

A stylized world map composed of a grid of small grey dots, with the African continent highlighted in a darker shade. The map is positioned in the background, partially obscured by a blue diagonal banner.

Patterns of Late Colonialism and
Democratization in Africa:
Using V-Dem to Measure the Long
Heritage of the Colonial State

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Patterns of Late Colonialism and Democratization in Africa: Using V-Dem to Measure the Long Heritage of the Colonial State

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Abstract

Between 1989 and 1995 the third (or fourth?) wave of democratization hit Sub-Saharan Africa, with mixed results. These different outcomes pose a challenge for most contemporary theories of democratization as they fail to explain this variation. So how can we explain democratization in this region? This paper will readdress this problem by re-introducing a variable that has not been fully explored: the late colonial period. During this period, that lasted from the 1930s through independence, colonial empires had to reform their rule, introducing elections with universal suffrage and local parliaments in some cases. We argue that this legacy of democratic experience in the absence of repression is a crucial factor determining a successful democratization by the end of the 20th century. Two different routes will be taken to test our hypothesis. First, we will sketch a brief historical comparison of different cases from the British and French colonial empire. Through this exercise we seek to understand if these differences did occur, how significant they were and what mechanisms might link them to a process that occurred almost three decades later. In a second moment we will use the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) database and see how it shows the differences during late colonialism and we will use it to test statistically our hypothesis.

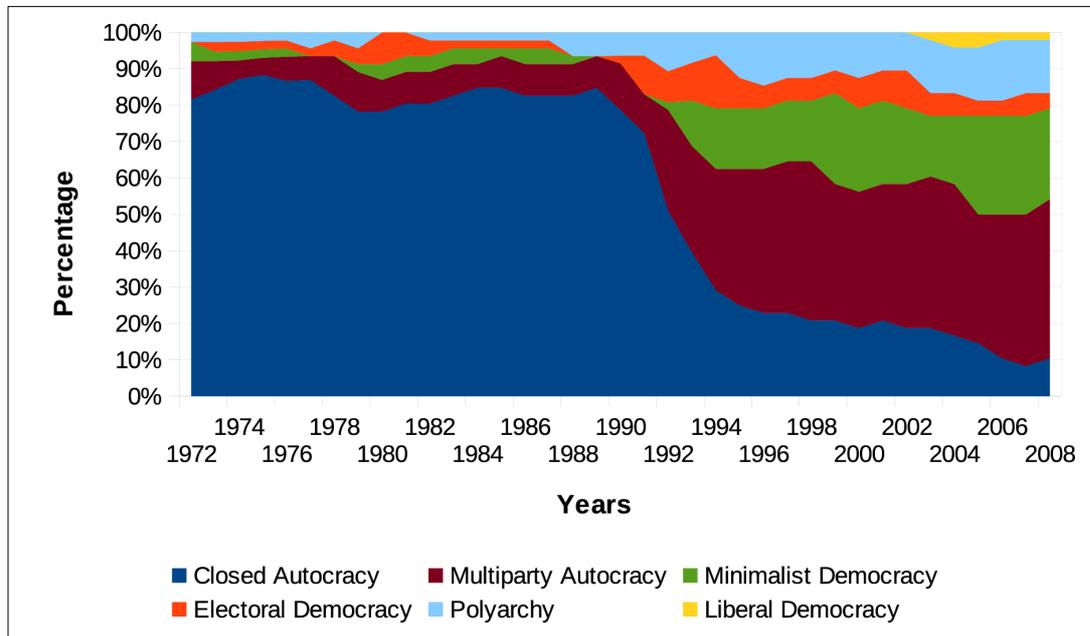
1. Introduction

Starting from 1990 a wave of protests swept Sub-Saharan Africa, undermining the authoritarian regimes that dominated the previous two decades, as Figure 1 shows. It appeared that the third wave of democratization had hit the continent where it was least expected: the overall low levels of economic development; the quite heterogeneous social composition, both religiously and ethnically; and the feeble state institutional capacity, all pointed to the improbable success of these political transformations, whose outcomes were in fact quite diverse. The result was the proliferation of political liberalizations – some substantial, some reversed, others merely cosmetic – that affected almost all the countries in the region. However, only in some cases did these reforms end up in democratization processes that still endure today. How can we explain this variation?

Interestingly enough, after almost a quarter of a century this variation is still unsatisfactorily explained. We argue that the most important democratization theories fail to explain this variation. In fact, even in the seminal study by Bratton and Walle, when comes the time to explain the success of democratization in this region the authors allude to the previous extent of political participation and competition, but are not able to identify the source of this variation, not even in the previous regime typology they created (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997). This paper's main goal is to explain this variation by re-evaluating the role of a variable that has been understudied: the colonial legacy. This study will try and answer the following question: Can the colonial legacy explain the success of the democratization processes that occurred after 1990 in Sub-Saharan Africa?

We argue that variation in the introduction, during the late colonial state, of elections with universal suffrage and local elected parliaments helps to explain the success of democratization processes in Sub-Saharan Africa. Namely, when the introduction of these two institutions occurs in the absence of massive repression it creates a legacy of both stronger civil society and more inclusive regimes. This legacy, in turn, would be an essential determinant of the transition processes in the 1990s, as it made the authoritarian leaders more prone to change due to political protests, but also gave them the mechanisms to mobilize population and survive in democratic regimes. To test our theory we will try first to identify the mechanisms that seem essential to link late colonialism and democratization processes. Namely we will try to understand why some countries which had both universal suffrage and local elected parliaments during late colonialism did not have successful transitions. Afterwards we will try and assess if in fact those mechanisms help us explain the variation of political regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa after 1990.

Figure 1 Distribution of Political Regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1972-2008. Based on (Møller and Skaaning 2013)



This paper will follow this structure: After this short introduction a short literature review will follow, in which we will describe briefly some of the main theories of democratization. Then a short argument will be made for the late colonial state hypothesis, in which we will try to sketch why do we consider this to be a critical juncture. Afterwards a brief historical comparison between four different cases will ensue in order to qualitatively test if this hypothesis holds true and to identify possible mechanisms that might connect the late colonial state with democratization processes that occurred three decades later. The hypothesis developed during our comparison will then be tested and its impact assessed and compared to the explanatory capacity of already existing theories. Finally we will present some tentative conclusions about the impact of late colonialism on the democratization processes in Sub-Saharan Africa.

2. Literature Review

In the specialized literature concerning democratization we can identify two main ways of explaining this phenomenon. On the one hand, many scholars argue that the social and economic structures are the main variables that determine the transition to a democratic regime. On the other hand – and connected with the third wave of democratization – many political scientist have stressed the role of agency and of strategic action of the main players (the elites).

Of course, this dichotomy is less clear than it seems and it is difficult to find a study that can only be fully assigned to one of these traditions.

Concerning the first tradition, that will be called structuralist², the main determinant of democracy that is acknowledged is that of economic development, sometimes taking the form of the wider concept of modernization. Fully functionalist theories (Cutright 1963) that identify economic development as a sufficient cause of democratization, have been questioned by both recent historical events and by the application of more sophisticated statistical techniques (Przeworski et al. 2000). Still, some recent studies argue that there is an endogenous and positive connection between economic development and democratization (Boix 2003; Boix 2011), even if this relation was stronger during some historical periods. Others have attempted to open up this black box and argue that changes in inequality (Acemoglu and Robinson 2005; Acemoglu et al. 2005) or in mass preferences (Inglehart and Welzel 2009) are the missing link between development and democracy.

But these are not the only theories that defend the relationship between economic development and democracy. Even the class structure analysis, that have been essential to understand democratic transition (Lipset 1959; Lipset 1963; Moore 1993; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992), argue that democratic success is supported by economic development and its impact on society. Of course that these theories take into consideration other prerequisites for democracy (Lipset 1959; Lipset 1994); either being certain attributes of the society (like social and cultural homogeneity) or certain historical peculiarities (like the relation between bourgeoisie and the landowner class or the international scene). Therefore, other mechanisms like the class strength and interests, state autonomy in relation to the elite or the emergence of civil society are used in this model. Still, economic development is an ever present variable – even if only in the background – and in the end is the ultimate determinant of democracy.

