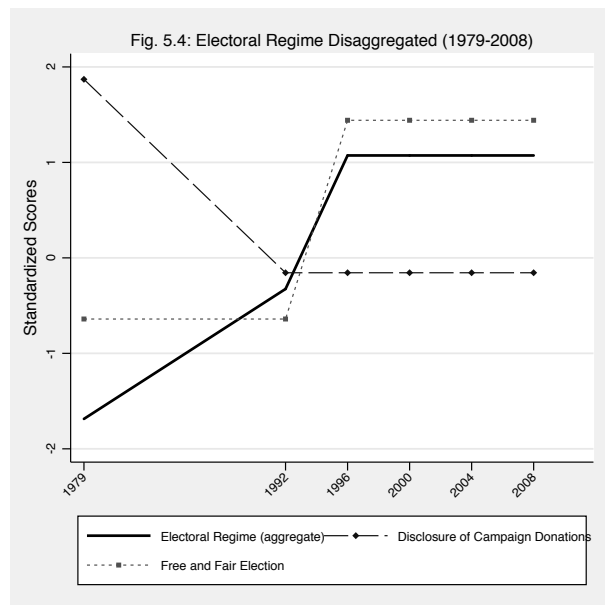


The 1992 elections were marred by three other difficulties: losers did not accept election results, the opposition boycotted the legislative elections, and there were significant levels of violence. The 1996 elections were, according to the V-Dem indicators, a significant improvement in many respects. The three problematic aspects were all addressed, if not perfect. This is an example of how the international and domestic community successfully collaborate to correctly identify and address the main obstacles to improving the electoral process. All indicators have since been stable, except for the executive and legislative turnovers occurring in 2000, when NPP candidate John Kufour won the presidency, and in 2008, when NDC candidate John Atta Mills won the presidency, and on both occasions also gained a legislative majority.

Figure 5.3 is the equivalent graph displaying the two indicators making up the electoral representation sub-component. The percentage of citizens who could not vote in practice has, according to the V-Dem country experts for the pilot phase, remained at 2% throughout Ghana’s Fourth Republic. It is hard to tell how accurate this exact figure is, in part because only two experts coded this particular indicator in the pilot phase. But at a minimum, it indicates that this has only been a minor problem in Ghana. The percentage of resident noncitizens who could not vote was at 3.5 percent from 1992 to 2004. According to the estimates of V-Dem’s country experts, this percentage dropped slightly to 2.57 in 2008, accounting for the slight increase in the aggregate representation score. The pilot phase did not include indicators for gender, ethnic and other potentially marginalized groups but these are now implemented in the main phase.



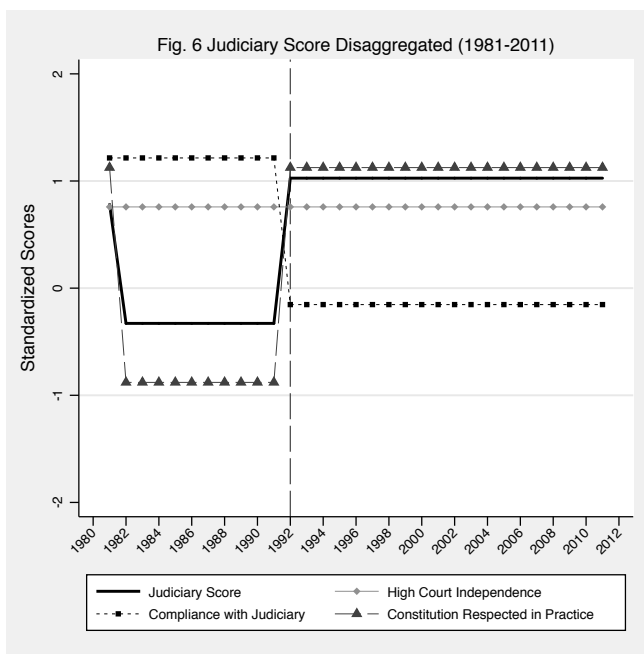
Finally, the disaggregation of the electoral regime subcomponent shows that throughout the Fourth Republic, Ghana has had campaign disclosure requirements in place, but these have generally not been observed or enforced. In 1992, V-Dem’s expert coders overall rated the election as ‘Maybe’ free and fair. This improved from 1996 to 2008, with coders rating the overall election as ‘Yes, somewhat’ free and fair, but never giving the elections the highest score of completely free and fair.



This may thus not be needed for the institutionalization of democracy.

The Judiciary – Individual Indicators

The disaggregation of V-Dem's Judiciary Score in Figure 6 shows that two important changes occurred in 1992 – that is in conjunction with the transition to a multiparty regime. First, the indicator, 'Constitution Respected in Practice' dramatically increased to a relatively high level in 1992. It is a reflection of the drafting of a new constitution for the Fourth Republic and the commitment to the new constitution displayed by the main actors, including the ruling PNDC and its chairman J. J. Rawlings. The holding of the elections manifested this commitment and the respect showed for the Electoral Commission and the judicial system's involvement in the process.



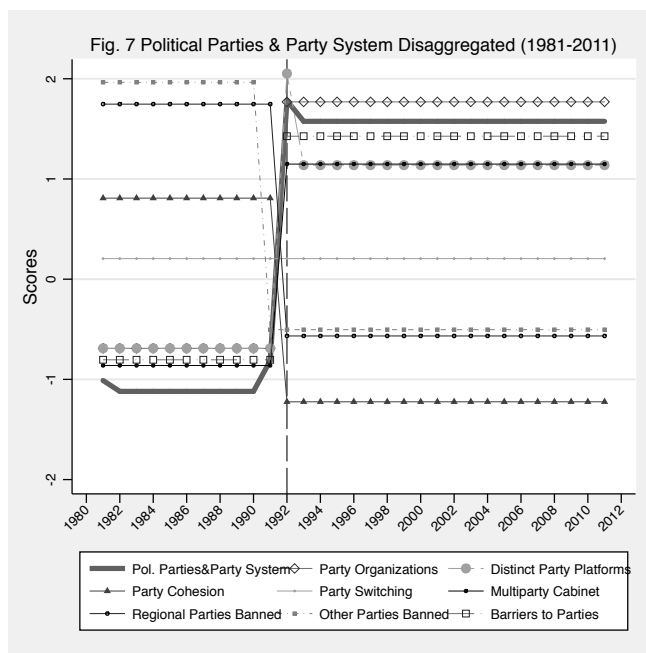
Secondly, compliance with the judiciary decreased and has remained somewhat low throughout the Fourth Republic. That this indicator moves south during a period of transition to multipartyism and a more democratic dispensation is not necessarily a sign of democratic worsening, however. It reflects first Rawlings tight control over the judiciary during his military-cum-civilian regime and the following decrease in compliance concurrent with installation of the democratic regime is signaling increasing judicial independence from the executive. The judiciary simply started to rule against the executive and accordingly, but somewhat regrettably, the executive is not always complying. In the first years, this is thus a good sign and a lesson to be drawn from when analyzing other processes. But one would have expected this situation to improve over the years, and it has not. The current compliance with the judiciary is clearly an area where Ghana's democracy is less than perfect.

Political Parties & Party System – Individual Indicators

Figure 7 portrays the V-Dem's Political Parties and Political System aggregate score and the constituent indicators. This is another area that primarily changed along with, and as a result of the installation of democratic elections in 1992. The transition to democratic rule in Ghana's

Fourth Republic saw democratic depreciations in three indicators, improvements in four indicators, and stabilization in one indicator, party switching.

These depreciations occurred as one national party was banned in 1991; as regional and local parties were banned in 1992; and as legislative party cohesion decreased in 1992. This last indicator, legislative party cohesion, is particularly interesting as it may represent democratic progress in the sense that legislative parties have since no longer been under the sole control of one autocratic military leader. And, from one perspective, the banning of regional/local/ethnic parties in 1992 could also be seen as an improvement in a part of the world where political parties with only regional and/or ethnic appeal is frequently seen as having potential to undermine democracy.