There is nonetheless one condition in which economic development does not promote democracy, in fact it hinders its prospects. Many authors have argued that when economic development is hinged upon the extraction of localized and highly lucrative natural resources – oil being the prime example – chances of democratization are lower (Mehlum, Moene, and Torvik 2006). This resource curse would allow political elites to repress protest movements and still maintain its legitimacy by redistributing the profits from exporting natural resources or by building an effective and stable repressive regime.

2 Even if this term might generate some confusion.

Besides economic development another crucial structural requisite for democracy seems to be social homogeneity, this is the absence or presence of significant religious or ethnic cleavages has been long considered an important factor. While there is still a big discussion surrounding the concept of ethnicity, it was expected that ethnic fragmentation of society would hamper democratization prospects (Horowitz 2005). So ethnic heterogeneity is a problem to be surpassed: either because certain institutional features are needed to ensure a democratic regime in a heterogeneous society (Lijphart 2008) or because ethnic cleavages tend to fragment the opposition movements, thus allowing the survival of authoritarian regimes (Arriola 2012). This variable should be crucial in this region as the national frontiers do not correspond to ethnic, religious or linguistic division.

Another factor that might also affect the success of democratization is concerned with the country's geography. Some authors have found that small insular countries tend to be more democratic than others (Anckar 2002). It is not always clear the mechanism that might explain this relationship, whether its size related or the absence of military competition.

Finally, some authors argue that religious composition of society has a strong impact on democratization. Usually authors expect that some religions, namely Islam, exert substantial effects against democratic values (Lipset 1994) while other religions, namely Protestant Christianity, have been essential to the spread of democratic ideals. This latter argument first proposed by (Weber 1912) to understand democratic variation in Europe, had been reevaluated recently to encompass the whole globe (Woodberry 2012). Woodberry suggests that there is a strong relationship between the activity of protestant missionaries and democracy around the globe. This variable might be essential in this region as missionaries had a crucial impact on Sub-Saharan Africa – namely through the spread of education – and were essential actors during colonialism.

In the last few decades, the emergence of democratic regimes in new contexts led many scientists to abandon these structuralist theories, since they were not as useful to understand the third wave of democratization (Huntington 1991). Either its modernization emphasis did not seem to hold up or these theories were too focused on the European context to be applied in other regions. Thus, a new approach was presented (O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead 1986) in which democratization depends on the strategic choice of elites and only indirectly from other factors, like economic development or foreign interference.

This new approach analyses how authoritarian regimes work and finds in their internal splits, usually separating the soft liners from hard liners, the main determinant of

democratization. It is true that opposition elites, called outsiders, are also taken into account in this perspective. Nonetheless, these authors focus their study on the analysis of the fall of the authoritarian regime, which only occurs when there is a split in the ruling elite (O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead 1986, 19). It should be noted that this view is connected to other elites studies that stress the importance of disunited elites and their negative effect on regime survival (Higley and Burton 2008, 33–54). To the authors of this second perspective, it is essential to study the fall of authoritarian regimes if we want to understand the third wave of democratization. And this new approach has been quite useful to understand the emergence of democratic regimes in Latin America, southern, and eastern Europe.

Turning our attentions to the analysis of the democratizations processes in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is no surprise that the main framework of analysis is based upon the strategy of elites, due to the region's low levels of economic development. In fact, the main study that encompasses these cases notes that democratization in this context is a challenge to the connection between economic development and democracy (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997). The main attempts to explain democratization in this region have been focused on the role of the elites and the political and institutional context that surrounds them (Lindberg 2006; Lindberg 2009) departing from a strategic point of view.

Micheal Bratton, Nicolas Van de Walle, and Staffan Lindberg centre their analysis around the role of the incumbent elites and how they play the transition game. Bratton and Van de Walle study how these elites faced the political turmoil of early 1990's and they were interested in cases of successful democratization as well as cases where incumbents managed to remain in power (Bratton 1998; Van de Walle 2003). While Lindberg's analyses is focused solely on the introductions of multi-party elections in authoritarian countries and how this sub-game affects the larger game of democratization. But Lindberg is unable to predict why multi-party elections occur in the first place, and while being an interesting description of how democratization occurs in this region, it seems that this new transition method does not seem generalizable outside of it (Lindberg 2009). We can conclude that both explanations rely on the strategic actions of elites to explain democratization and both are detailed analysis of the transition process more than the regimes that followed.

Interestingly, their arguments do not seem sufficient to explain fully the cases of democratic success in this region. As Bratton and Walle state "the extent of both political participation and political competition in previous regimes must be included in any analysis aimed at fully understanding regimes changes"(Bratton and Van de Walle 1997). Which clearly

relates to Lindberg's argument that some small pockets of political liberalization – namely multi-party elections – are the main drivers of democratization after the Cold War, by changing the balance of the costs of toleration and oppression. What is interesting is that this difference in historical paths is not explained nor theorized.

Why did some African countries experienced more favourable paths towards democratization, as identified by Bratton and Walle, while others did not? This research raises the hypothesis that this difference is dependent on the colonial past. More specifically, on some political institutions that differentiate the late colonial States between 1945 and independence.

To consider the colonial state as a factor that explains democratization is problematic, which is apparent in the ambivalence that social sciences study this phenomenon. On the one hand, when the colonial state is studied as a whole, the big tendency found is how it actually hampers democratic experiences. Many authors have studied how colonialism left a state that undermines the autonomous power structures (Young 1994; Young 2004; Young 2012), whose presence in the economy blocks an opposition that should be favourable to liberalization (Frimpong-Ansah 1992), and whose connection to the individual person is ambiguously done between the subject and the citizen (Mamdani 1996). All of which should be seen as unfavourable to democracy.

On the other hand, when different colonial states are compared, studies show that some colonial heritages are more advantageous to democracy than other (M. Bernhard, Reenock, and Nordstrom 2004). Usually, these studies only aim to assess statistically this relationship and do not seek to describe the underlying mechanisms that might explain it. An exception to this trend can be found in the work of (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992) when they try to understand why the Caribbean countries are democratic while most central America countries are not. Their answer is based on the political structures of British colonial state in the Caribbean, which allowed for a larger space for contestation and participation, which in turn was favourable for democratization.

Following this argument, some historians have noted how the British, the French, the Belgian, and the Portuguese colonial experiences differed in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, specially after 1930 (Hargreaves 1990; Shipway 2008; Wilson 1994). While the two first colonial empires introduced political institutions that allowed for political contestation and participation, even if managed by the metropolis, the latter never did it or did it just before independence. Of course that this introduction of democratic channels did not imply the democratization of the colonial empires. The economic structures still remained repressive and coercive. But in this dire

context some spaces were opened, in some colonial states, for political representation, participation, and contestation.

This variation of political structures during colonialism was analysed by (Collier 1982) on her study about the regime transformation after independence in Africa. Collier argues that the regimes that followed decolonization were directly affected by the structures of late colonial state. The author identifies two important differences. The first relies between different colonial states. Both British and French colonies enjoyed an earlier access to democratic political institutions, namely elections with universal suffrage and local parliaments, and during some time before independence. This introduction in the Belgian colonies was only later and ultimately failed, with a general boycott to the elections just before independence. And if the Portuguese colonies were not analysed, other authors have noted the absence of any representation institution in the Portuguese Colonial state (Jerónimo 2010).

The second difference found by Collier – when analysing the experience of the then British colonies – is the coexistence of the mentioned democratic institutions with some form of multi-racial accommodation in some colonies. In the cases where there was a strong presence of non African population, the channels of representation of the African population were constricted to ensure the supremacy of the European settlers. The author argues that this variation had a significant impact of the structure of opportunity of the representation of the African population and the political instruments of the elites after independence. Which means, these instruments not only tried to block the access of African elites to the state, but also – when their inclusion was unavoidable – granted them mechanisms to repress competition. And is through this mechanism that Collier explains the emergence of dominant parties after independence that used coercive means to stay in power. What is striking is how this argument resembles the explanation of the democratization of the Caribbean, that was referred earlier. Both note how the Colonial State might be favourable to democratization, if it does not support the settler minorities; or undermine this process, if it aligns with them.

More recently, Wantchékon and García-Ponce (2013) have also pointed to this period as a critical juncture that determines democratic success (Garcia Ponce and Wantchekon 2011). They argue that choices on the development of independence movements between 1945 and independence is statistically correlated with higher levels of democracy after 1990. Namely, those independence movements that based their struggles on urban protest, mass mobilization and non-violent actions, would leave a more democratic legacy that would be translated after 1990. On the other hand, when independence movements chose rural insurgency as their strategy a

more violent legacy would be instated.