At the same time, 1992 saw drastic improvements in a series of other and less ambiguous indicators. Party platforms became more distinct, political parties came to have permanent organizations, barriers to parties were decreased, and the executive cabinet came to be made up of multiple parties. Even if two parties (NDC and NPP) typically collect some 95 percent or more of the national vote, several small parties continue to garner legislative seats and have tended to be included in government.

Finally, the stable party switching indicator is representative of the historical traditions and thus stabilization in political parties in Ghana. The NPP is said to trace its political traditional roots back to the so called “Big Six” of the pre-independence area and the Danquah/Busia liberal ideology. The NDC is said to be based on Nkrumah’s socialist-minded ideology. Political traditions are a major force behind the two-party system that functions at the national level in Ghana and this may be one of the important lessons to be learnt, however hard to replicate in other countries.

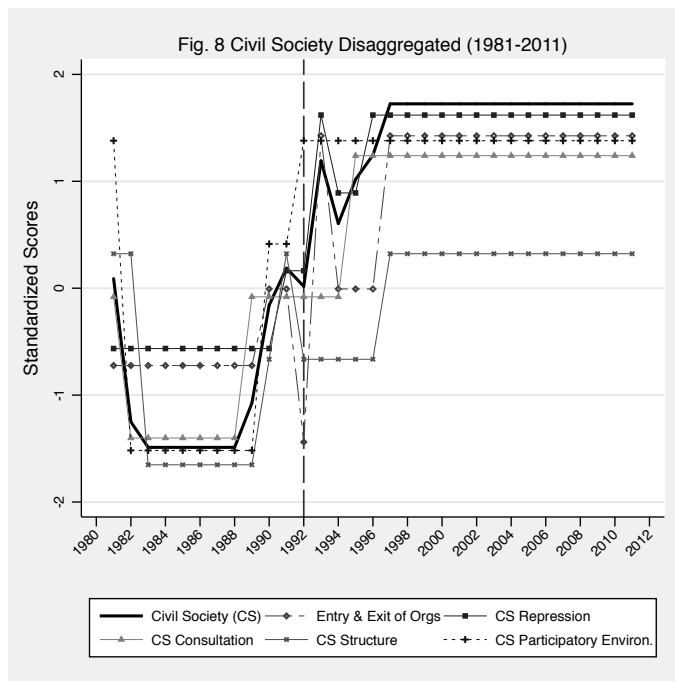
Civil Society – Individual Indicators

We saw above that civil society in Ghana seemed to be rather following as an effect of successful institutionalization of democracy, rather than being a cause of it as often assumed.

Figure 8 displays the aggregate component score, as well as the five individual indicators of the aggregate, 1981 to 2012. Again, this allows us to drill down into the particulars of the democratic development of Ghana.

The more detailed inspection, however, reveals that we may have to revise, if only slightly, the conclusion that an expansion of civil society played no role in the early stages of Ghana's democratization. While hard to detect at the aggregate level, it is now possible to see that a few aspects improved significantly starting already 1989.

The indicators improve in stages, and at different times suggesting a complex democratization process, by which certain controls on democratic liberties were tightened at different times as others were relaxed. It possibly also indicates complex causal relationships with other aspects of democracy discussed above.



Improvements began in 1989, with a jump in the extent to which civil society is consulted before major decisions are made. We note that this is necessarily a leadership-initiative, and was so in the case of Ghana as well. This strengthens the picture painted above, that it is necessary that the political elite are willing to move ahead with substantial reforms. This improved level of consultation stayed until 1995, which is right before the 1996 elections, when it is taken to yet a higher level and has remained high since then.

Another early change was in 1990 with improvements in the civil society participatory environment and in the ability of civic organizations to enter and exit freely without government control. The civil society participatory environment then improved again with the elections in 1992 and has stayed high since. The final climb of free entry and exit to its highest level took longer and occurred with the 1996 elections.