Unfortunately, this argument falls short on two questions. Firstly, their argument rests only on choices by the elites of the independence movements and does not take into account the institutional framework in which these choices were made. As we will discuss later, this institutional variation was not merely in the introduction of elections and parliaments, but also in the levels of repression and coercion exercised by the colonial state. Failing to account this context leads the authors to argue that the Mau Mau emergency was a result of strategic choices by KANU, which does not seem to be the historiographical consensus (Branch 2009).

Moreover, while complex statistical techniques are employed to try to assess the causality of their argument, the underlying mechanisms are never truly measured. The authors assume that the political culture of the country depends on the nature of the independence movement, but this connections is never assessed, neither in the critical juncture nor afterwards. Nor is there any claim on path dependency that could connect the identified critical juncture with democratization in 1990.

We argue that Wantchékon and García-Ponce are right in identifying this a critical juncture but they miss the importance of institutional transformation that occurred in this period, specially what concerns the introductions of elections and local parliaments. For instance, recently Miller (2015) has noted that recurrence of elections, even without democracy, can explain democratic survival in the future, which ties neatly with Rueschemeyer, Stephen and Stephen's account of democratization due to different colonial experiences in south America and with Bratton and Walle's finding on the impact of previous levels of participation and contestation. So there is the theoretical expectation that the introduction of these democratic institutions might explain democratic levels. But, obviously, the colonial choice of introducing representative mechanisms to their rule cannot explain on its own democratic success after 1990. Both the British and the French empires introduced elections and parliaments, but not all of their former colonies did democratize. A comparative analysis of this period might reveal what is missing in this model.

2.1. Case Selection

In order to better understand the impact of late colonialism we need the to compare cases of French and British empires that had different outcomes in the transition during the 1990's. This double comparison allows us to better understand the mechanisms that might explain why did in some cases the introduction of elections and parliaments during colonialism had an positive

impact on democratization while not in others. Our choice of case studies is justified by some criteria.³ First, we needed cases with both legacies and with both outcomes – democratization and non-democratization. Then we needed cases that do not vary significantly in the other significant correlates identified by the literature, namely GDP in 1990, ethnic fragmentation, and small island status. Finally, we chose one negative case that did not experience rural insurgency during late colonialism, to try and show that variation in this variable is not relevant to the failure of democratization. In the end of this process four cases were selected: Ghana and Benin as cases of successful democratization and Ivory Coast and Kenya as cases of unsuccessful transition. But before we continue with the case studies, a better clarification of why we consider the late colonial period a critical juncture is needed.

3. Comparing Trajectories of the Late colonial state

3.1. Why the Late Colonial State?

We argue that the late colonial state represents an important critical juncture that will mark the political trajectories of most, if not all, sub-Saharan African countries. We identify late colonial state as a moment of political, social and economical change fostered and partially controlled by the colonial administration. Chronologically we consider the period to start after the end of the Second World War and to last until independence. This was not by all means a strictly homogeneous period, with different processes having different starting points and tempos depending on the specific circumstances of the colony. Furthermore, these different processes of change became more and more acute with time, resulting in a period of colonial crisis after 1945. And it is in this context of colonial crisis that empires present in Sub-Saharan Africa had to redesign the colonial state.

The crucial institutional change we wish to consider only occurred after the Second World War, but in order to fully understand it, it is necessary to bear in mind that it happened as a result of two intertwining historical processes. On the one hand, this is the height of the institutionalization process of the colonial state. In the first half the century the colonial state goes from an abstract being institutionalized mostly in the maps of European leaders, to a

3 It should be noted that this study followed a nested analysis strategy (Lieberman, 2005), even though the structure of the article does not follow it. So the significant covariates discussed are identified in Model 4, presented later on the text. Also, both positive cases clearly outperformed the democratic expectations set by existing theories, as in these cases had the highest residuals in Model 4.

functioning set of institutions of rule that could actually exert some control over the territory and the population that lived in it. At the same time, in order to financially support the aforementioned process, colonial institutions will foster a moment of quick but important economical transformation that will dramatically change African economy and society.

3.2. Political Transformation

Having its position of sole ruler in its possessions asserted at the end of the century,⁴ through a combination of pacts with local leaders and conquest through war, European colonial officers needed to expand and institutionalize the state capacity. Their three main objectives were the creation of permanent and centralized decision making institutions; the consolidation of power over the territory encompassed by colonial borders; and the expansion of its administrative structures throughout the territory, often building from the traditional African structures that still had some power over the population.

The first step was the creation of autonomous and centralized institutions of rule in each colony, that orbiting the Governor (or its homologue),⁵ would be where most political matters were decided (Wight 1947; Benoist 1982). These institutions would serve as the central policy making bodies of the colony and their autonomy was to serve as the backbone that sustained the growth of the colonial state. It is true that in some cases these institutions had already appeared in late century but they gain most of their political relevance in the beginning of the subsequent century.

Nonetheless their differences these assemblies shared one crucial aspect: in them there was little or no space for representation of African interests before the Second World War. They started as merely bureaucratic organs that embodied the scientific and civilizing roles of the European colonialism (Tilley 2011; Baber 1996). Important local officers of the colonial state were ex-officio members of both councils and dominated them. Even when there were African representatives in these councils – mostly nominated by the Governor – their role was only to give their opinion and they should not feel in any way to be representing the African population at large (Apter 1972, 137).

The second political transformation to occur in the first half of the century was the integration into the colonial borders. Albeit having already defined them, none of the empires

4 Of course there were some exceptions that only later integrated into colonies.

5 In the French empire designations for the Governor varied with time from *Chefs de Territoire*, *Chefs de Colonie* to *Gouverneur*.

did effectively control the territories they claimed in Africa. Only by 1910 did the colonial state achieved the status of supreme power in most of these territories, after a lengthy process of negotiation with and conquering land from traditional leaders (Boahen 1975; J. I. Herbst 2000), but still it was far from actually administering these territories.

Finally, there was also a significant expansion of the local administration. With the growth of the central colonial state apparatus and the attempts to encapsulate the territory came the growth of interactions between local populations and the state. But the costs of creating a new bureaucracy staffed with European officers proved to be too burdensome for the scarce financial resources available. The low levels of economical development combined with low levels of population density did not allow for the creation of a big infrastructural state in Africa during colonialism (J. Herbst 2001).

In both empires local traditional elites were recruited to act as intermediary actors in behalf of the colonial state in return for extension of their power and the guarantee that their loyalty would ensure this traditional chiefs the coercive capacity of the regime if it was needed. As this local administration was strengthened, chiefs held power over land allocation, tax collection, native judiciary systems and local police forces. The sources of legitimacy of chiefs also changed. They need not to rely on popular consent, which traditionally existed in systems of control from below, but rather on the support from the colonial state.

The result of this process was that by 1945 the late colonial state was a Janus-faced state, as Mamdani aptly describes it (Mamdani 1996). At its political core, colonialism was marked by the racial exclusion (Watson, Gold Coast. Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, and Great Britain. Colonial Office 1948, 25), as Africans were barred from any significant participation in the central institutions of rule (Morgenthau 1964, 6). And in its periphery, colonialism tribalized Africans by creating local despotic institutions with limited but significant powers over local issues.

3.3. Social and Economical Change

The second objective of this late development of the colonial state, parallel to the political transformation already discussed, was to economically develop – or at least transform – those territories. Since the colonial state was not able to rely solely on funds from its metropole it had to find alternatives sources of revenue. The low population density combined with low economical development made it hard to ensure enough revenue through personal or domestic commercial tax, especially in a context of low levels of monetization of local economies and problems with local administration (J. I. Herbst 2000). So, the only viable solution was to

develop an exporting sector and taxing the resulting international commerce, which resulted in a booming cash crop activity. With it came the development of internal markets, not only to compensate for the transition of the agriculture sector – as the export orientation created the need for a stronger internal food market – but also to ensure the links between local producers and international agencies. A good indicator of this whole process is the diffusion of the colonial currencies throughout the territory and the impact it had in the monetization of the economy.