The structure of civil society seems to have improved around 1990-1991 but did not stabilize on a higher level until 1997. Improvements in civil society repression were similarly protracted with an initial improvement in 1991, followed by five years of fits and starts with a gradual decrease in repression until stabilizing from 1996 onwards. In conclusion, the complex process of growing a democratic civil society did not stabilize in Ghana until around 1997.

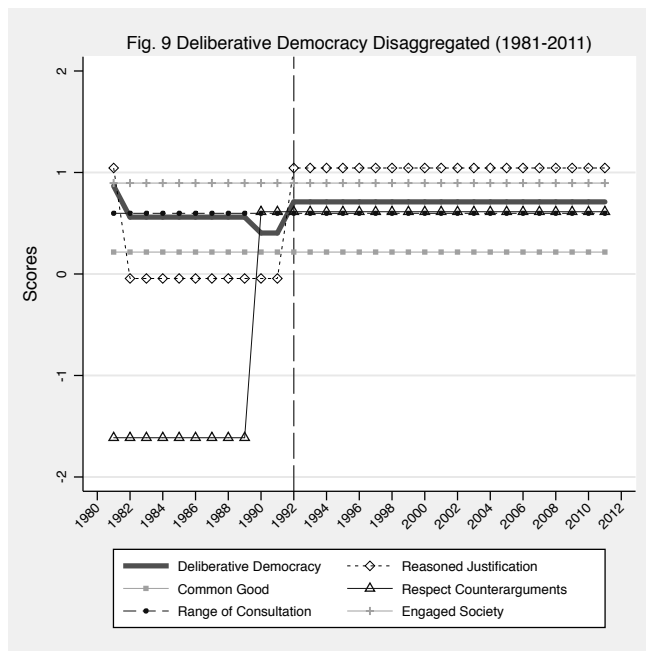
The Deliberative Dimension – Individual Indicators

V-Dem's Deliberative Democracy index is composed of five different indicators. These are displayed in Figure 9.

The aggregate component score shows little change between the PNDC and democratic eras illustrating that some democratic values can be addressed to some extent in non-electoral regimes, and that electoral democracy does not necessarily improve the conditions for *all* democratic values.

The first democratic improvements occurred in 1990, with a drastic increase in respect for counter-arguments. This is during the consultative process of hearings conducted by the NCD under Justice D. F. Annan, and the process of deliberation on the new constitution. This is also the period when media freedom increases so it is natural that we see an accompanying increase in the respect shown to counterarguments.

The only other increase was in 1992, as experts coded that reasoned justification increased such that, since 1992, elites tend to offer more than one complete justification for proposed policies. V-Dem's experts overall felt that common good, range of consultation, and engaged society remained at the same levels from 1981 to present. In other words, justifications for policy changes have been consistently based on references to constituency/party/group interests and on appeals to the common good, elites have consistently tended to value counterarguments, and consultation with elites has consistently engaged elites from all important parts of the political spectrum.



Conclusions & Reflections

Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) is particularly useful for helping researchers locate specific times of improvement of individual democratic indicators.

Overall, our component scores, and V-Dem's individual democratic indicators, suggest a diversity in the timing of democratic improvement in Ghana that can provide some lessons for engaging with other countries in support of democracy.

The diversity of V-Dem indicators show improvements in selected areas even as early as 1985. A series of early improvements in a few civil liberties and in the media, as well as in government consultation with civil society, occurred in 1989-1990 preceding the more monumental change around 1992. Institutional improvements supporting the electoral process, the judiciary, and the parties and party system were fundamental to Ghana's early democratic development. A stronger civil society seems to be more of an effect of successful democratization, than a cause of it.

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¹ The presidential election was decided in a second round and a subsequent rerun in one constituency (Tain) after the first round on December 7 failed to produce a winner. The NDC won the presidential race with 50.23% of the votes translating to a margin of 40, 586 votes. The total number of rejected votes was almost twice the size of the margin of victory (92,886) illustrating how close and potentially contested the outcome was.