During this period of economical change, African societies also changed, specially in two domains. The first is undoubtedly the expansion of access to education. This transformation has its roots in the missionary activities in the previous century, but it was in the century that these primary and, later on, secondary schools made a more profound and systemic impact. The number of Africans with primary or secondary education rose considerably in this period and, even if in a smaller scale, also did the number of those with higher education. More significant than the sheer number, expansion of education introduced a new social groups that became more prominent as time went on.

The primary – and secondary – school leavers had new expectations concerning their future and their role in the changing society. They usually left their small rural settings in the search of new job opportunities that could fit better their own skills, taking advantage of the new work opportunities that the increase of international trade brought. They partook in consumption habits that were heavily influenced by European standards and patterns. And they were more critical of the local chiefs and council of elders, as they tried to flee those more local settings but also observed how the traditional rulers were using the colonial backing for their own profit. University scholarships were granted for a small number of African students to study in the Metropole, and from this group would sprung up a new elite with a more cosmopolitan perspective but also very critical of the colonial order.

Another crucial social transformation was that of urbanization (Boahen 1975). It is true that some cities, mainly by the sea, had some importance in the previous centuries, but the processes of political and economical change fostered the quick development of many new cities and towns throughout the colonies. This change had a dramatic impact as it was essentially a new social setting with new assets and problems associated with it. Namely as it introduced new kinds of job opportunities – clerks, sellers or drivers for instance – that were specially appealing to the primarily educated rural impoverished populations. Cities demanded the provision of essential goods – both from the countryside and from abroad – to nurture its inhabitants, which had to rely on a distribution network that was not always fully functional. The waves of migrants from

rural areas also created problems around housing, hygiene and provision of essential services like water.

3.4. Emergence of Civil society

These processes of socio-economical and political change were intertwined and self reinforcing, but they also produced some essential contradictions. The most important of which is the mismatch between these new and/or reconfigured social and economical groups that emerged in Africa and their recognition as politically relevant groups by the colonial state. During this period many new political grievances and challenges arose from the new social and economical realities, but Africans lacked any institutional channels to deal with them or even to express them. As we discussed, the colonial state excluded African population from central institutions and only gave them any political power as parts of tribal traditional authorities.

So its unsurprising that during this period, and to deal with social, economical, and political transformations, African populations sought to organize themselves in associations in which they could defend themselves, either from the central state or from new challenges. For instance, urban self improving associations emerged that tried to work as safety net for the arriving rural dwellers, often with ethnic ties or ties to their places of origin. Farmers started commercial organizations in rural areas, not only to improve business but also to use them as a platform to negotiate with the state. In small industries, ports or mining facilities the first workers' unions were formed, protesting and striking for better conditions.

More importantly all these associations were directly affected by the same obstacle: their lack of recognition by the colonial officers. Even when strikes, protest and other gatherings were organized – sometimes with impressive numbers – their voices where not heard in neither the local colonial state, nor by the imperial institutions in the Metropole. With time, these associations started to change their scope of action and their demands started to include also the transformation (or even the end) of the colonial state. Elected representation based on universal suffrage to a local parliament, the transformation of the colonial government into a cabinet responsible to the parliament and the africanization of the civil service became commonplace goals of these associations.

If the roots of civil society rested in those who were now participating in new forms of the economy and were leaving the traditional relations of patron-client linkages behind, this does not mean that these associations were only restricted to them. In fact, as chiefs failed to protect their communities from the intervention of the colonial state and endangered the traditional moral economy by pressures to participate in the new global market economy, they started to

lose the support of the poor and often landless peasants. This gave the opportunity to mobilize these unrepresented masses by those who were envious of the chief monopolistic hold on state accommodation. As Li writes:

“[P]rotest played an important role in local politics and in most cases caused changes in colonial policy. In challenging the colonial establishments, rural social protest converted African commoners into political actors and made a great contribution to the formation of the independence movement.” (Li 2002, 15)

These demands were not received gently and the special provisions of the colonial state against sedition were often used to curb basic civil liberties of these “dangerous revolutionaries”. Which also implied that these demands had to be made in opportune moments and carefully in order to avoid stepping in the wrong toes. Fortunately, the new international environment and the new developmental policies headed by the empires – seeking to legitimize their colonial rule in a time when the UN Charter proclaimed self-government as an international principle – helped relaxed restrictions on civil liberties and promote the rise of civil society associations.

In each of our four case studies we can identify good examples of this emerging civil society. In Kenya the Kenyan African Union, founded in 1944 as an evolution of the Kikuyu Central Association, played a central role in Kenya, not only in articulating political demands concerning the split of land allocation between European settlers and Africans – the crucial point of contention regarding colonial policy – but also in managing an extensive network of primary schools that existed as direct competitors with European missionary schools. In Ghana, youth organizations⁶ emerged throughout the country and acted as a safety net to incoming rural dwellers that arrived in the cities and as an institutional check to local chief authority (Boahen 1975, 136). In Ivory Coast the Syndicat Agricole Africain created in 1944 played a crucial role in organizing the African cash crop producers and in leading the campaign against forced labour – a practice that still endured in European plantations – that tried to convince the colonial state that paid labour was actually more effective. In Benin, trade unions - of Public servants and of industry and commercial employees – protested against forced labour and demanded equality in treatment relative to European workers.

So by 1945, colonialism in Africa was in turmoil. While the international factor cannot be forgotten in this context (Hargreaves 1990), with the international order that emerged from the

⁶ In this context youth does not refer only to the age of an individual but also its status as non member of traditional institutions.

end of the Second World War being unfavourable to colonial empires as they had existed, the local conditions were crucial to the crisis of the colonial state. And as the local movements of protest rose and started to articulate new demands of political inclusion it was clear for the colonial officers that the old order was at an end. The question then was how the new order was to emerge. And we argue that even if sharing some commonalities, namely the introduction of elections and parliaments, different policies to deal with these protests were pursued.

3.5. British Empire - Ghana and Kenya

The distinctive feature of the British empire in Africa was its degree of decentralization, even in matters of institutional design. If it is true that Whitehall had the last word in colonial institutions, each colony was granted considerable autonomy in the definition and implementation of new structures of rule. And this greater autonomy will lead to clearer distinctions in the period between 1945 and independence.

Still some commonalities persisted. The first was the gradual introduction of elections with universal suffrage in this period. The second was the transformation of the Legislative and Executive Councils, the parliaments and cabinets of the colonial state, into representative institutions with the latter politically responsible to the former. Even if with different timings and paces, by independence all colonies had at least one government supported by an assembly which had been elected based upon universal suffrage. Nonetheless, some crucial and significant differences can be found in the political trajectories of Ghana and Kenya during this period.

3.5.1. Ghana

The igniter of political change in colonial Ghana was the 1948 Riots. In February and March of 1948 protests and riots broke in Accra and later spread to other towns including Kumasi, as a violent suppression of a peaceful protest by demobilized African soldiers was the last drop that made a cup – already filled with many grievances, including some related to the rising of the prices of primary goods – run over. These riots took the colonial officers by surprise in Ghana and in London, the latter promptly assembling an inquiry commission to try and understand why the colony that had been considered a model in the British African empire was the stage of such violence. The report of this commission was quite clear on the causes of the riots: the continuing political exclusion of frustrated Africans, whom could not trust the colonial state to answer their grievances (Watson, Gold Coast. Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, and Great Britain. Colonial Office 1948, 7–8). And after an initial protest by colonial officers who disagreed with many of the report's conclusions, the proposal of institutional change was

accepted and a nominated committee with extensive African participation, even if some groups were not represented, would start a process of quick institutional change.

In 1951, the first elections based on universal suffrage⁷ took place in Ghana and resulted in the first Legislative Council with an elected African majority, which designated most members of the Executive Council, including the one African member who would become the leader of government. By March 1957, when Ghana became an independent country, this process had occurred two more times and further constitutional reforms were concluded which granted more autonomy to the African executive vis à vis the colonial bureaucracy. Also by this time, local elected representative institutions had replaced the traditional institutions on which the colonial administration used to rely. Provincial and local councils, two thirds of which were elected, had emerged as the new face of the local state.

But this moment was not just a moment of formal openness to African civil society. Even if there was some initial backlash against some African leaders, namely against some leaders of the by then only political party the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), with emergency powers resulting in some arrests (Boahen 1975, 163)⁸, repression was not used systematically. In fact, this would be the period of consolidation of the Congress People's Party (CPP), announced in Accra to a crowd of 60 000 people on the behalf of the Committee on Youth Organizations in June 1949. Even if some leaders of the CPP were arrested as the peaceful campaign for Positive Action marched on and even if the CPP was clearly disliked by the local administration at first, this nationalist party – whose main goal from the start was independence now – did not suffer systematic repression at the local level. In fact, pretty soon administration was relying on their action to ensure a good process of voter registration before the first elections in 1951.

During this period the CPP won every election, ensuring majority governments until independence. Moreover, this nationalist party, whose basis were the Youth organizations that already existed, quickly sought the support of other civil society organizations. Trade unions of railway workers (Jeffries 1978), Farmers' organizations (Beckman 1976), students' unions, and women's groups were mobilized by the CPP as a strategy to reach power through the mobilization of popular vote. This mobilization strategy also had the goal of weakening the traditional chiefs, who were creating their movements in opposition to the CPP.

So in this case the introduction of elections and of representative parliament led to the

7 Even in for this first election the rural voters participated in an indirect election.

8 It should be noted that none of these arrests resulted in actual charges (Watson et al., 1948, p.16).

development of nationalist party with a strong anchorage in civil society institutions, which were actively promoted in the absence of repression from the colonial state. Nonetheless, as we will see in the Kenyan case, this process was not reproduced in other colonies.

3.5.2. Kenya

In Kenya there was also a violent outburst in response to problems created by the colonial state: the Mau Mau Emergency that lasted between 1952 and 1960. It was a military conflict that opposed rebellious Kikuyu dominated groups, called Mau Mau, against the colonial state, white settlers, and the anti-Mau Mau African troops. This very complicated and multidimensional conflict – which can be seen as a counter-insurgency effort (Corfield 1960), a justification for the use of violence to maintain the colonial order (Berman 1990), or as an intra-ethnic civil war (Branch 2009) – also resulted in some political reforms of the colonial state. Once the military side of the conflict had been won by British forces the only problem left to fix was political. Just like had happened in Ghana some years before, here colonial officers came to the realization that inclusion of Africans in the political process was unavoidable.

In 1957, the first election of African representatives to the Legislative Council took place, even if under a very strict suffrage (Kenya. Commissioner Appointed to Enquire into Methods for the Selection of African Representatives to the Legislative Council 1956). It excluded those who could not read, those who did not pay taxes, and those members of the ethnic communities involved in the Emergency that refused to join the colonial counter-insurgency movement. In the end less than 14% of the African population was eligible to vote. There was no African majority in the legislative assembly nor was the Legislative Council political responsible to it. Those two accomplishments would only be achieved in 1963 at the eve of independence.

Not only the expansion of participation of Africans was more limited in this case, but during this period systematic repression was employed by the colonial state. When the emergency was declared and until its end, all African political organizations considered political and with a national scope were prohibited. This meant that, not only the leaders of the Kenyan African Union were detained – most for the entire duration of the Emergency – but also the members and supporters of this group were prosecuted. In an attempt to control the possible Mau Mau support by these organizations, a mass scaled operation of deportation of members of the Kikuyu dominated ethnic communities took place, where each individual was evaluated for their potential cooperation with the colonial state. After being screened, these Africans were sent back to the Kikuyu reserves where they were divided into either punitive work camps, for those

who were deemed to radical, or into a villagisation programme, where they were expected to be rehabilitated into peaceful life. In the end, more than one million Kikuyu had been resettled into the new villages, close to one hundred thousand were detained for some period of time, and twenty thousand Africans died during the conflict.

This systematic repression resulted in the destruction of most civil society associations that existed beforehand. Moreover, when the political parties were allowed once again after 1960, they lacked any anchorage in civil society at large. This was the period of consolidation of Kenyan African National Union (KANU), that emerged as the loose coalition of those Africans that won the first elected seats in the Legislative Council during the emergency. KANU would win the majority of seats in the 1961 and 1963 elections, but the high number of nominated and European elected members in the Legislative council in 1961 did not allow it to form a government. Lacking a strong organization on the ground, the KANU candidates would use the distribution of the state led development programmes as local patronage to secure the vote. Ironically, these local development plans that started as a part of the counter-insurgency effort led by British forces was to become an essential part of the strategy that would enable KANU to survive in power for over 40 years (Mbithi 1977).

3.6. French Empire - Benin and Ivory Coast

Unlike its British counterpart, the French Empire was considerably more centralized in its institutional design. This means that after the Second World War the institutional changes followed a path defined by Paris in terms of introduction of elections with universal suffrage and local parliaments. More decisively, these transformations occurred synchronically in all African French colonies.

In the 1944 Brazzaville Conference – in the complete absence of African representation – it was decided that the French African empire had to change its relationship with its overseas inhabitants (Lemesle 1994). Not only a plan for the administrative, economical, and social development of the colonies was adopted, but also political changes were promised. The rhetorical promise of self-government was de facto discarded by the end of the conference (Gaulle and (France) 1988, 99–101), nonetheless two essential features will be introduced. The first of which was the election of representatives from the colonies to the Metropolitan assemblies, either constituent or legislative (texte 1944, 33). It is true that limitations of the suffrage and the split between two colleges – one for the French citizens and some évolués and another for the rest – implied that this representation would be favourable to settler interests. Nevertheless, this was the first opening that led many Africans to be elected to French

institutions in order to push for more concessions.

The second innovation was the recognition of the need for the Chefs de Colonie to be supported by both European and native populations (texte 1944, 35). This meant the substitution of the existing consultative councils for representative assemblies at the local, colonial and regional levels that would be comprised of European and African representatives. The colonial assembly would have deliberative role in matters concerning the budget and the proposal of new policies, but would have only consultative powers in the rest of the domains.

Between 1946 and 1956, in the absence of full universal suffrage, elections took place in all French African colonies for the Constituent/Legislative French Assembly; for the Assembly of the French Federation⁹; and for the Assemblées Coloniales and Conseils Federales. This period was marked by the expansion of political parties in French speaking Africa and by small victories by African elected politicians in matters concerning their citizen status and labour policy. In 1956, this gradualist institutional evolution took a sharp turn. With the approval of a new Loi Cadre all colonies were granted a local assembly with vast powers, including that of nomination of a cabinet, which was to be elected under universal suffrage. It was the final recognition of self-government on the eve of independence.

Even if these institutional changes were synchronical, this does not imply that they had the same same impacts in all colonies. In fact, as we will argue by comparing the cases of Benin and Ivory Coast, the context in which they were applied had deep implications in the effects of these institutional changes.

3.6.1 Benin

Even before the Brazzaville conference, Benin¹⁰ had a strong educated elite, which had a legacy of criticism and opposition to colonial rule (Lemesle 1994)⁹. Local newspapers¹¹ had been used for decades to oppose colonial policy and denounce its abuses . Unsurprisingly, when the political space was opened after 1944, these press societies were the basis in which the new political parties would emerge (Lokossou and Brunschwig 1976).

Due to the significant electoral restrictions these urban elitist press societies quickly dominated the elections for the territorial and supra territorial levels (Glélé and Gonidec 1969).

9 The French Federation was a short lived project that aspired to replace colonialism was the basis for the relationship between France and its then colonies.

10 At the time called Dahomey.

11 Necessarily a quite elitist political instrument due to the high illiteracy rates in Benin.

But, as the basis of suffrage was widening¹² these elite based movements needed more a stable basis of support. So after the first election in 1946, those elected saw the need to create their own organization the Union Progressiste Dahoméenne which was the only party in the colony and united almost all elected African members. In time, this elitist party would dwell into internal struggles concerning electoral lists.

By the 1951 legislative election, two splinter groups would emerge and replace the UPD. On the one hand, Suoro-Migan Apithy – former UPD MP in the French Assembly – would form its own Parti Républicain du Dahomey and would stress its connections with the southern ethnic groups to mobilize its electorate. On the other hand, Hubert Maga – an eminent Northern Leader – decided to create the Rassemblement Démocratique Dahoméen after being denied a position on the UPD list of candidates. Just like the PRD, the RDD also used its ethnic appeal in the northern regions to secure votes (Glélé and Gonidec 1969, 98–131).

With the continuing expansion of suffrage, there was also an expansion of political parties. Notably, the January 1956 elections for the territorial assembly would witness the electoral début of the Union Démocratique Dahoméenne. It had ties with trade unions, namely that of public employees, and was much closer to the Ghanaian CPP than the other parties in Benin. Unlike the CPP though, the UDD was not able to win election after election to secure its base. Nonetheless it successfully mobilized more widespread civil society groups and its capacity to mobilize strikes and protest made it an essential party before and after independence. In fact, if we look at the last elections to take place before independence the UDD was the most voted party, winning more than 43% of the vote. Due to the design of the electoral constituencies though, UDD only elected 20 of the 70 members of the Legislative Assembly, less than 29% of the seats. Unhappiness with this discrepancy would lead to massive protests and strikes organized by the UDD, which would provoke the fall of a government after independence.

The introduction of these political institutions in Benin resulted in the emergence of a fragmented party system. The UDD never achieved the same importance as the CPP in Ghana, but it resemble its Ghanaian counterpart in its ability to mobilize civil society. Moreover, even in this fragmented party system, each party developed its own electorate and following: based either on ethnic groups or in trade unions. And this development was made in the absence of massive repression by colonial authorities.

12 As discussed earlier even if universal suffrage was granted after 1956 electoral laws were gradually softening the restraints. For the case of Benin, the number of registered voters in 1946 was 54 208 and grew to 384 700 in 1956, before the approval of the *Loi Cadre*. After the approval of this law, the number of registered voters rose to 673 056.

3.6.2 Ivory Coast

In Ivory Coast, when elections were introduced after the Brazzaville Conference, there already existed an extensive African organization on the countryside: the Syndicat Africain Agricole. The success of African planters in cash crop production in the previous decades and the problems related with competition with European settler plantations, led African farmers – in this case mostly Chiefs in the South – to organize themselves to protect their interests (Morgenthau 1964). Namely, they sought to improve their bargaining position when dealing with international companies and to exempt themselves from being recruited under forced labour laws, enacted to ensure a constant flow of African workers for settler farms during the Second World War. This latter conflict against forced labour would become an essential topic for the SAA and its successors. It united both the African landholding farmers, as forced labour grew to become only for European farmers and undermined African recruitment capacity, and the peasants, who preferred wage paying labour opportunities.

When elections were announced and official African political parties were allowed, the SAA allied with African organizations in towns, specially those present in the capital Abidjan, to form the Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI). The PDCI used the SAA extensive network in the countryside to become an agrarian party. Membership in the PDCI quickly rose, surpassing momentarily even the number of Africans eligible to vote, in 1946 it had some 65 000 paid members. By the end of the decade the PDCI claimed to have 850 000 card carrying members (Morgenthau 1964, 183). Still it was a party dominated by rich planter chiefs of the south.

Félix Houphouët-Boigny was elected in 1945 to the French Constituent Assembly and became quite popular as some essential reforms were enacted by that assembly: namely the recognition of citizenship to African populations in the French empire – even if short of full citizenship – and the end of forced labour. The PDCI had all the requisites need to become one of the prominent West African mass parties. With the charismatic leadership of Houphouët and its extensive organization on the countryside financially supported by the rich farmers, PDCI came to dominate electoral politics in the Ivory Coast.

But after 1948 crucial events would change the PDCI path. Due to its connections with the French Communist Party¹³, which disturbed many colonial officials, and the threat that

13 PDCI was the most important member of the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain*, which combined most west African parties represented in the french metropolitan Assembly. The RDA had strong ties with the FCP and its deputies were part of the communist group.

PDCI represented to some strategical colonial economic interests, official colonial policy to deal with the African party changed. The new strategy was to repress it while supporting opposition movements. In November 1948, the newly appointed Governor Pécoux had a clear goal to break the PDCI hold on African politics.

What followed was three years marked by Incidents.¹⁴ The promotion of rival parties sparked ethnic tensions, which in turn resulted in small cases of violence. To avoid further violence the colonial state quickly repressed the activities of the PDCI in the countryside. A campaign to stop any PDCI events took place, including the arrest of its leaders and participants. Civil servants who sympathized with the PDCI lost their jobs, including some chiefs. If there was any evidence that a village sympathizing with this party was revolting or non cooperating with the authorities – for instance if a village refused to pay taxes – military forces were quickly mobilized. Even Houphouët himself was the target of this repression, but his parliamentary immunity¹⁵ ensured his freedom.

The repression campaign climax was the 1951 French national assembly elections, with Governor Pécoux keen in ensuring the defeat of the PDCI. And, if it is true that this was the last moment of repression, with the Governor being replaced that year, the aftermath was substantial. It should be noted that by this time 52 Africans had deceased, several hundreds had been injured and more than 3 000 had been arrested as a result of the repression according to official numbers (Morgenthau 1964, 198). After the rapprochement between PDCI and colonial authorities that would ensue – namely after the PDCI decided to abandon its ties with the Communist Party – which allowed Houphouët to be nominated minister in Paris in 1956, the PDCI was weaker as it had ever been. Not only did the repression destroy the party's organization in the countryside, but it enforced a clear cleavage inside the party. Peace had only be achieved by PDCI leaders accepting a more moderate political stance, including the end of a revolutionary independent rhetoric and the accommodation of settler interests inside the party, namely by including European members in their candidate's lists. The moderate stance approved by the rich farmers without consulting the branches that had been created throughout the country since 1946 alienated some of their supporters in the countryside, trade unions and students' unions:

“The decision taken in Paris and Abidjan – that French officials and the PDCI would co-operate – could not simply arrest the revolutionary pressures in the

14 Borrowing the expression used by the Colonial officers when referring to this.

15 A central perk to the position of MP in the French assembly was the right to parliamentary immunity.

countryside. Incidents continued with a momentum of their own.
“ (Morgenthau 1964, 206)

In the end, the PDCI would achieve independence in 1960 but with a party that was institutionally weak and which relied more and more on the leadership of Houphouët. Unable to control mass opposition and with more autonomy vis à vis civil society, PDCI used more the repressive apparatus of the state as means of controlling the political sphere, specially as its position became more fragile. This led to an extreme centralization of political authority with the goal to ensure the near absence of political life at the local level (Boone 2003, 177), the party's mass base was not to be rebuilt. This led to a very centralized but durable regime that would rule over while ensuring the minimum space for political organization.

4. Comparing Trajectories

Our brief comparison of the four cases allows some tentative conclusions. First, in all cases elections with universal suffrage and local parliaments were introduced after 1945, even if there were differences in timing between empires and within the British colonialism. It was during this crucial moment that African political parties emerged, on the foundations of the civil society organizations that existed previously. And in all cases, these would be the parties that would achieve independence and rule over for the next decade at least.

Our second conclusion, is that albeit commonalities there were also crucial differences in the context in which these institutions were introduced. On the one hand, in Ghana and Benin these institutions flourished in the absence of systematic repression by the colonial authorities. Here nationalist parties grew to achieve power by mobilizing civil society and building stronger ties with it, a trait which we would suggest would have long lasting impacts. On the other hand, in Kenya and Ivory Coast repressive measures by the colonial state were present during these innovations. We do not argue that the Mau Mau Emergency was similar to the incidents in Ivory Coast, as it is clear that the former was quite more violent, but they had similar results. They blocked the development of these parties and cut their ties with civil society outside.

This crucial difference could have a lasting impact. As (Collier 1982) noted the process by which nationalist parties came into power determined how the independent regimes worked. Namely, prior experience with more repressive measures seem to lead post independence African leaders to rely more on coercive mechanisms to stay in power. So these effects could be replicated through following decades as the new African regimes consolidated. Historical

accounts would suggest that both Ghana (Chazan 1983) and Benin(Cornevin 1968; Bebler 1973) experienced more unstable regimes more prone to both mass participation and military coups. While, in Kenya(Cheeseman 2007) and Ivory Coast(Amondji 1986) more personalistic regimes achieved stability through co-optation and repression. And it should be noted that the two dimensions that might be weakened by repression during late colonialism – civil society participation and party institutionalization – can be essential for democratization. Both are seen as determinant for democratic survival (Michael Bernhard et al. 2015). And, as (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997) noted, African transitions in early 1990's were characterized by popular protests and mobilization.

So, we can hypothesize that the impact of late colonialism on democratization in Africa occurred through these two mechanisms. In the cases where the introduction of elections and local parliaments was done in the absence of systemic repression, stronger pre-independence parties emerged with more extensive ties with civil society at large. This legacy would be reinforced between independence and the late 1980's, as the new regimes would attempt to strengthen their parties and continued to integrate civil society participation. When the transition occurred in the 1990's, democratization was successful as authoritarian leaders were unable to contain mass mobilization, fostered by a stronger civil society, or they believed they could run the democratic game, since their stronger parties with historic ties with civil society gave them enough confidence that they could still compete in fair elections.

In the cases where the introduction of elections and local parliaments coincided with repressive campaigns, weaker pre-independence parties emerged that lacked ties with other civil society organizations. This in turn would lead to more personalistic regimes more prone to use repressive means to sustain their power in the decades that followed independence. And when, in the early 1990's, protest and demonstrations demanded democratization, authoritarian leaders in these cases could rely on both co-optation and coercion, even full fledged violence, to steer clear of a successful democratic transition. Unfortunately, due to space limitations, we cannot provide a more extensive analysis of how these mechanisms might have operated through time. But, still we might test if this hypothesis still holds after some empirical tests.

5. Measuring the Late Colonial State

In our previous section through the comparison of four political trajectories of late colonialism we identified possible mechanisms that might explain variation in the success of democratization.

We argue that the introduction of elections with universal suffrage and local parliaments did seem to be an essential period for the development of civil society and the connections between the this and nationalist movements, but only in the absence of systematic repression. If the introduction of these institutions is followed by massive and systematic repression, both the institutionalization of the nationalist parties and their anchorage on civil society suffered.

The question then becomes: can these two mechanisms adequately explain democratization in the whole region? In order to assess this we will use data provided by the Varieties of Democracy Project (V-Dem) which comprises data for almost all the countries in the world since 1900, even during periods when the countries were colonized. In this dataset we identified three indices that can capture the mechanisms described above. The first is the generic Electoral Democracy Index, which captures the extent to which Dahl's polyarchy concept is achieved (Dahl 1982; Coppedge et al. 2015; Teorell et al. 2016). With it we can capture quite well the introduction of elections and responsible parliaments in our cases.

The second index we use is the Civil Society Participation Index that measures the extent to which civil society partakes in political decisions, how large is the civic engagement within civil society, and how legislative candidates nominations are done. Apart from this last subcomponent, this index does seem apt to capture the differences in the role and importance of civil society described above, namely differences of how institutionalized coercion might hamper civil society.

Finally there is the Party System Institutionalization Index that aggregates data on party institutionalization, including level and depth of organization, links to civil society, party supporters within the electorate, and other attributes of institutionalized political parties. By doing so, this index can capture the institutionalization of major parties and how feeble they were in their context.

Figures 2 and 3 present the evolution of the combined indexes.

Figure 2 Evolution of the combination of Civil Society Participation Index, Party System Institutionalization Index and Electoral Democracy Index for Ghana and Kenya. Shaded area corresponds to the critical juncture.

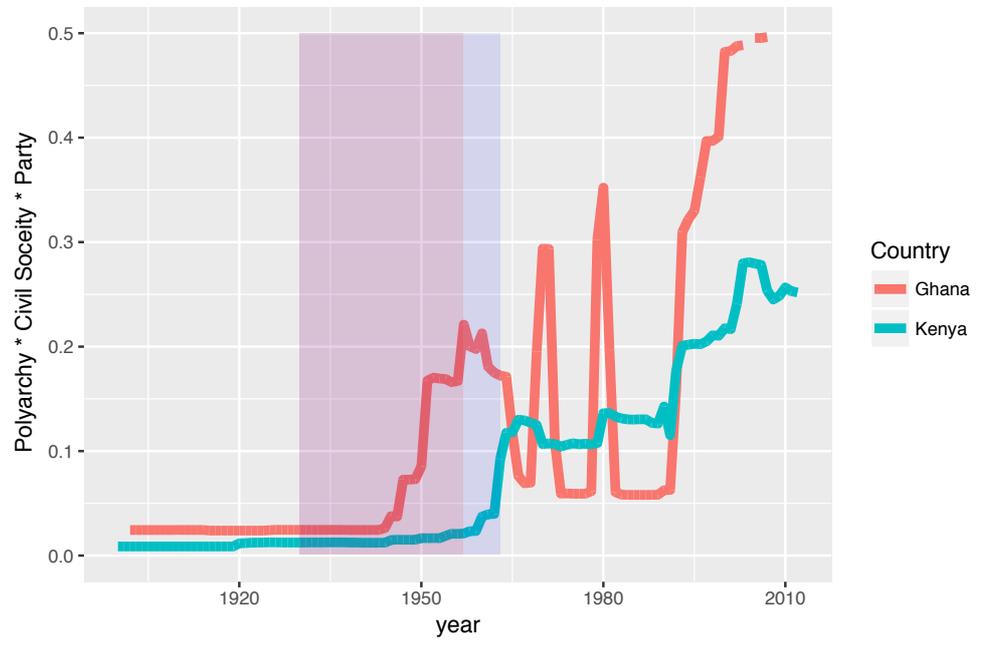
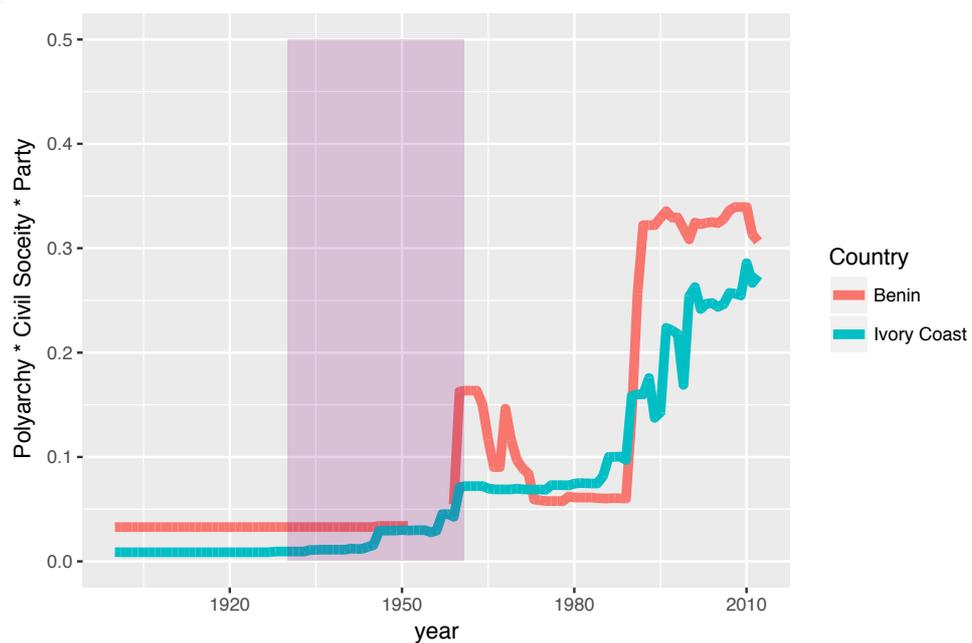


Figure 3 Evolution of the combination of Civil Society Participation Index, Party System Institutionalization Index and Electoral Democracy Index for Benin and Ivory Coast. Shaded area corresponds to the critical juncture.



These three indices will be the base of our own Index of Late Colonial Transformation, but aggregating procedure requires some attention. Of special importance will be when and how to measure the combined indicator. On the one hand, we discussed how the variation between 1945 and independence date was essential, which suggests that we should measure by looking at the difference between these two points in time. On the other, different levels by independence can also be considered relevant regardless of their evolution. The problem lies with the fact that differences in colonial institutional design might result in differences in the absolute levels, which are due to differences in central empire but not necessarily on local variation. In order to solve this problem we combined both the variation during the critical juncture,¹⁶ on the one hand, and absolute levels at the end of it, on the other.

5.1 Testing Existing Hypothesis

Before assessing the explanatory power of our variable, it is important to assess the extent to which the existing theories explain democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa. To do so, we used a regression analysis in which the dependent variable is the average of the combined Freedom House scores between 1990 and 2014. The results are presented in Table 1. It is true that we were unable to test all the variables predicted by some theories, either because of data unavailability, or because many agency based theories do not rely upon clear and generalizable factors outside that of elite disunion. If we take in consideration structuralist theories (Model 1) none of them is statistically linked with democracy. If we add Bratton and Walle's previous regime typology and the number of parties present in 1989 to the equation (Model 2), the overall explanatory power rises and the status of small insular country does seem to be a positive factor, while ethnic fragmentation and economic development – this latter variable quite surprisingly – have a significant negative effect. Nonetheless, this model still fails to explain most of the variation in democracy levels, as most variation is explained by the previous regime being either a settler oligarchy – the comparison group in Model 2 and thus absent from the table – or a multi-party regime, two categories that only comprise two and five cases respectively. As Model 3 shows, if we remove these two categories from the sample, the model can only explain around 32% of the variation, which indicates how these theories of democratization fail to help us understand democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Model 4, presented in Table 2, we added a dummy variable to distinguish between the cases that experienced a rural insurgency during late colonialism. This variable is statistically

16 In fact we chose 1930 as the starting point to ensure data availability for more cases.

significant in the model, but most other variables remain significant.

5.2. Adding Late Colonial Transformation

To compare how well the new variable fares when compared with these theories, we introduced it to model 4. The results are in Table 3.

As it can be seen, model 5 is able to explain more of the variation in democracy levels after 1990 – about 64% – than the previous models. The variable Late Colonial Transformation Index does seem to be quite significant and has a substantial effect. More interesting is the effect of this new variable on the other factors. In this model, only GDP per Capita and the status of small insular retain their significance with , while ethnic fragmentation is only significant with . On the other hand, the previous regime typology loses much of its explanatory power.

Table 1

	Dependent variable:		
	Average FreedomHouse 1990-2013		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Log GDP 1990	0.204 (0.540)	-1.213* (0.623)	-1.212* (0.638)
Natural Resource	-2.564 (3.370)	3.425 (3.535)	3.421 (3.599)
Crisis		0.0003 (0.001)	0.0003 (0.001)
Ethnic Fragmentation	-2.189 (1.540)	-2.599* (1.479)	-2.592* (1.550)
Small Island	2.138 (1.493)	3.378** (1.424)	3.377** (1.451)
Evangelical by 1900	0.024 (0.022)	0.023 (0.020)	0.024 (0.021)
Muslim	-0.010 (0.012)	-0.009 (0.012)	-0.009 (0.012)
Military Oligarchy		-7.008** (2.863)	
One Party Plebiscitary		-6.610** (2.835)	0.398 (0.951)
One Party Competitive		-6.267** (2.785)	0.741 (0.981)
Multiparty		-3.964 (2.425)	3.026 (2.097)
Number of Parties 1989		0.011 (0.117)	0.013 (0.159)
Constant	4.590 (3.791)	20.171*** (5.835)	13.148*** (4.394)
Observations	44	44	42
R	0.350	0.563	0.506
Adjusted R	0.244	0.393	0.324
Residual Std. Error	2.408 (df = 37)	2.158 (df = 31)	2.193 (df = 30)
F Statistic	3.315 (df = 6; 37)	3.323 (df = 12; 31)	2.788 (df = 11; 30)

Note:

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Table 2

Dependent variable: Average FreedomHouse 1990-2013 (4)	
Log GDP 1990	-1.422 ** (0.542)
Natural Resource	0.713 (3.127)
Ethnic Fragmentation	-2.698 ** (1.308)
Small Island	2.385 (1.254)
Evangelical by 1900	0.023 (0.017)
Muslim	-0.019 * (0.011)
Crisis	-0.00001 (0.001)
One Party Plebiscitary	0.202 (0.804)
One Party Competitive	0.159 (0.843)
Multiparty	3.064 * (1.770)
Number of Parties	0.046 (0.135)
Rural Insurgency	-2.468 *** (0.681)
Constant	16.495 *** (3.821)
Observations	42
R	0.660
Adjusted R	0.519
Residual Std. Error	1.851 (df = 29)
F Statistic	4.685 (df = 12; 29)

Note: * p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Table 3

	Dependent variable:	
	Average FreedomHouse 1990-2013	
	(5)	(6)
Log GDP 1990	-1.367 ** (0.521)	-1.246 ** (0.526)
Natural Resource	-0.541 (3.031)	-0.170 (3.091)
Ethnic Fragmentation	-2.287 * (1.282)	-1.993 (1.296)
Small Island	4.210 *** (1.399)	4.734 *** (1.384)
Evangelical by 1900	0.017 (0.019)	0.018 (0.019)
Muslim	-0.012 (0.010)	-0.008 (0.010)
Crisis	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 * (0.001)
Military Oligarchy	-2.355 (2.863)	-0.777 (2.717)
One Party Plebiscitary	-0.906 (3.044)	1.050 (2.803)
One Party Competitive	-1.668 (2.956)	0.320 (2.692)
Multiparty	-0.522 (2.544)	0.753 (2.449)
Number of Parties 1989	0.065 (0.122)	0.058 (0.125)
Rural Insurgency	-1.144 (0.776)	
Late Colonial Transformation Index	55.781 *** (18.081)	70.006 *** (15.651)
Constant	15.287 ** (5.772)	11.381 ** (5.248)
Observations	39	39
R	0.772	0.751
Adjusted R	0.638	0.621
Residual Std. Error	1.672 (df = 24)	1.711 (df = 25)
F Statistic	5.791 (df = 14; 24)	5.797 (df = 13; 25)

Note: * p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

But how well does this new variable affects the democratization process? Assessing individual predictor weight in multiple linear regression can be done by employing different methods (Nathans, Oswald, and Nimon 2012). If we look only to the impact that each independent variable has in the dependent variable, the Late Colonial Transformation Index has the biggest impact. The expected difference in democracy level between the case with the lowest score in that index and the one with the highest score is of 9.89 in the average of the Freedom House index, which is substantial. To put it in perspective, the Freedom House index ranges from 2 to 14. If a country with 14 points – the most authoritarian regime in the sample – would loose 9.89 points in this index, turning its index to 4.11, it would have transitioned from the most authoritarian country in Sub-Saharan Africa to have a place among the 15% more democratic countries in the region. The problem with this simple calculations is that it does not take into consideration inter-correlation between predictors.

Another method to try and assess the individual weight of each predictor is to assess its dominance in a given regression (K. F. Nimon and Oswald 2013). This method has the advantage that it takes into consideration the total the effect of each variable when isolated from other independent variables (direct effect); the effect when all other independent variables' effects are accounted (total effect); and contributions to regression when specific subset of variables is accounted for (partial effects). In Table 4 we present the General Dominance Weights of all independent variables present in model 6 statistically significant at least at a 5%. The results show that this variable is the most important in this regression analysis.

Table 4

	General Dominance Weights
Late Colonial Index	0.207
Log GDP 1990	0.033
Small Island	0.166

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, we argue that the late colonial state represents a critical juncture for the political developments of African countries and its essential to understand the fate of transitions in the 1990's. Namely, the introduction of elections with universal suffrage and local parliaments in the absence of systematic repression of civil society is linked with better levels of democracy by the end of the century.

This conclusion seems to be in line with a recent historical turn in democratization research that has been advocated by (Capoccia and Ziblatt 2010). It also underlines the importance of political parties and social movements as drivers of democracy in the developing world, as argued by (Bermeo and Yashar 2016). Researchers interested in democratic success should look at the historical development of political regimes, political parties and civil society organization. But we should also look for the sources of the variation of these developments in concrete critical junctures.

This research also stresses the importance of going beyond simplistic conceptualizations of the colonial state that hinge upon the variation between different empires. While studying the differences between empires can be important, we should also look at differences across time, regions and even within regions. It also highlights the importance of defining concrete mechanisms through which colonial legacies can operate through.

Still further steps are needed to strengthen our argument. First there is the need to study the political evolution of these countries between independence and the 1990s. While we argue that there is enough evidence that supports considering late colonialism as an essential juncture, it is necessary to identify the feedback mechanisms that might explain the endurance of the political legacy of the colonial state through the following decades. Namely, a more detailed description of the following authoritarian regimes is needed in order to understand how different legacies shaped them.

Secondly, other types of colonialism should also be included in this analysis. It is essential to study African cases that did not have this positive colonial legacy, but nonetheless still democratize, namely Cape Verde and São Tomé. These two successful democracies are not explained by our model, as the Portuguese Empire refused almost any space for African political representation or competition, and their study should lead to intriguing and important hypothesis.

Finally, future research should look at the variation during late colonialism as a dependent variable. On our analysis, we assumed that variation in the levels of repression was due to

choices made by colonial officers during late colonialism. But these actions might be explained by settler pressure, political economy, access to European education by Africans before 1945 or a combinations of all these factors.

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